

SECTION ONE: THE LABOUR MARKET

RESEARCH SKILLS

ACTIVITY: Brainstorming, small group activity, individual activity

TIME: 3 hours

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Participants will understand how to conduct labour market research on their own using libraries and/or the Internet.

DESCRIPTION:

- Explain that in order to stay on top of what is happening in their field, participants should be able to gather information on their own.
- Ask the class to brainstorm sources of information that would be useful to engineers. Record responses on an overhead projector or flip chart.

Responses should include:

Directories	Government
Magazines & Newspapers	Employment Resource Centres
“Information interviews”	The Yellow Pages
The Internet	Professional association websites
- Organize the class into groups of 3-4; instruct participants to read the article “Chip maker buys B.C. software firm” on **page 9-10** and complete the exercise on **page 11 (Research Practice)**.
- Take up answers as a class, using the answer key provided.
- Assign readings from the Resource Package and the exercise on **page 12 (Skills in Demand)** to be completed individually. If time is a concern, this exercise can be assigned as “homework”.
- Instruct participants to review the material on **pages 13-19 (Researching Companies)** of their workbooks and to complete the worksheet on **page 20**. Circulate the room and comment on participants’ work plans with them.

**THE LABOUR MARKET:
RESEARCH PRACTICE: ANSWER KEY**

1. What kind of company is HotHaus Technologies?

A small software development company.

2. Who is the head of HotHaus Technologies?

Ross Mitchell (an engineer)

3. What changes are likely to occur at HotHaus as a result of its takeover?

The company could experience growth as it becomes a major player in the race toward interactive television. The climate at the company might also change as decisions might not be made locally any longer.

1. What skills are HotHaus likely to be looking for?

Software development; design.

2. What kind of working environment do you think HotHaus offers?

Employees are shareholders and profit when the company does well; this provides incentive. Employees are expected to work overtime to meet deadlines.

3. If you were to submit your resume to the head of HotHaus, what points might you make in your cover letter?

Highlight research, development experience; an interest in latest technologies; teamwork experience; a strong interest in the products HotHaus is developing.

RESEARCH PRACTICE

Read the following article and, as a group, form answers to the questions that follow.

Chip maker buys B.C. software firm (page 1 of 2)

U.S. company's \$414-million purchase of HotHaus intended to accelerate development of interactive TV

By WENDY STUECK

The Globe & Mail, British Columbia Bureau

Monday, July 19, 1999

Vancouver -- Broadcom Corp., a U.S. maker of broadband communications chips, is buying a small and little known B.C. software developer in a transaction worth an estimated \$414 million.

Based in Irvine, Calif., Broadcom yesterday announced its acquisition of HotHaus Technologies Inc., a five-year-old private company with 70 employees and a 1998 revenue of only about \$5-million.

The companies said the transaction is intended to make them market leaders in the race to develop interactive television and other electronic devices.

Under the terms of the agreement, HotHaus shareholders will be able to exchange their HotHaus shares and options for stock in Broadcom, which has reserved two million shares of its class B common stock to close the deal.

Based on the closing price of Broadcom shares on the Nasdaq Stock Market on Friday, the transaction is valued at \$280 million (U.S.) or roughly \$414 million (Canadian).

The companies said yesterday HotHaus will continue to operate in Vancouver, as a division of Broadcom, under the direction of HotHaus president and founder Ross Mitchell.

Mr. Mitchell said yesterday the acquisition gives HotHaus access to Broadcom's worldwide sales organization and a strong research partner to push forward into new markets.

"I don't see any speed bumps around this deal at all."

In the short term, the winners in the deal include Mr. Mitchell, who founded the company in 1994 and who, along with his employees, owns about one-third of the company.

The deal also means handsome returns for Vancouver-based investment fund Working Opportunity Fund, which first invested in HotHaus in 1996, and Texas Instruments Inc., a long-time customer and strategic partner that now owns about 30 per cent of HotHaus.

GrowthWorks Capital Ltd., manager of the Working Opportunity Fund, said the fund will gain more than \$100-million in the deal and called the takeover "the largest high-tech merger transaction in British Columbia's venture capital history."

Founded in 1991, Broadcom has become a leader in developing integrated circuits, or chips, that make high-speed broadband communications available to and within homes and businesses.

HotHaus is a pioneer in voice over Internet Protocol, or voice-over IP,

Chip maker buys B.C. software firm (page 2 of 2)

technology, which is technology that sends voice signals over the Internet. Together, the companies plan to develop chips and components that will make the much-hyped interactive television, along with a host of other applications, a reality.

For the consumer, that means gadgets like video phones, high-speed Web browsers and even E-commerce applications that could allow, say, television watchers to instantly find out more information about, or purchase, an item they see on their favourite program.

Such technologies have, in general, not yet lived up to their hype. But new software and components, like the ones being developed by Broadcom and HotHaus, mean that new devices will be easier and more attractive to use, Broadcom president and chief executive officer Henry T. Nicholas III said yesterday.

The companies have been working together closely for the past year, Mr. Nicholas said. "It's an ideal merger, because we're both working toward the same goal." There is no overlap in technology between the two companies, he added, so there will be no need to

streamline staff or operations.

In its brief history, HotHaus has gained a reputation for living up to its name in terms of rapid growth in sales and employees, and through its emphasis on research and development. An engineer himself, Mr. Mitchell built strong development teams that would, on occasion, work around the clock to meet a client deadline or perfect a new application.

Mr. Nicholas said he found that culture appealing, and added that it matches the energy at Broadcom.

"It impressed me that we would make calls in on Saturday at 1 a.m. and a very large percentage of the company was sitting there working."

With HotHaus, its first software acquisition, Broadcom says it is now better positioned to target the growing voice over Internet Protocol market, systems that can ship voice and images, as well as data, over packet-switched systems. (Traditionally, voice transmissions have gone over circuit-switched networks.)

The merger has been approved by the boards of directors of both companies, and is

expected to close within 60 days, subject to regulatory and shareholder approvals.

The race for interactive television technology sped up last week when Microsoft Corp. invested \$600-million in Rogers Communications Inc. as part of an alliance aimed at getting interactive TV services into Canadian homes.

LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH PRACTICE

Answer the following questions based on the article Chip Maker buys B.C software firm.

1. What kind of company is HotHaus Technologies?

2. Who is the head of HotHaus Technologies?

3. What changes are likely to occur at HotHaus as a result of its takeover by Broadcom Corp.?

4. What skills are HotHaus likely to be looking for?

5. What kind of working environment do you think HotHaus Technologies offers?

6. If you were to submit your resume to the head of Hothaus Technologies, what points might you make in your cover letter?

**THE LABOUR MARKET:
SKILLS IN DEMAND**

From the labour market material in your resource package, select the articles and documents most appropriate to your background. Then complete the following:

What is your engineering discipline (i.e. mechanical, chemical, etc.)?

The tasks and responsibilities associated with this type of engineer are:

Of these duties and responsibilities that you have just listed, put a check mark beside those that you have performed in previous work experience.

List some industries that typically employ members of your engineering discipline:

Of these industries, put a check mark beside those that most interest you in terms of employment. Are these industries experiencing growth?

List some skills that you think are in demand in the industries you have chosen.

List some employers – either from the articles or from other sources – that are operating in the industries you have chosen.

THE LABOUR MARKET: RESEARCHING COMPANIES

Once you have determined what industry you would like to work in and what kind of position you are looking for, you will need to research specific companies that might hire you. Most jobs in Canada are not advertised in major newspapers. Instead, successful job searchers target companies where they would like to work, and they conduct research on a company and know something about it well before the interview.

Steps to Researching Companies

1. **Determine what kind of job you are looking for and in what industry.** You should know what job titles you are qualified for and be prepared to present your skills and experience as they apply to that job title. You should also have a rough idea of what salary to expect.
2. **Find the names of as many companies as possible** that operate in the industry you are interested in. Use newspapers, magazines, the Yellow Pages, business directories and the internet to find the names of companies.
3. **Find out some basic information** about those companies.
 - Do they hire people with your experience and skills?
 - Where is the company located?
 - What kind of working conditions and salaries do they offer for people in your position?

Use business directories at your local library, the Internet, and newspaper / magazine articles. In some cases, you may have to make a call to the company.

4. **Narrow your list.** Select about 10 companies that you think you are most interested in working for and that might have opportunities suited to you.
5. **Research those companies.** Use the sources described on the following page to find detailed information on your targeted list.
 - How big is the company? Is it growing or downsizing?
 - Are they changing, starting new departments?
 - Are there particular skills they need?
 - In what job titles are people with your skills hired?
 - Who is responsible for hiring them? To whom should you send a resume?
 - Do they post and/or advertise job opportunities?

THE LABOUR MARKET: USING LIBRARIES FOR LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

How library material is organized

Most materials in a library are catalogued. Usually, library catalogues are contained in a computer database easily used by library patrons; however, catalogues may also be on microfiche or in card form.

Items in a catalogue are normally organized under three headings:

- Author
- Title
- Subject

Therefore, if you know either the author or the exact title of the item you are looking for, you will be able to use the library catalogue to find it. If you do not know the title or the author, you can search for the item using the subject function. Some library catalogues also have a “keyword” function; this allows you to search for items using a word or phrase.

When you have found the catalogue record for an item you are interested in, note its “call number” and use that number to find it on the shelves.

All libraries use a classification system to catalogue their holdings. In Canada the Dewey decimal system is the most widely used. The Dewey decimal system provides ten major indexing categories that are further divided into subcategories. The major Dewey decimal categories are:

000-099	General knowledge (Encyclopedias, Newspapers)
100-199	Psychology & Philosophy
200-299	Religion
300-399	Social Sciences*
400-499	Language
500-599	Science and Mathematics
600-699	Applied Sciences and Industries*
700-799	Fine Arts and Recreation
800-899	Literature
900-999	History, Geography Travel and Biography

*Most business and engineering information is contained in these sections.

THE LABOUR MARKET: USING LIBRARIES FOR LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

Some Basic Library Resources for Researching Companies

Directories

Your reference library will likely have some or all of the following business directories:

Blue Book of Canadian Business

Canadian Distribution Directory

Canadian Key Business Directory

Canadian Trade Index

The Dun & Bradstreet National Directory of Canadian Service Companies

Fraser's Canadian Trade Directory

Made in Canada (Business Opportunities Sourcing System) B.O.S.S. Vol. 1 Product; Vol. 2 Company

Ontario Business Directory

Scott's Ontario Manufacturers Directory

Annual Reports and Corporation Files

Some reference libraries hold the annual reports and other information about Canadian companies – usually those that trade on the stock market. Ask a reference librarian if they have this information.

Financial Post Investment Reports

These reports are published for the top 500 Canadian public companies. They provide historical and current data, investment recommendations, latest earnings and performance analysis.

On-Line Databases

Your library may offer access to computer databases. You can use these to find articles and other information about companies.

THE LABOUR MARKET: USING LIBRARIES FOR LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

Glossary of Library Terms

Call number: A group of letters and numbers, given to each book and to each serial in a library that acts like an address.

Circulating/Non-Circulating: Indicates whether material can be borrowed from the library (circulating) or must be used within the library only (non-circulating)

Citation: Information about a publication or other item that will help someone identify and locate that publication. For example, a citation to a magazine article will usually include the author and title of the article, the title of the magazine, the volume number, page numbers and the date of publication.

Holds: A function that allows someone to request a book that is currently signed out to another person, preventing that person from renewing it.

Index: An alphabetical list of topics, names of persons, authors or titles which serves as a guide to finding information in a publication or a group of publications. In the library, you may use journal indexes to find references to journal articles.

On-line database: Information stored in computer files. Examples of databases found in libraries are catalogues of library collections and indexes to journal articles.

Periodicals: Publications that appear at intervals of more than one day, such as weekly, monthly or quarterly. Magazines are an example of a periodical.

A Reference: A citation to an item such as a book or magazine article.

Reference Material: Material that cannot be taken out of the library, such as dictionaries, directories, atlases.

THE LABOUR MARKET: USING THE INTERNET FOR LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

To use the Internet, you must have an account on a network that is connected to the Internet. If you do not have a computer with Internet access at home, many libraries and employment resource centres offer access to the Internet on-site.

The Internet provides a variety of services and information of use to job seekers and professionals, such as:

- ❑ Company and employer profiles through the World Wide Web
- ❑ Discussion groups, offering networking opportunities
- ❑ Government documents
- ❑ Information about professional associations and licensing bodies
- ❑ Email, allowing you to send and receive messages.

The World Wide Web is a network of machines all over the world that provide information and are linked together. Users go from one page to another simply by clicking a linked image, word or phrase within the text of the document.

The World Wide Web has become the foremost information service on the Internet. Virtually anything you can think of is on the Web. Unlike libraries, however, the World Wide Web is not catalogued – that is, it is not organized by any one central source. The best way to find information on the Web, therefore, is by using a “search engine”.

A search engine is a program that searches the World Wide Web for sites that meet the criteria you enter. You access search engines on the Web itself. Some search engines offer “subject trees” – a series of categories and sub-categories that you select to find information you are interested in. Some popular search engines include:

www.altavista.com

www.yahoo.ca

<http://www.google.ca/>

<http://groups.google.com/>

(for specialty topics)

<http://www.alltheweb.com/>

www.metacrawler.com

www.hotbot.com

<http://www.scirus.com/>

(for scientific information)

THE LABOUR MARKET: USING THE INTERNET FOR LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

Glossary of Internet Terms

Email: Electronic Mail – messages, usually text, sent from one person to another via computer. Email can also be sent automatically to a large number of addresses; this is called a Mailing List or Listserv.

HTML: Hypertext Markup Language – the coding language used to create Hypertext documents for use on the World Wide Web.

Hypertext Link: Links are pointers to other web pages that make it easy to follow a thread of related information. These links lead you to more information whenever you choose to follow them.

Newsgroup: The name for discussion groups on Usenet.

Query: A search request. A combination of words and symbols that defines the information that the user is seeking. Queries are used to direct the search tool to appropriate databases.

Search Engine: A program that searches for web sites that correspond to parameters you set.

URL: Uniform Resource Locator – a standardized system for describing the location of any resource on the Internet that is part of the World Wide Web; often called a Web-site address. Example: www.gov.on.ca.

Usenet: A world-wide system of discussion groups called Newsgroups.

Web Browser: A software program that connects you to sites on the World Wide Web. Examples: Netscape, Internet Explorer.

Web Pages: The World Wide Web consists of web pages, each of which contains information on a particular topic. The main Web page of a web-site is called its Home Page.

Web Site: A specific address or URL in a computer network.

THE LABOUR MARKET: RESEARCH PLAN

Use the following worksheet to create a research plan that will help you stay on top of the trends and issues for members of your profession and increase your understanding of the labour market. If necessary, use the list of labour market resources provided on the following pages.

Identify at least three sources of information you will use to find out about the **skills in demand** for members of your profession. For each source, indicate where you will find the source (e.g. a library, resource centre, Internet, subscription, etc.)

Identify at least three sources of information you will use to locate and learn about **specific employers**:

Identify at least three resources you will use to find out about specific **job opportunities**.
