

# Finding business information on the web

## Transcript

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Where can I find business information?

Some of the information is freely available on the web. For example, the company's own website contains lots of information about the company's strategies and newest products. It may also contain the annual reports. Of course, no company web site would say negative things about its own company, right? You will need to use other resources to learn more about that particular company.

If you are looking for a public company, here is the good news. Public companies are those traded on the stock markets. Thanks to the stock market crash in 1929, public companies are required by law to disclose financial information to the public so that the investors will have access to accurate financial information about those companies. A wide range of financial reports are therefore available in the SEC's free EDGAR database.

SEC stands for Securities and Exchange Commission. It was formed in 1934. EDGAR is the name of the database. It stands for Electronic Data Gathering - Analysis and Retrieval. Ok, the full name is a bit of a mouthful, but you should know that EDGAR contains the annual 10 K reports and quarterly 10 Q reports. These kinds of reports are key to understanding the health of any company. Before EDGAR was available in 1984, the financial information was mainly available to securities and investment firms. Independent investors like you and me would find it difficult to access those reports. Now, if you want to know what is going on financially with that company, you can go to EDGAR and spend some time reading those 10K and 10Q reports!

When it comes to Stock prices, there are also some free web sites available.

Yahoo!Finance and Google Finance both have stock prices data. You can find out the past stocks performance of a company. Another web site is QuoteMedia. I find it very useful especially for a company that no longer exists or has been merged with another company. Just simply enter the ticker symbol such as ORCH for Orchid Cellmark. Click the "historical" button and get the historical stock prices. All these resources are particularly useful for personal investment, especially when most of the individual investors do not want to pay for the data.

To find out the latest development of a company or some stories that appear in the news media, you will need to look for news articles.

My favorite site is news.google.com.

The advanced search option is available by clicking the down arrow in the regular search field at the top. You can then filter your search for news articles on Google by a specific time range, such as articles from the last hour, week, month, or a custom date range.

Other than Google news, I also like searching articles on [Google Scholar](#), which is free to the public. For example, the other day, I had a question about SmartWheel which is used to prevent distracted driving. The student was interested in finding research articles that have investigated whether Smartwheel could actually improve the safety of driving. You will find articles by entering the search terms there. For example, “SMARTwheel” and safer driving.

But wait, if all this information is freely available on the web, then why do we bother to use the library databases which I will talk about in other videos.

First, not all the information is freely available. Certain magazine articles or research reports are only available through some databases which Rutgers has a subscription.

Second, some vendors hire professionals to repackaging the data. For example, certain statistics and data can be repackaged in the form of charts and diagrams which are visually easier to comprehend. Those reports and information may only be available at a cost or through databases that we have paid for.

In short, don't forget the libraries!