

Web 2.0 Featured Article

Use Social Networks as a Job Hunting Tool

By [Jessica Kostek](#), TMCnet Channel Editor

Professionals in the Information Technology world could be more at an advantage in regards to using social networking tools as a resource to gain exposure to employers but everyone who is currently out of a job should consider using at least one Web 2.0 application.

IT people are likely to be more comfortable with Websites such as [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and related technologies as they could adjust automated scripts and customized search engines and RSS feeds, experts say.

Brennan Carlson ([Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)), a newly hired product manager at e-mail marketing firm Lyris Inc., according to ComputerWorld, is an extreme example by customizing search engines, widgets, mashups, a [Netvibes "start page"](#) that organizes blogs, news, weather, photos and social networks. Carlson also made concentrated use of social networking sites to present himself online and to research targeted companies

Whether it's [LinkedIn](#) or one of the other myriad services, these Web tools are vital to today's IT job search, Carlson said.

"If you're not online, get online," Carlson said. "Be everywhere. Start using these services. . . If you're not on Twitter, get there. Start Tweeting."

Although customizing online tools and sending out cover letters/resumes is helpful, Carlson says that you also have to target specific companies interesting to you. He sent out 103 blasts, this time using LinkedIn and other tools to research target companies, and searching for people who worked at the company who had a role in the product area he was interested in, or who worked as company recruiters.

According to ComputerWorld, three days after the blast, he sent out follow-up messages. "And the response rate from those follow-ups was much higher than the original send outs," Carlson said. "At 40 percent compared to the first response rate of only 5 percent."

Carlson started working at one of his targeted companies, Lyris Inc., on March 23, four weeks and one day after the targeted resume/cover letter blast.

For those who don't have a technical background and may be a little scared about using any one of these Web 2.0 applications should know that as long as they know how to navigate the Internet, they most likely can build a profile.

Natalie Wilson doesn't have that technical of a background, but she also found a job through social networking. Laid-off from Circuit City in Richmond, Va., where the failed electronics store chain was headquartered, where she had worked for 24 years she turned to LinkedIn and according to her, "it's really worked out well," Wilson said of using the site.

LinkedIn is in essence a giant Rolodex with access to thousands of contacts all guiding each other in finding the right contacts to get them where they want to be

professionally. More importantly, these contacts are directly linked to your targeted companies giving job seekers a foot-in-the-door.

"That's the greatest value" of LinkedIn, said Harry Urschel, owner of the staffing and recruiting company [e-Executives](#) in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. "If you're applying for positions posted online, you're one of hundreds of others that are doing the same thing. And even if you're a great fit for a job, it's incredibly hard to get noticed because you just fall into a database or you're in a sea of other resumes they have on their desk."

There are many opportunities to make yourself known online. Make yourself stand out and continuously try to form those contacts via social networking sites and the your job search could quite possible have a happy ever after.

[Jessica Kostek](#) is a channel editor for TMCnet, covering VoIP, CRM, call center and wireless technologies. To read more of Jessica's articles, please visit her [columnist page](#).

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