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Online job searches go beyond e-mail

By Erika D. Smith

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Would you like to be the job applicant who's wanted instead of the one who needs help?

Then remember this: The Internet is your friend, but it's just one tool in the toolbox. It's certainly no substitute for old-fashioned diligence and research, experts say.

For starters, e-mailed resumes can be easily overlooked, warned Madeline Miller of Compu-Type Nationwide Resume Service in New York.

"I recommend sending an e-mail and then following it up with a hard copy and a cover letter," she said. "In the cover letter say, 'I e-mailed and I am following this up with a hard copy.'"

There's also the chance that the applicant and recruiter won't have compatible e-mail programs, which make the resume unreadable, Miller said. Bulleted items are especially susceptible to the vagaries of electronic transmission. The dots can turn to plus signs or asterisks, for example.

E-mailed resumes should be formatted simply, without symbols, pictures or other embellishments that might be altered during transmission.

Often, job seekers choose not to follow up after they send a resume by e-mail, said Paul Magnus, director of the Mature Services Senior Employment Center in Akron.

And that's a mistake, Magnus said. Communication between the employer and applicant is what gets a person hired.

Take advantage of the information that's available on the Internet. Job seekers often don't tie in what they've learned about a company and how they may fit in when writing cover letters. These days, Sullivan said, applicants have to sell themselves to employers.

Research also can help you find the open positions that aren't advertised. To find these jobs, Magnus said, applicants must study business and industry trends, like a spike in openings for a particular job on Monster.com.

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