Skills for Job Seekers

Overview: Learn what Ferguson’s Career Center and JobZone can do for you; use it to search for jobs, refine a resume, or ace the interview. Learn about Web Site security, too. Practice typing and computer mousing with free instruction on the Internet!

Student Skill Level: Basic

Requirements: Basic mouse skills (Ability to move the mouse around the computer screen with some assistance. Ability to “click” and “double click” the mouse as instructed during class)

Length: 3 hours (including 10 minute break)

Objectives
- Discuss Ethernet cards and how to connect to an Internet access point
- Discuss security features common to web sites
  - View a secure web site
- Use the BTOP web site and find:
  - The Ferguson’s library resource
    - Use it look for possible employment (from the Home Page)
- Explore JobZone with your account
- Explore Craig’s List to see what local job openings are currently available
- Find free typing and mousing tutorials on the Internet
Connect to an Internet Access Point

What do you need to connect to the Internet? Something called “a network interface controller (NIC). [It] is a computer hardware component that connects a computer to a computer network. The low cost and ubiquity of the Ethernet standard means that most newer computers have a network interface built into the motherboard” (Wikipedia, 2013).

Computer devices (including computers, smartphones, tablets, and laptops) have a wireless adapter that creates radio signals that are picked up by wireless routers (How WiFi Works, 2013).

This is what we need to activate in order to connect to the Internet.

This is the Wireless Connection Center icon, located in the lower right corner of your screen, in the system tray. Mouse over it and click once.

The Center will open. Click on the connection with the strongest signal, as seen by the green bars on the right.

Click connect and wait for your computer to connect to the Internet.

Once you are connected, there will be five white bars in your system tray.
Web Browsers and Web Sites

"Browsers are software programs that allow you to search for and view various kinds of information on the Web, such as Web sites, video, audio, etc." (Boswell, 2008).

Internet Explorer is one type of Web browser. There are many different kinds of browsers, but they function similarly. Examples include Firefox, Chrome, Opera, and Safari (Mac).

Using a browser allows you to access Web pages which are stored on a server. Web page(s) make up Web sites. A single Web site may consist of one page to thousands of pages, just like books.

Let’s open the Internet and look at the BTOP computer training web site.

Open the Internet

There are two ways to open the Internet:

Double click on the icon on the desktop OR

Click once on the icon and then press the Enter key on the keyboard

The icon will turn white and then a small circle will appear on the screen as the computer works to open the program

The anchor page of ANY Web site is called the Home page. It is the starting point of the site, much like the cover of a book. A good Home page will have an easy-to-remember web address (like www.btopexpress.org), introduce you to the company or person who owns the site, and will clearly point the way to additional pages in the site – like the table of contents in a book.

If you know the Home Page address of a Web site, it’s very easy to find the site!

Here’s a portion of the BTOP Express’ Home Page:

We see the NIOGA logo, alongside the BTOP logo, and these introduce us to the owner, and multiple hyperlinks. Those are elements in a Web page that allow users to see new items or Web pages. Your mouse indicator will change its shape to a hand when you move it over the link. Links may be words, images, or animation.
Secure Web Site Example

I want to point out the standard security features of this site. Not every Web site NEEDS to be secure. It’s only very important when you are giving out personal information – name, social security number, etc. It is imperative that you check a site’s security BEFORE you enter personal data – even from a well-known company.

All legitimate businesses have a great interest in keeping your information secure. This is done by a two-part process: first, by ensuring that your computer is in fact connected to the correct server (in this case, Tops) and second, by scrambling data sent over the Internet in such a way that if anyone tried to steal it, all they would find is meaningless, random information.

You can see that Tops secures your personal data by seeing the “S” after the http (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) in the Address bar. This indicates a secure transaction through encryption (data scrambling) so that no one else may see it.

There is a padlock at the end of the Address bar. Click the padlock to view the company’s Security Certificate.

Here is the identification drop down window. VeriSign is a well-known computer security firm and has been in business for over 25 years and is a trusted name.

This is the Connection tab in the drop down window. This is important because it tells us the encryption rate (how much the data is scrambled). This one says 256-bit encryption. This is important, because the higher the number, the harder the connection is to crack.

Right now, there is 128-bit and 256-bit encryption for residential use. 256 is better.

Click once on the Certificate information link to view the security certificate.
Here is the certificate itself. The **Valid from** dates are the most important part of the certificate and they should be current.
The NYS Department of Labor has a workforce development site as well. It has more online resources, and a place to log in with an account, as well.

Go to www.jobzone.ny.gov

This is the upper corner of the first page. Notice that some links are in color, while others are gray. To access all the resources, you need to sign in with your account.

Your job counselor has created an NY.gov account for you. It's in your paperwork (if you don't know your login, ask your counselor).
Once you log in:

**JobZone**
- Create Work Search Report
- Save Employer Contacts
- View Work Search History

{Click on JobZone button}
Home

Did You Know?
Locate local employers who have announced plans to hire additional workers from our Business Expansions and Contractons Report url(http://www.labor.state.ny.us/workforceind).

Your Local Career Center
Below is the office closest to your location. Click on More>> to find additional Career Center offices around your area.

Lockport WorksourceOne Center
Service Type: Affiliate Site
Address: 272 S. Transit Street
Lockport New York 14094
Email:
Phone: (716) 433-6765
Fax: (716) 459-8933
Hours: M-F 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Parking: Yes
Public Transit
Access: Click here for driving directions

Career Center Events Calendar - See workshops, networking meetings, job clubs, job fairs and all of the events being offered by NYS Career Centers through this new calendar.

Job Seeker Resources
Additional tools to aid you in your job and career exploration. Learn about apprenticeships, job search strategies, veterans services and much more.

Upcoming Job Fairs

Job Search
Keyword: 
ZIP Code: 14094
Radius: 25 miles
Search

Online Work Search Record
Work Search Record - Whether for Unemployment insurance purposes or your own personal record search activities.

Resume and Letter Preparation
How to Create a Resume - Learn the basics of creating a resume, receive resume tips and view sample resumes. This online guide will help you build a resume businesses will want to read. Go step by step or skip to the section that interests you.
Resume Builder - Create a new resume or upload a current one.
Letter Writer - Create cover letters, thank you letters, and follow-up letters.
Reference List - Generate a list of references to distribute to potential employers.
Work Samples - Upload samples of your past work experience and save them to your portfolio.

Tool Box
Take some time to explore the options available to you on JobZone!
Mouse Tutorials - Practice

There are many different tutorials on the Internet, and sometimes getting to them can be a trick in itself! Follow these instructions to get to one particular tutorial:

Open the Internet (double click the icon)

Click once in the Address bar (the letters turn blue). WHEN YOU SEE BLUE THAT IS WHERE YOU WILL TYPE.

Type pbclibrary.com/mousing in the address bar

Press the Enter key on the keyboard

Click on the mousercise link in the middle of the page

Begin the self-paced tutorial! Good luck and have fun!

Hand Position on Mouse

To hold the mouse, rest the palm of your right hand on the mouse so your index finger is positioned over the left mouse button. Grasp the mouse lightly using your thumb and ring finger to control the movement of the mouse on the surface or mouse pad.

http://www.kckps.k12.ks.us/courses/images/position.gif
BTOP Express Web Site

The Nioga Library System has developed a web site for job seekers. It is designed to help people “develop a strategy to ‘win’ the job of their dreams!”

Start by clicking once in the **Address bar** and typing in **btopexpress.org**. Press the **Enter** key on the keyboard.
Free Online Typing Tutorials
There are many different typing tutorials on the Internet. Let’s look at some of the free ones available.

Right on the front page of BTOP Express is a link to Typing Web. It’s a free course that’s great for beginners. You may choose to register to track your progress (free).

If you don’t want to register, just click the red “x” in the corner of this window.

Angela Colley created a useful step-by-step guide to searching Craig’s List for jobs:

1. Visit Your Local Craigslist Site
Choose either “Jobs” or “Gigs” to start your search.
Jobs Section. Craigslist divides the jobs section into multiple categories. Clicking a section will show you open jobs in your industry and area. You can also click the Jobs link at the top to view all available positions in every category.
Gigs Section. The gig section divides jobs by type, such as “computers,” rather than industry. You can click a single type or the Gigs link to view them all.
Pro Tip: Craigslist is a location-based search, and you’ll have to select the city closest to you. If you’d like to look for jobs or gigs around the U.S., you can use a third-party website like AllofCraigs.com, which allows you to search for a specific type of job in every city at once.

2. Pick an Industry from the Category List
Keep in mind that Craigslist asks posters to separate part-time and full-time work. If you’re looking for part-time work, use the part-time section primarily, though you may want to browse your specific industry for part-time work as some postings get mis-classified. Otherwise, pick the industry closest to your career field.
Pro Tip: Craigslist has an “ETC” section meant for any jobs that do not fall into a specific category. In most cities, the “ETC” section is 95% scams and phishing ads. It’s best to avoid this section altogether.
The job ads in each section go in order of posting date. You’ll see the newest listings on top; each page holds 100 listings. Most ads include at least a title, such as Administrative Assistant Needed Full Time, and the location.

3. Browse the Ads
Once you find one of interest, look at the location and make sure the job is within whatever commuting distance you’re comfortable with.
**Pro Tip:** As Craigslist grows in popularity, more and more employers are using it to post job listings and you may see several hundred available. Make sure you look beyond the first 100 listings as the later ones could have the fewest applicants!

4. Read the Ad Description
When you open the ad, you’ll see two sections. The first describes the job itself and possibly the company offering it. The second section addresses job details, such as duties, qualifications, contact information, and sometimes compensation. Read through these carefully to see if you’re still interested.
**Pro Tip:** Craigslist does not verify any information supplied in an ad. Remember the old adage, “If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.”

Craigslist does not have an online resume builder like some other job hunting sites. Because of this, you’ll need to write your own resume and cover letter.

5. Write Your Resume
You can use a Word template or start your resume from scratch with a blank document. Either way, make sure it has all relevant information regarding your job history, education, licenses, and any special awards or acknowledgments – the stuff employers really want to see. Definitely include any marketable skills that will make you stand out against the competition, such as if you’re bilingual or proficient in certain programs pertinent to your field.
**Pro Tip:** Keep your resume short and pointed, and use “action” words.

6. Write a Cover Letter
Think of your cover letter as a short introduction to you and your skills. This is your opportunity to “sell” yourself. Again, being short, sweet, and to the point will win you more friends in HR than being exhaustively comprehensive in your self-assessment.
**Pro Tip:** Take your cover letter seriously. Many people rush through the cover letter, hoping that their resumes will speak for themselves. But some hiring managers won’t even get to your resume if they don’t make it through your cover letter. Remember, they’re busy too.

7. Respond Quickly
The early bird really does get the worm on Craigslist. Many employers receive hundreds of responses and make decisions pretty quickly, so it pays to get your application in as soon as you can. Aim for responding within 48 to 72 hours of the posting date.
**Pro Tip:** When I have multiple jobs I want to apply for, I prioritize them by posting date, starting with the oldest and then respond one by one. However, if there’s one particularly appealing job out of a few candidates, I suggest you respond to that one first.

8. Reread the Description Before Replying
If the company included an email address or a hyperlink to their website, use that information when applying instead of the anonymous email address provided by Craigslist on the top of the ad.
**Pro Tip:** Make a note of any special instructions. For example, a graphic design company may want you to send in three samples of your work. If you don’t answer the ad completely, most companies won’t even consider giving you a call.
9. Keep Your Subject Line Simple and to the Point
When you reply to a Craigslist ad, put the title of the job in the subject line and any internal (non-Craigslist) reference number if applicable. Companies often receive hundreds of emails through Craigslist and they may skip over yours if you have a poor or overly long title.

10. Include Your Cover Letter in the Body of Your Email
Also, make your cover letter specific to the job you are applying for. Don’t develop a “form” letter unless all the jobs to which you are applying are extremely similar.

**Pro Tip:** Include your email address and phone number below the signature line in your cover letter. Many companies forward applications to several different departments, making it difficult to tell where it originally came from.

11. Include Your Resume as an Attachment
If you attach your resume to your email, use a common file extension, such as .doc. If you have a newer version of Word, make sure to save your file as a .doc and not a .docx, as older versions can’t open .docx files. Alternatively, you can place your resume below your cover letter in the body of the email. If you include your resume in the body of the email, double-check the formatting before you send.

**Pro Tip:** If you attach your resume to your email, be sure you mention it in the cover letter. If the attachment didn’t send, but the hiring manager saw your note, you may luck out. Some hiring managers are willing to ask for your resume again.

While Craigslist can be a great tool for finding a new job, the website is famous for letting anyone post pretty much anything they want. Unfortunately, this means that common Craigslist scams abound. To protect yourself, take the following precautions:

12. Read the Craigslist Scam Overview
Craigslist includes a list of common scams and how to avoid them. Read these over before you apply.

**Pro Tip:** The scams mentioned by Craigslist are only the most common ones. There are still plenty of other scams not mentioned to look out for.

13. Don’t Apply If It Sounds Too Good to Be True
As a general rule of thumb, if an ad doesn’t sound legitimate, it’s probably not. If it includes the name of the company, however, you can Google it before you send your resume. Otherwise, you may want to move on to the next ad.

**Pro Tip:** If you can’t decide if the company is legitimate, send a brief email expressing your interest and asking for more information. Do not attach your resume or include any personal details. Odds are, you'll be able to tell if the company is legit or not from their response.

14. Join Social Networking Sites Geared Toward Professionals
With sites like LinkedIn, you can create a professional social networking profile, connect with old colleagues or bosses, and meet new professionals in your industry.

The best features of LinkedIn include:
- **Friend Finder.** You can use the automatic finder to find old colleagues or search for new people on the site.
- **Jobs.** LinkedIn has a job section where you can search for new jobs from your homepage.
- **Answers.** The answers section lets you post business questions to the board and get answers from specialists in your field.

**Pro Tip:** While LinkedIn is the premiere site for professionals, don’t overlook other social networks. For example, your Facebook friends could provide potential leads.
References


Resources

**These items are available in the NIOGA Library System!**
**Contact your local library for assistance!**

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NIOGA LIBRARY SYSTEM
6575 Wheeler Road - Lockport, NY 14094
Phone - (716) 434-6167  Fax - (716) 434-8231

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