

# Dig Up A New Career

By Sharon Davis

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There seems to be no end to the demand for information on the internet. It's bought, sold, bartered, and begged for.

This demand has opened up a huge market for "Internet Researchers". Many dot-com companies rely on the ability to provide timely, relevant information but they don't have the time or the resources with which to get it.

Some researchers specialize in a particular market such as Genealogy. People are very interested in their family history and tracing the family tree. Other researchers offer their services to clients seeking any type of information.

This business is certainly not for everyone. An Internet Researcher must be detail-oriented, tenacious and have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. Below you'll find a comprehensive overview of what it takes to become an Internet Researcher:

Start-up Cost: \$4,000-\$12,000

Potential Earnings: \$18,000-\$75,000

Typical Fees: \$45-\$75 per hour

Advertising: Networking, contacts in fields where you have experience, seminars, newsletters, advertising in trade journals, bulletin boards

Qualifications: Familiarity with the requirements of the databases in your specialized field, ability to scan information rapidly and pick out what is relevant

Equipment Needed: Computer, modem, fax, printer, on-line accounts, office furniture, business card, letterhead, envelopes

Potential Home Business: Yes

Staff Required: No

Handicapped opportunity: Yes

Hidden Costs: On-line time, marketing required to sell such a new service

Lowdown: Companies require many kinds of information, but they often do not have the time or skills necessary to find it. Not everyone has the patience and creativity to be an effective, efficient researcher. The information explosion means that a wealth of data is available, but

sorting out what is useful to a particular project can be challenging. Increasingly this work is done through computerized databases rather than in the library. Successful on-line research often requires that you specialize in one type of information so that you can draw on your familiarity with Internet locations to produce the information your clients need quickly.

Start-up: A computer and high-speed modem will be your basic tools in this business. On-line database access and accounts can be expensive, but this cost is spread out over time. Expect to spend at least \$2,000 to start; expect to bill at \$45 per hour until you develop a strong reputation.

Bottomline: The task of finding specific data for a client can have the same appeal as solving a puzzle or tracking down the answer to a mystery. Creative thinking is often required to discover new approaches to a search or hidden sources of information. You can use your intellectual curiosity and your desire to leave no stone unturned to develop a successful on-line research business. You will be gaining satisfaction by providing information essential to the growth and development of your client businesses. Costs can be difficult to manage, however, because it is hard to predict how long a search will take. And you may not always be able to find that last piece of data. You will have to keep learning how to use new databases, and you will have to keep educating potential clients about what your service is and be able to justify what might turn out to be an expensive additional cost to their bill.

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For More Information

This information was compiled from the Business You Can Start Almanac

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1558506020/americanhomebase>

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Sharon Davis is the Mother of two girls, the owner of <http://www.2Work-At-Home.Com> and the Editor of the site's monthly ezine, America's Home. In her spare time she reminisces about what it was like to have spare time.

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