



## Ask Jack: Finding a Job

by [Jack Wilson](#)



*ACM's career consultant, Jack Wilson, answers questions from students about their forthcoming careers in computing and information technology.*

**Q: How soon should I begin applying for an academic position? Any advice on searching for them?**

**A:** I believe that the optimum lead time for an academic position is about nine months. If you are looking for a job starting in the Fall term, I would suggest beginning your search in December of the preceding year, which is also about the time that you will begin to see advertisements on upcoming faculty openings.

I would look for ads in such places as [CACM](#), [IEEE Computer](#), and [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#), as well as in the local newspapers of major metropolitan areas in which your targeted school(s) may be located.

Even if you do not see relevant ads for your targeted schools, I suggest you not let that deter you from approaching the appropriate dean or department head to express

your strong interest in contributing to the excellence of their academic and research programs. Your initiative may turn up something that has not yet been advertised.

I also suggest using every contact you have in, or even remotely connected to, the academic world to identify specific job leads or obtain referrals.

Finally, there are a number of search firms around the country who purport to specialize in higher education searches. They can be found in the current *Directory of Executive Recruiters* under the industry code I.13. Your library should have a copy in the business reference section.

**Q: Where are the best places to look for jobs advertised on the Internet?**

**A:** There are almost too many to list, and it's a very dynamic situation with new and additional sources coming online all the time. There are at least two books on the subject: *Finding a Job on the Internet* by Alfred and Emily Glossbrenner, McGraw-Hill, 1995; and *NetJobs*, Michael Wolff & Company, 1996.

The February 1996 issue of *Internet World* has a good [article on creating a hypertext resume](#), including information on employment resources. A recent issue of *Human Resource Executive* showed some statistics from Austin Knight Inc. based on a nationwide survey of 210 companies and agencies posting jobs on the Internet. They found the top services used were: [Online Career Center](#); [America Online](#); [E-Span](#); and [Contract Employment Weekly](#).

To name a few other sources: six major metropolitan newspapers have a joint web site of their ``Help Wanted'' ads that can be searched by topic area (e.g., computing) at <http://www.careerpath.com>; *ComputerWorld* has a site for career and recruitment resources at <http://www.computerworld.com>; NCS Jobline sponsors a *Career Magazine* for Information Services (IS) job information at <http://Internet-plaza.net/careermag>.

If you have some specific companies in mind, many of them have web sites where, among other things, they post job openings.

**Q: If I am made an offer by a company, do I have to accept or reject it; or can I ask for more salary and other things? I have not had much experience in**

## **negotiating.**

**A:** Unless the offer that is made to you states unequivocally that this is the one and only offer they are prepared to make (and that would be highly unusual), you may consider this as a starting point in your negotiations. I believe that negotiating is an art, and that the art of negotiating is a skill that can be developed to some extent by almost everyone through self-study or seminars.

In my experience, it has been most effective to first negotiate and settle the salary issue before bringing up any other requirements, such as starting bonus, start date, benefits, relocation, expense account, association membership, insurance, etc. There are a number and variety of things that may apply to your needs and that you may want to discuss. If so, I recommend doing so in a dignified, professional way, by asking questions such as:

- "Would it be possible to receive.....?"
- "Could we talk about...."
- "Would you consider adding .....?".

Just as I believe salary should be the first item, I believe the subject of vacation should be the last, after you have everything else settled. Vacation, important though it is, is time away from work; and at this point you should be demonstrating your interest in STARTING work, not getting away from it.