

Electronic Youth

creating the current

A project of the Workforce Planning and Development Board.
Funded by Service Canada

This report contains information that was gathered from December 2010 to May 2011. Its contents include research on how youth (15-30) are accessing and sharing labour market information. The goal being to “create the current” between youth and employers for a mutually beneficial relationship.

Acknowledgements

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Electronic Youth- Creating the Current

PROJECT OF THE WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD.
FUNDED BY SERVICE CANADA.

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1.0 Executive Summary

Electronic Youth - "Creating the Current", was funded by Service Canada and led by the Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board. The project launched in January of 2011. This report provides some insight on how the "current" can be created between youth and employers.

The project targeted youth between the ages of 15-30 from all different aspects of life. The ultimate goals were to take the pulse of youth and employers in order to identify recommendations to build this relationship and to learn how youth were accessing and sharing labour market information electronically.

The youth labour market is one that can be heavily affected by the economy and is still very much in recovery mode. In reviewing articles, it was discovered that, while other areas of the economy improve, the pain of unemployment is felt in greater numbers by youth who have trouble finding permanent employment. It is clear that, in order to correct the hard hit youth demographic, programs and supports continue to be needed, and the relationship between the youth job seeker and the employer must be improved.

A number of tools were utilized to conduct research: one-on-one interviews, discussion groups and a survey, with each providing insight into the project. Ultimately, the common theme echoed by youth was their frustration with the current labour market giving rise to the gap between the expectations of youth and those of the employers. As well, it was evident that technology has served a greater purpose in increasing the use of applications and access to opportunity. However, it has hindered many applicants due to: access, navigation and awareness.

The project itself was exploratory and the sample random. The key findings were:

1. that youth were looking more to trusted sites with an abundance of opportunities
2. that information was shared using a combination of traditional methods such as discussion with friends and modern methods such as email
3. that youth seemed to be most concerned with getting all the information available on a job posting to ensure good use of their time and
4. that youth looked to identify what advantages were offered over the short-term future for jobs that attracted their interest

The strength of the project was in the number of youth and employers that participated. The project involved over 700 individuals. This was strong, considering the challenges that were faced: broad topic, accessibility and the high level of responses concentrated in the London community. As well, the threats of electronic communication evolving and making rapid changes to the labour market are certainly possible. The project's greatest asset was the opportunity to conduct an exploratory process adjusting to follow "the current" between youth and employer.

It is without a doubt that this project has identified the need for changes to take place. A thorough list of recommendations (section 9.0) has been created based on the research that has been conducted. It is clear from these recommendations that more resources need to be available to youth. Also, youth need to ensure they are maximizing the use of electronic communication to their advantage and in a professional manner. Furthermore, youth must recognize their responsibility to stay up-to-date on the labour market, use new forms of electronic communication and know how they can use the social media advantage.

The Electronic Youth - "Creating the Current" project is as a snapshot of youth in today's labour market and identifies the barriers youth are facing. It serves to create conversation, and highlight opportunities that can help maximize their potential in the labour market. It is hoped that this project will serve as a stepping stone for further research, projects and initiatives.



2.0 Introduction, Objectives and Current Environment

2.1 Introduction

In October 2008, *Creating Work Opportunities for Youth in London CMA Strategic Plan*, was created. It identified a need for a project that would, identify the electronic connection of youth to the labour market. here in the London census metropolitan area (CMA) .”¹

Growing out of that report, a local project was developed and submitted to Service Canada for funding in the fall of 2010 and was approved to start in December 2010. The goals addressed questions such as:

- How are youth seeking employment?
- What electronic resources are they using?
- How do they share labour market information?
- How do employers use electronic sources successfully to hire employees?
- What attracts youth to a job posting?

It is important that regions are “creating the current” between employers and youth so that they can grow a workforce to maintain and grow the economy. It was Franklin Roosevelt who said, “We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.”²

2.2 Our Definition of Youth and the Labour Market

For the purpose of this study, youth were defined as individuals aged 15 to 30. This age range mirrors the definition from Service Canada. Respondents for this survey did not have to meet specific criteria in order to respond, other than being in the stipulated age range. Without specific respondent criteria, the diversity of our respondents varies in income, student status, employment status and location.

Although labour market information can be interpreted and defined differently by individuals, we defined it as information that related to job searching and job opportunities. This included historical, current or projected information on wages, job details, qualifications and working conditions.

2.3 Our Objectives

The main goal of this project was to conduct exploratory research that would help create the “current” between employer and candidate. The objectives for this research were as follows:

1. Identify the primary electronic communications tools used by youth to access the labour market
2. Identify how youth use these tools to share information about jobs
3. Identify what attracts youth to apply for a job posting
4. Identify how employers successfully use electronic communication tools to hire employees

1 “Creating Opportunities for Youth in London CMA Strategic Plan,” The London Economic Development Corporation, October 2008.

2 (Babad, 2011) (Youth Unemployment Skyrockets: OECD, 2011)



2.3 Current Environment

The global financial crisis has had a devastating effect on employment prospects across the world and the recessionary economies have affected youth specifically continuing to hamper their employment opportunities. While the Canadian economy has been able to weather the financial storm better than most countries, Canadian youth are still finding it difficult to find employment. In February 2011, the *Globe and Mail* reported that the unemployment rate in Canada was at 7.8 percent. The same *Globe and Mail* article also indicated that the youth unemployment rate in Canada was not fairing as well as the rest of the country. The youth unemployment rate in February 2011 was 14.4% and the article noted, “The jobs market for youth has stalled over the past year.”³

In discussions with youth, it was clear that their opinions of the economy and job prospects for themselves were in line with the general economic environment of Canadian youth across the country. One individual described the feelings of Canadian youth saying, “There is a lot of general frustration. I think that a lot of people feel that they are appropriately educated but their education is not yielding jobs.” Another youth added that the economic climate for young Canadians right now is “Not good. Most job postings are not geared towards entry level positions. It is difficult to go from university directly to a career. Most people are overqualified for their positions, but are working at these positions out of necessity.” It is apparent that, while Canada may be doing better than most other advanced economies, Canadian youth are still suffering greatly during these difficult economic times.

3 Michael Babad, “Can We Find Enough Jobs For Our Youth? Labour Market For Young People Stalls,” *Globe and Mail*, 4 February 2011, Final Edition.



3.0 The Future Forecast

Predictions on the future of youth employment vary greatly. The research team gathered information from youth interviews, as well as relevant literature on the subject, to discuss the direction of youth employment.

A CBC news article reported findings about youth unemployment that was recently published by the The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).⁴ The report indicated that youth unemployment has skyrocketed to 2.8 times the unemployment rate of people over the age of 25. This figure was explained to be an effect of the economic recession, which has many youth fulfilling temporary contracts and making them more vulnerable to corporate cut backs. Another issue that has increased the youth unemployment rate is that less skilled youth tend to work in areas like construction and manual labour, which have been affected by the recession.

The OECD is suggesting that government increase apprenticeship program funding and experiential learning opportunities for youth who possess lower levels of education and skills. Access to apprenticeship programs will provide at risk youth with marketable skills and add them to the pool of available workers when the economy rebounds. The article also promotes providing youth with services that will aid them in conducting their job searches.

Another major concern about the future of the labour market is the emphasis on the emerging knowledge economy. In a report prepared by the Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres, Valerie Bernard writes about growing concerns that the 'Baby Boom' generation will leave a gap in the workforce that youth will not be able to fill.⁵ Bernard predicts that the problem areas will be in the skilled trades and technical jobs, as she reports that they are already facing a shortage in qualified applicants.

Bernard's report finds hope in that youth are staying in school longer and attaining higher credentials. Bernard posits that the lack of essential skills in the youth candidates will create a barrier in filling those high positions left when the Baby Boomers retire. Essential skills are characterized as reading, writing, communication and working cooperatively in a team environment.⁶ The report also points out that management skills are not integrated into curriculums in our higher education system because they are viewed as skills that are gained solely from experience on the job. This could prove to be a disservice to youth as management skills including planning and evaluating could be taught by the education system. Employers believe that management skill sets can only be acquired after extensive job experience in a specific field.⁷ In order to fill the future labour shortage, the OECD report suggests that the education system needs to integrate management, essential and technical skills into the curriculum.

It is clear that there needs to be a focus on preparing youth for changing labour market demands. Experts in the field are suggesting that youth need to be provided with more opportunities to learn marketable skills. It is important that the recommendations are put into action so that we can prepare the youth of today for the changing labour market of the future.

4 CBC News Article. "Youth Unemployment Skyrockets: OECD". February 2011. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/story/2010/04/21/youth-unemployment-oecd.html>

5 Valerie Bernard. "Models of Economic Impact in a Skills Shortage Context." February 2003. (Bernard, 2003)

6 Bernard, 18.

7 Bernard, 19.



4.0 Literature Review

A number of articles exist that relate to youth, youth employment, youth job searching and the effects that electronic communication has on the labour market. Not only is the demand side of labour affecting changes in technology, the manner in which employers and job seekers release and seek labour market information is continuously changing because of technology.

Today, youth hardly know anything beyond internet job searching. The technology that we have opens new possibilities in internet job-searching. Job searching has become comprehensive and many positions can be found online. The following articles outline some of the literature previously written on the subject:

1. **“People Without Jobs, Jobs Without People: Ontario’s Labour Market Future”** Rick Miner. February 2010. MIINER Management Consultants.

The basis of Miner’s article was that the aging baby boomer generation is going to have near catastrophic repercussions on the labour market. He thinks that not only is this demographic shift going to leave the labour market under populated, but that skill levels will need to be heightened to address the increased need for workers in the knowledge economy. Miner gives some stark predictions stating that by 2031, 77% of our workforce will need post secondary credentials. This is a 10 percent increase from what our labour market is now with respect to workers with these credentials.

Miner warns that this demographic shift will shake the foundation of our economy and perhaps prevent economic growth if it is not corrected. The article also touched upon gender differences in the labour market noting that women consistently participate 10% less than men throughout their life span, which can be contributed to many factors including parental leave and part-time positions.

Miner presented three graphs that outline different rates of growth in the labour market. All three demonstrate alarming trends that predict a deficit of anywhere from 40,000 to 800,000 workers between now and 2031. The Human Resource and Skill Development Canada report released in 2007 stated that around 65% of jobs created over the next five year time span will require post secondary training. The reason behind the push for post secondary credentials is that the new jobs being created require analytical and interpretive skills that are gained primarily from higher education.

2. International Labour Organization. **“ILO report warns weak jobs recovery to continue through 2011 - youth employment a world priority.”** January 24, 2011. (Organization, 2011) (Kuhn, 2004) (Accessed January 29, 2011).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) report on the major economic trends since the global economic crisis began pointed specifically to an over-arching problem of youth unemployment across the globe. The report pointed to many troublesome statistics in regards to youth unemployment rates. They noted that 78 million youth were unemployed in 2010, which was an increase of approximately 5 million from pre-economic crisis levels. This placed the youth unemployment rates at 12.6% globally, which was 2.6 times higher than adult rates. In addition to these statistics there were “1.7 million fewer youth in the labour market than expected based on pre-crisis trends, and that such discouraged workers are not counted among the unemployed because they are not actively seeking work.” This was enough to spark concern from the ILO’s Director-General Juan Somavia as he stated “Youth employment is a world priority.”

3. Kuhn, P. & Skuterud, M. (2004). **Internet Job Search and Unemployment Durations.** *The American Economic Review, Volume 94*, pp. 218-232.

This related study was done by Kuhn and Skuterud (2004) entitled “Internet Job Search and Unemployment Durations” where they asked “which types of unemployed workers looked for work online and whether Internet searchers became reemployed more quickly”. They found that Internet searchers have observed characteristics that are typically associated with shorter unemployment spells, and so spend less time unemployed. Internet searchers who are more likely to have been employed prior to the current unemployment spell, were much better educated, and were more likely to be in their “prime” working ages. These characteristics, plus the fact that they are effectively using the Internet to look for work, result in a shorter unemployment spell. The study concluded that “either Internet job search is ineffective in reducing unemployment durations, or Internet job searchers are negatively selected on unobservables.”

4. Timm, D. (2010, July). **Youth Labour Market Information Plan.** Windsor, Ontario: Workforce WindsorEssex.

The *Youth Labour Market Information Plan* created for the Windsor-Essex region of Ontario explored when and how youth wanted to hear about labour market information. It also asked youth about when and how they started to think about their future career choice. The study surveyed high school students from grades nine to twelve. The intent was to gain insight in how best to communicate emerging occupations to youth. Highlights from this study include: 64% of respondents wanted to receive labour market information in grades 9 and 10; family members are most influential in a youth’s career and education decision; the internet, followed by teachers, parents and friends, and guidance counselors were the preferred sources in receiving information about emerging occupations.

4.1 Other Sources Available

For the purposes of the length of this report it was decided to include the four major sources that would best provide some insight on youth employment. However, a full review of sources is available on request through the EMO Workforce Planning and Development Board.



5.0 Research Methodology

The “Electronic Youth” project had a qualitative and quantitative phase that was carried out by a team of four part-time Research Associates and supervised by a full-time Project Coordinator. The data was collected in a period of approximately ten weeks from December 2010 to March 2011.

The qualitative phase took approximately 10 weeks to complete (interviewing began earlier and continued alongside the quantitative survey). It was an exploratory process that made use of semi-structured interviews with youth (40) and employers (14) and youth focus groups (3). The respondents were recruited through convenience sampling and were most likely to be connected to the personal social networks of the researchers in Southwestern Ontario. Other respondents were obtained through cold calling and snowballing, or referrals made by respondents who had been interviewed. Focus group discussions were made possible through the support of a youth non-profit organization in London, Ontario – Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU). Case studies were included to showcase the particular success stories of youth hired through electronic means of communication, particularly through online channels.

The quantitative phase was a web-based survey consisting of a variety of questions. The research team invited respondents to participate in the online survey through social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, e-mail and personal messaging. To supplement this method, the team also distributed the survey to libraries and schools.

5.1 The Studies Limitations

This project used a non-probability sample and can be considered more of an exploratory project in nature. Given the type of sample, statistical theory and accuracy cannot be known to any degree, nor can we determine how representative the sample is to the population. This project used a convenience sampling method in which available individuals were asked to participate in an online survey and personal contacts were used to conduct one-on-one interviews. Although it would be inappropriate to generalize the results to any degree of certainty, we can use this information for illustrative and exploratory purposes. This sampling method was most economical given the limited time and resources of this project.

Conducting an online survey presented both opportunities and limitations. The survey was publicized through multiple channels and networks including social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook, and on the ground outreach in the community. It should also be noted that a large number of the respondents were based in Southwestern Ontario. It is important to be aware of the limitations that present themselves. This includes accessibility, sampling and representative issues and incomplete or partially completed surveys that can have an effect on the final results.



6.0 Research Tools

6.1 Youth Interviews

Eleven questions were formulated to gain a broad view of youth's opinions on their connection to the labour market. These questions can be found in Appendix A. The first two questions were designed to gain knowledge about how youth have found jobs and labour market information both in the past and present. Questions three to six dealt with the use of electronic resources when searching for labour market information among youth (i.e. what websites do they use, what do they like or dislike about using these sites etc.). Questions seven through nine were intended to gain knowledge about on-line job postings. This included what attracted youth to a job posting and how they shared information about them. The final two questions were intended to gain broader knowledge of how youth believe electronic resources could be better used to learn more about labour market information and also ascertain their general feelings about the state of the economy.

Interviews helped gain insight into actions, attitudes and beliefs of a small cross-section of youth in Southwestern Ontario. The interview respondents provided valuable information for creating the questions for the electronic youth survey. The personal stories and opinions gathered from the interviews helped illustrate specific examples of experiences that surveys alone cannot provide. These interviews also provided insight into the stories of individuals who have had success applying for jobs via electronic communication.

6.2 Success Stories

Success stories of youth and organizations were gathered – 15 in total. These stories highlighted the direct effect that electronic communication has in connecting youth with jobs and the labour market. These stories provide evidence that youth are successfully using electronic communications to gain employment. See Appendix B for a list of success stories.

6.3 Employer Interviews

In order to “create the current,” the research team spoke to employers about youth employment. The team was able to explore how to better connect youth with potential employers and to gather information that may help youth in their job search. As a result of the employer interviews, the research team also developed guidelines for the use of electronic communications.

Fourteen employers with a variety of backgrounds and experiences were interviewed. Many were consulted because of their experience with youth or knowledge in the area of human resources. All employers noted the use of online resources when posting positions, but for many the main source for filling positions was networking and sharing information with community members.

Most employers have indicated that the majority of positions filled are based on location and the use of existing job postings as “skeletons” when seeking new employees. Also, the research team found that most employers recognized a shift in the use of electronic communication. This meant that employers were paying attention to the online presence of individuals and this reached far beyond just “googling” a potential employee. Rather, it was a potential employee taking an active role in following a company, its actions and how the potential employee could network with them. As one employer noted, “Social media is a movement. Social media puts you out professionally and allows you to make connections. It allows people to market themselves for others to see.”

Employers noted that when choosing to use online resources, targeted their talent pool is important. Audiences are important. Their particular industry or sector can be one of the most important factors when determining where an online posting will be placed. It seemed that, while generic job search engines are popular, many companies chose to post where candidates with proper skill sets were known to exist. While much is changing in terms of employment

for youth, employers did emphasize a few things. First, youth need to be aware of their online presence in terms of professionalism and the effect it could have on an individual's future career. Second, youth need to carefully adhere to job postings in their full form and respond accordingly. Finally, youth cannot take the process personally.

Appendix C has a list of do's and don'ts from employers based on our interviews. As well, employers noted some preferred sites which can also be found in this Appendix. Ultimately, for employers, job posting decisions are driven by location, past success and the ability to reach a wide range of candidates.

6.4 Discussion Groups

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) is a service in London, Ontario that provides programs to youth in the community to help them achieve their potential. In total we conducted three separate discussion groups with two of the programs offered to youth through YOU.

The first group we spoke with was Youth Endeavouring for Success (YES). This particular program runs for two weeks and includes a series of workshops on resume writing, interviewing skills and completing job specific certifications. The instructor introduced the youth in the YES program to electronic resources to aid in their job searches.

The second focus group involved the Skills, Practice and Relationship Knowledge (SPARK) project which is a longer and more intensive program offered by YOU. This project runs for twelve weeks and focuses on practical employability skills as well as creating and maintaining relationships. The SPARK program was comprised of youth who were older than the YES group and in comparison had more personal experiences in the labour market.

Overall, the three discussion groups provided interesting data for our final analysis. The results can be classified into themes that were present throughout the process with all three groups. Those themes are as follows:

Accessibility

The primary reason youth participate in either of the programs at YOU is because they are both out of school and work, and are facing barriers to employment. It was important for our research that we include vulnerable groups to explore challenges that at risk youth face when searching for jobs.

A major concern voiced by many of the youth in our discussion groups was accessibility to the internet. The unique financial constraints these youth faced prevented many from having access to the internet at home. This fact resulted in the youth having to travel to public libraries or employment centres to search for jobs and apply online. Two additional complications to the inaccessibility of the internet from home was coordinating travel to public libraries and employment centres and limited hours of availability. Accessibility can be a concern and a barrier for youth in our community in regards to using electronic resources to connect to the labour market.

Education

The first question asked in each discussion group was which sites youth used when searching for a job. In every discussion group one of the top three answers was Kijiji which is an online classified website. This site was favoured by youth because the postings did not have strict educational requirements. For this reason the youth were not as comfortable using the government job bank or sites such as Monster and Workopolis.

This real or perceived lack of education was a barrier to these youth when deciding which electronic resources to use for job searching. Part of the YES and SPARK programs teach youth to market their skills and abilities and provide certification opportunities which will help them meet standards listed in job postings.

Awareness

During the discussion we also asked youth how they used social media websites like Facebook and Twitter. We were interested in finding out if youth used social media in their job search or if they were interested in learning how to use social media for finding employment. All three of the discussion groups communicated a lack of awareness that social media could be used in professional job searches. There was hesitation in using a private Facebook account for professional purposes. When we probed the group about the website LinkedIn, which was created as a professional social networking site, only three of the youth were familiar with the site. These three youth went on to explain that they were familiar with the site because LinkedIn specifically was a topic of discussion by their instructor in class the previous day.

It is clear that these youth are interested in using a social networking site to make professional connections. There is a lack of awareness with youth in regards to the possible uses of social media in their job search as well as networking. All of the youth that participated in our discussion groups showed interest in learning how to use social media in their job searches and finding labour market information.

Economy

The final portion of all the personal interviews and discussion groups was an open ended question about the current economy. The youth communicated cautious optimism in the discussion about the future of the economy and labour market. They considered the workshops they were participating in as a good step in the right direction in honing their skills and abilities. These employability workshops gave the youth hope that they could be more competitive in the job market.

One concern of all groups was that there is heavy competition in the labour market, and they do not feel equipped to compete without a high school education. The possibility of post-secondary education was a goal for the youth and they seemed to be interested in trade and service industry training. This was an interesting finding as the youth perceived the booming industries being hospitality, food and retail services.

6.5 Survey

Youth are concerned about future employment opportunities while employers want to hire the right person for the job. Clearly, a gap exists between an employer's and a young job-seeker's job expectations.

The development and distribution of an online survey was one of the main research components of this project. It can be found attached as Appendix A. The survey was meant to gain the pulse of youth about their perceptions of the labour market and their experiences in job searching. The direct deliverables are addressed later in this report but below you find a synopsis of the surveys results:

- In order to know which sources youth refer to for labour market information, they were asked, "Which sources do you use most often when looking for job postings and job trends?" The overwhelming response are government-sponsored job sites (jobbank.gc.ca – 43.3%; government jobsites – 41.4%), the most probable reason is that these are known to be "trusted sources."
- Privately operated online job boards such as Workopolis (32.4%), Monster (29.6%) and Kijiji (27.7%) also rank high. Such sites have actively been advertising as well, which may also increase youth awareness of such tools. Company websites are big resources as some youth use company-specific sites in their job search. This is possibly why company reputation is also a factor in their decision to apply (see top 4 sources section below).

- Job postings such as the sites above are generally accessible to anyone who has access to the Internet. Applying online would typically require user registration. The data supplied by the user is also used by the computer to pull other related job matches and alert the applicant at the end of one application or e-mail it to the users (21.9%) as they come along.
- The computer matches job postings based on the information disclosed by applicants and keeps them continuously engaged in their job search. Online school job boards (21.9%), though access is usually limited to students and alumni are also top job resources.
- To gain an understanding of what youth found beneficial in online job searching, we asked them, "Please rate the importance of the following factors when you are using online resources in your job search (rate all that apply)?" Fifty-four percent ranked "organized" as a very important attribute, followed by around 48% that named "searchable" and "location" as very important.
- It is because the internet makes it possible to tailor searches according to preferences including job title, status and location; job seekers have the power to easily filter the job opportunities that are available to them rather than to manually sort through physical job postings. Not surprisingly, "accessible," (44.8%) "convenient," (42.3%) and "quick" (40%) are found to be important factors.
- The internet is a great resource; however, it also causes some perils in terms of the legitimacy and reliability of some job postings. A major concern is inaccurate and incomplete information (55.9%), which for some employers may be intentional as they are limited in the information they are allowed to advertise. Unfortunately, it could also be a telling sign of an internet scam.
- Also, the impersonal process (43.7%) is a setback for online users as they are limited to what they can do to market themselves to employers. For example, providing a good first impression as they hand in their resumes to employers in walk-ins is something that cannot be done online.

What is it that you dislike about these resources (select all that apply)?

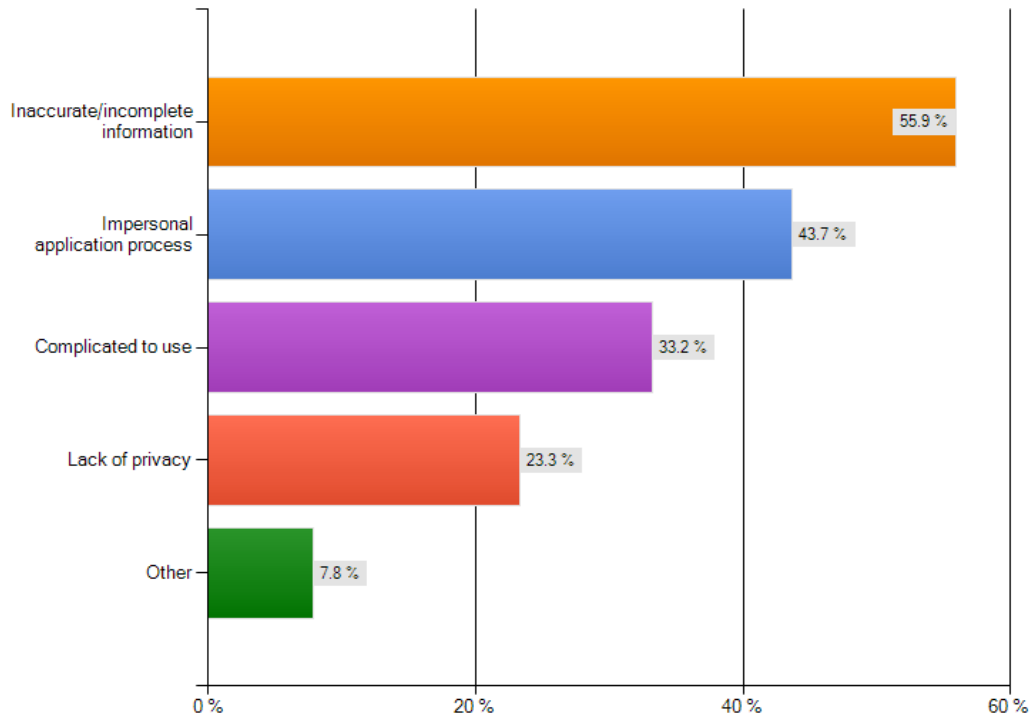


FIGURE 1 DISLIKES ABOUT JOB SEARCHING ONLINE

- In order to find out what youth find most difficult when looking for jobs, we asked, “As a youth looking for work, what do you think is the biggest barrier in your job search?” 40.3% listed lack of experience as the main obstacle in their job search. This is not surprising especially in a competitive labour market where employers seek skills acquired through experience in which youth obviously are clearly disadvantaged in.
- 28.8% said that they were not seeing enough jobs available, which is a problem rooted in structural factors. During the recession, the demand for youth labor is most affected.

As a youth looking for work, what do you think is the biggest barrier in your job search (please choose one)?

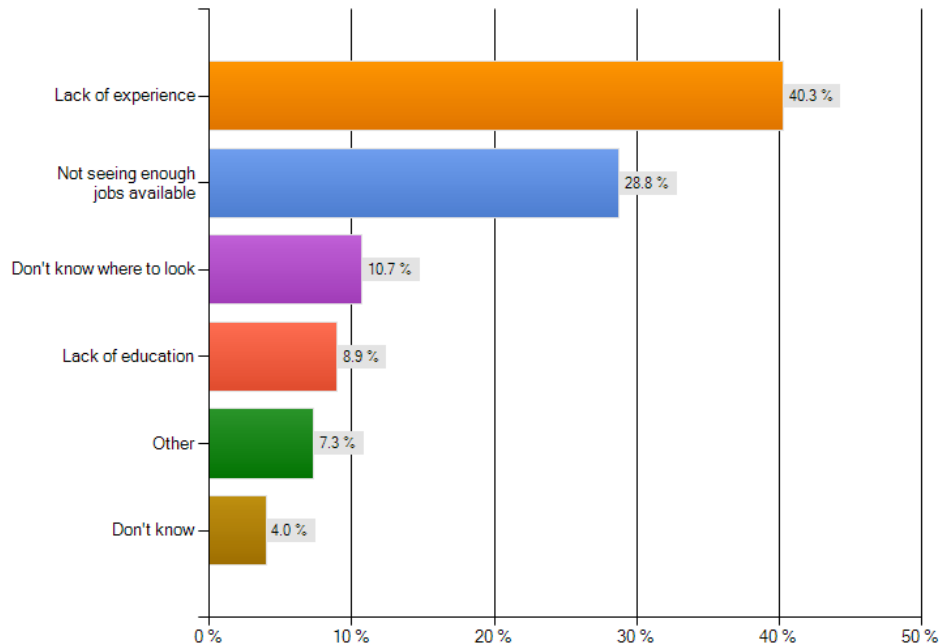


FIGURE 2 YOUTH BIGGEST BARRIER IN JOB SEARCH

- E-mail (81.3%) is without question the most popular tool for communicating labour market information. It is worth noting that informal communication through phone calls (43.1%), text messaging (34%), personal messaging (Facebook chat-23.5%; instant messaging-15.8%; Blackberry messenger-11.8%) are also heavily used for sharing information which is no surprise given how “wired” or “electronically connected” youth are today.
- Even as youth identify “face to face interaction” (48.5%) as the second most popular top way to share information, there is still some sort of electronic reference made to the internet when they research about the company or learn more about the job opening they have been told about (see top 5 ways youth share job information below).
- More than half of the youth (58.7%) surveyed have utilized social media channels in their job search. Facebook and Twitter are generally seen as social and recreational and inappropriate for the purposes of job searching.
- LinkedIn is less popular than other social networking sites and many are unaware of how to utilize this tool. Many are discourage to use LinkedIn due to its target to ‘professionals.’
- Although social media is not currently a major job search tool today, it has brought with it a potential new way for youth to search for jobs. It could be an emerging channel because of its efficient features that may help contour the future of job searching in today’s information age.

Have you ever used social media (such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn) in your job search?

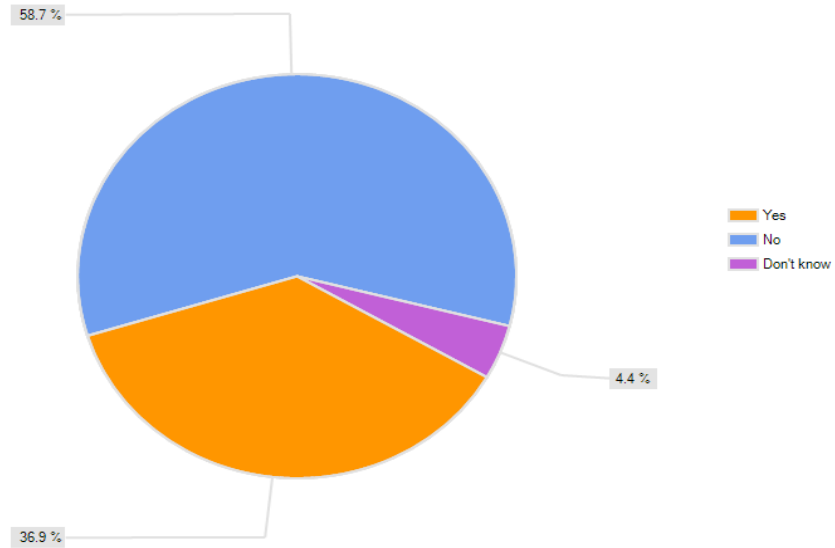


FIGURE 3 YOUTH AND SOCIAL MEDIA JOB SEARCHING

For a copy of the survey results, please contact the Workforce Planning and Development Board.



7.0 Findings

7.1 Four Primary Electronic Communication Tools (Figure 4)

Youth are accessing job opportunities and labour market information in a number of ways through the use of electronic communication tools and resources.

The four (4) primary electronic communication resources categorized from the research:

1. Government Websites/ Online Job Boards

Youth are visiting websites operated directly by government organizations such as Service Canada's Job Bank (jobbank.gc.ca), the Ontario Public Service (gojobs.gov.on.ca) or Federal Public Service (jobs.gc.ca) job boards. 43.3% of respondents chose government websites/online job boards as their most often used resource. This can be attributed to the high credibility given to government resources as trustworthy and accurate. Job opportunities and labour market information posted by government resources often include detailed information that youth are seeking. For example, most government websites and job boards provide detailed job postings that include wage rate, job description, contract term and qualifications.

2. Non-government Websites and Job Boards

Non-government websites and job boards such as workopolis.ca, monster.ca and kijiji.ca are popular resources among youth. These websites are useful because they provide a variety of job postings that range in wage rate and required experience. A major drawback cited with these websites is the hesitation to apply for jobs because of the lack of information or fraudulent job postings. Youth have to become savvy job searchers in order to spot suspicious job postings that may not be legitimate.

3. Company Specific Websites

Youth are directly visiting company specific websites to apply for jobs and/or get more information about opportunities. A lot of organizations are moving towards application processes directly on their website. This involves the candidate filling out information directly on company specific websites and submitting their resume through this system. The research team also believes that youth are going to specific company websites because they also provide credible information about the job posting or opportunity.

4. School Websites and Online Job Boards

Youth are using online job boards and websites operated by their educational institutions and program departments. Although this is not as popular as the other three listed above, school websites and job boards continue to grow as a popular resource. Many colleges and universities are introducing and expanding their career development services and complimenting them with online resources for students.

Which resources do you use MOST often when looking for job postings and job trends (labour market information)?

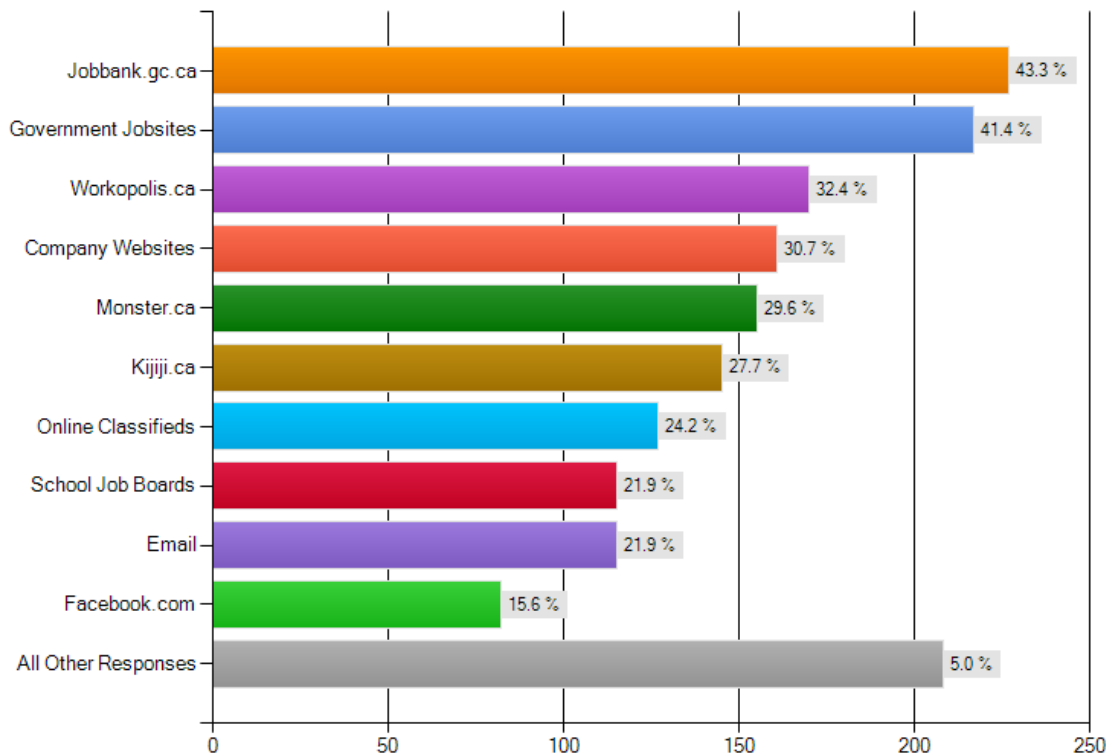


FIGURE 4 RESOURCES USED BY YOUTH

7.2 Top 5 ways Youth Share Information About Jobs (Figure 5)

The Electronic Youth Survey indicated that the top five ways in which youth share and receive information about job postings and job trends are:

1. Emails
2. Face-to-face interaction
3. Phone calls
4. Texting
5. Facebook chat

How do you share and receive information about job postings and job trends (labour market information) (choose all that apply)?

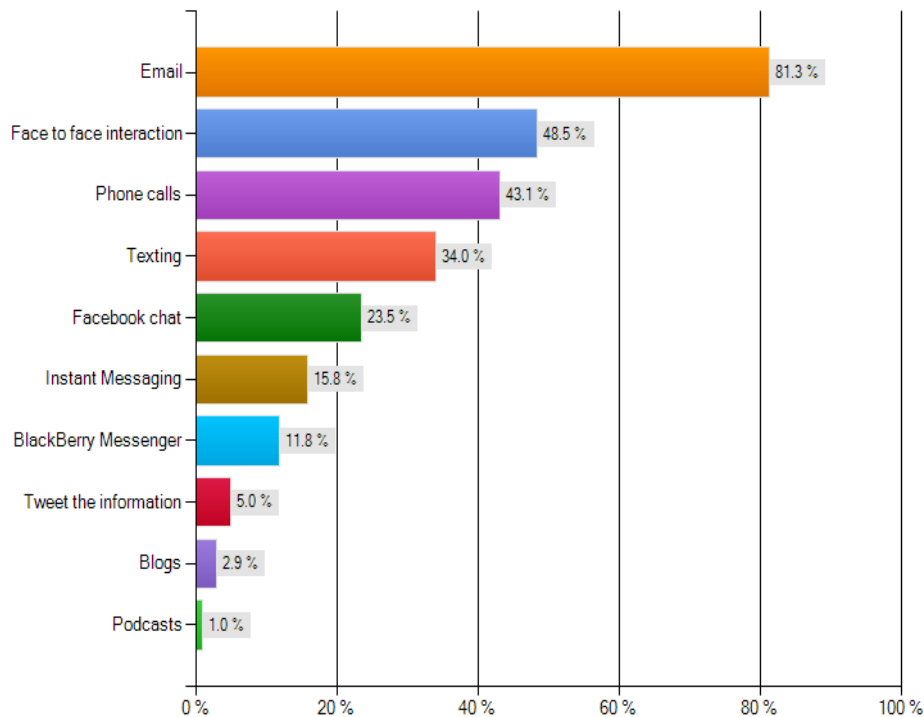


FIGURE 5 HOW YOUTH SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT JOBS

Figure 5 clearly indicates that emailing is the dominant form of communicating job related information as 81.3% of survey respondents indicated that they used email to share information about jobs and labour market information with others. The study’s personal interviews with youth also indicated that e-mailing was the most common tool used by youth with one interviewee summing up the advantages of e-mailing employment information saying that, “emailing is the easiest and most professional way.”

The electronic youth survey also indicates that face-to-face interaction is still a widely used method of sharing job information among youth, as 48.5% of respondents indicated that they used this method. These statistics are in line with one of the over-arching themes of this project: electronic communication is a great tool to use when searching for and sharing labour market information, but it cannot be a substitute for personal interaction. Rather, it must be used in conjunction with personal interaction. Youth interviews also indicated that the sharing of job information does occur during the course of regular face-to-face interactions such as casual conversations with friends or co-workers.

The third and fourth most common ways that youth share and receive information about job postings and job trends are phone calls and text messaging, with 43.1% and 34% of respondents indicating that they used these tools. These statistics are to be expected as a large majority of young Canadians are connected through their personal mobile devices.

The fifth most common way that youth share and receive information about job postings and job trends was somewhat more surprising. 23.5% of respondents to the electronic youth survey indicated that Facebook chat was a way in which they shared labour market information. The survey indicated that social media was not a top way in which youth accessed labour market information, but it is a way in which they are sharing labour market information. What

is clear is that while social media is not trusted as a reliable way to search for jobs, it is believed to be an effective way to relay information in general. This may be attributed to many sites having the option of instantly sharing links through Facebook and that the networks that are formed through Facebook are more social in nature and are not job or career oriented.

When reviewing the top five ways in which youth share and receive information about job postings and job trends, it is apparent that electronic communication is very important. What should also be noted is that with the proliferation in the use of smart-phones, youth will be able to email, phone, text, or chat on facebook anytime and anywhere. It is important for companies to be accessible in these ways and provide potential employees ways to share information through all of these avenues and make it easy for electronic interaction to occur.

7.3 Identify 10 Key Attractions for Youth to a Job Posting (Figure 6)

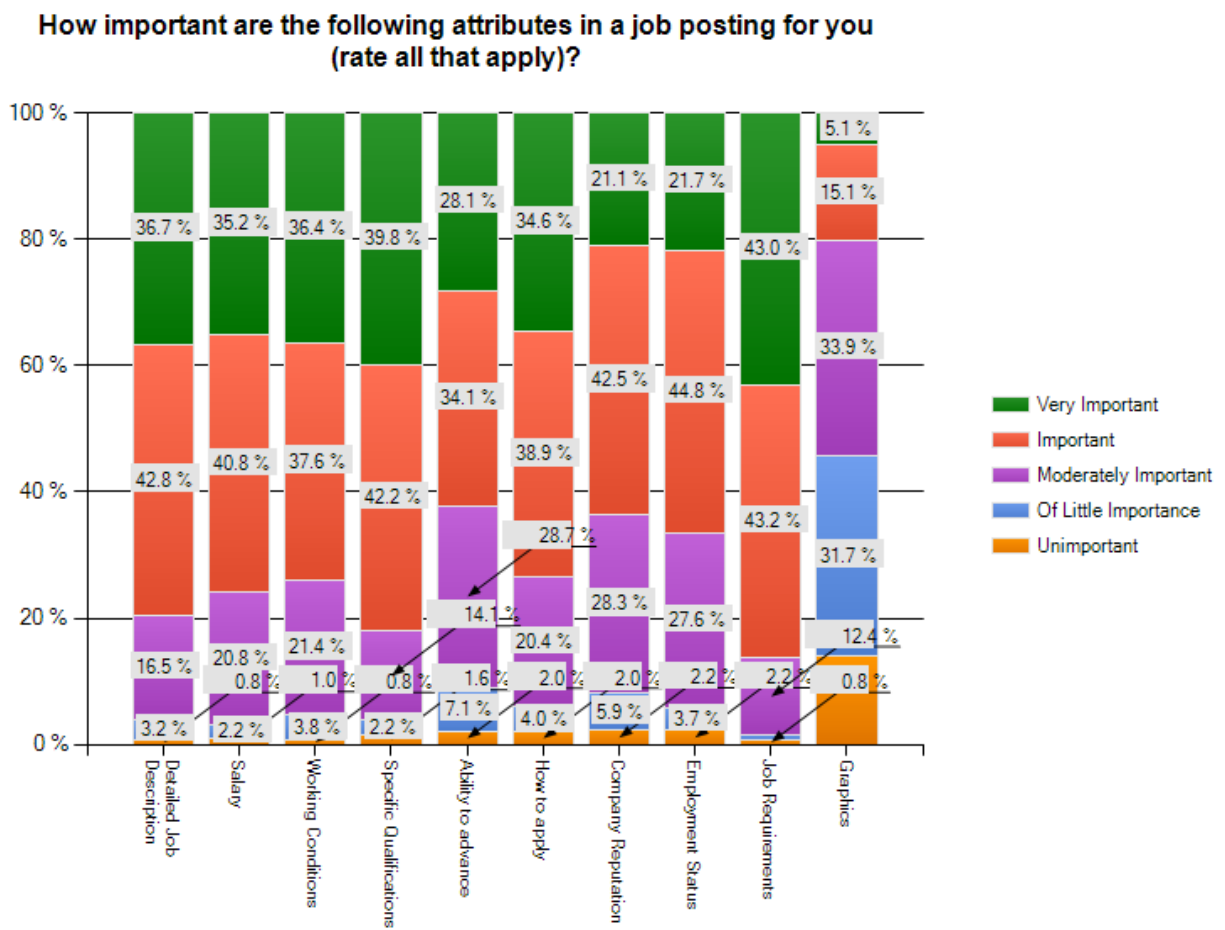


FIGURE 6 A BREAKDOWN OF THE ATTRactions TO A JOB POSTING

JOB DESCRIPTION

“It could be a turn down as what was advertised was not really reflective of the job details.” – Respondent, Youth Interview

A **detailed job description** included in a job posting is viewed as very important by an overwhelming 46.7% of youth job seekers surveyed. The internet has a wealth of information and its accuracy is also contingent on the reliability of the source. Perhaps this is a reason why government-sponsored job sites are the most frequently referenced job source as it provides fairly comprehensive and accurate information about job qualifications, requirements and duties. Generally, young job seekers today are an educated workforce who form decisions based on the wealth of information that is made available to them. A concise job title supported by a clear job description is helpful in attracting a targeted workforce and hopefully, retaining them as well by stating expectations at the start – through informative and accurate job postings.

JOB QUALIFICATION/REQUIREMENTS

“I personally do not have a license or a car so if that is a requirement I am probably not going to apply to that. A lot of places overlook that depending on the candidate but I just feel that it is one of the things that you are putting on your site and I do not have that, for a lot of sales job it involves a lot of travel and I do not have that. That is the only reason why I would not apply to it.” – Respondent, Youth Interview

Closely related are details about **specific job qualifications** (38.8%) **and requirements** (43.0%). These were considered as very important information because it provides the most crucial basis for employment; it screens the targeted workforce. Employers disclose information about who they need for the job and job seekers gauge themselves as to whether they meet the employer’s qualifications and job requirements. Job qualification details also educate the workforce on the required skills and education for that particular role, field or industry. Detailed job requirements also make it possible for job seekers to select particular openings in the job market tailored for their needs and credentials – hours (i.e. required hours to work), status (i.e. open to temporary placement), location (i.e. access to public transportation) and experience (i.e. new worker).

LOCATION

“I want... for it to be in the right location... Somewhere in the main city where things are happening I suppose” – Respondent, Youth Interview

Location has also been mentioned a major consideration in applying. Youth tend to be attracted to locations in urban areas, close to school or accessible by public transportation. This is understandable as youth generally tend to be less mobile and may not have a dependable form of transportation, limited by money that goes into fare or constrained by the distance they could travel due to school commitments. In addition, the attraction offered by the city life life that grabs the interest of younger workers.

EXPERIENCE/POSSIBILITY TO ADVANCE

“For me, it would have to be something that would further me. It will have to be an opportunity to grow within the job position. It must talk about an opportunity and it is not just a job that is 9-5. It has to be something that enhances my future and gives me the ability to learn and help me grow as a person.” – Respondent, Youth Interview

Youth are attracted to **jobs that de-emphasize the need for experience and are more open to taking youth as work trainees**. The learning opportunity and the possibility to advance (28.2% very important; 34.1% important) are regarded as important because youth are able to see beyond the job opportunity itself. Many youth job seekers feel disadvantaged in the labour market where seniority and advanced skills are preferred over the less educated and inexperienced workers. Youth strategize by staying in school and getting the education needed to participate in today’s highly competitive job market. The biggest hurdle is finding those opportunities that would give them the experience highly valued by employers and develop the skills they could utilize later in their chosen career. In most of the online job postings, youth compete and are pitted against adult job seekers:

WAGES


One of the major changes as a result of posting job opportunities online is that job seekers are presented or can easily search for information. Some employers provide information about wages, employment terms and work environment in their online job postings, which is appreciated by job seekers as it immediately filters their options and interests:

“I like how they tell you how much you are gonna get paid so at least you know what you are starting at. If you get a job, you could kind of budget your way around that and you do not have to ask your employer how much you are gonna get paid, you already know.” – Respondent, Youth Interview

Not surprisingly wages are a big consideration for many job seekers. 35.2% ranked wage as very important include in a job posting however this view is not typically shared by employers. Information about wages or even just salary ranges for a particular role; field or industry also educates job seekers about the demands of the labour market. It could influence their ability to negotiate their salary or upgrading/changing careers all together. Not surprisingly too, youth are not as interested in benefits especially because they are typically contracted for temporary, part-time work; wages more than benefits provide immediate solutions to their short-term needs for living expenses.

WORKING CONDITIONS

“It could be a smaller company that is paying a little less but if they are a more relaxed atmosphere and they are going to give me the freedom to do what I need to do to make some sales, sure, why not?” – Respondent, Youth Interview



Working conditions are also considered very important by about 36.4% of youth job seekers surveyed. The work environment and work culture has a big impact on job loyalty and employee satisfaction. Employers who supply such information on job postings could effectively be minimizing risks of hiring the wrong worker. When job seekers are aware of the environment that a workplace offers and want to be part of that culture because it gives them a stronger incentive to apply. Youth exhibited desire to stay in places where they find their work enjoyable and where they have good relationships with people they work with.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

“I like when it lists if it is full-time, part-time or contract, salary, start date and end date, possibility for renewal of contract...” – Respondent, Youth Interview

About 44.8% of the of the youth survey ranked **employment status** as important. Many young job seekers would like to know the terms of employment for that particular job – full-time/part-time, temporary, contract, casual or permanent. For young job seekers still seeking to complete their education, flexibility in hours is a big consideration. For the older youth however, job stability is more important. While many employers only offer temporary, contract or casual work during these current economic times offering the information about employment terms gives job seekers the necessary information needed to determine a whether such arrangement fits their short-term career goals or not.

COMPANY REPUTATION

“It matters to me how the company is viewed by society, I do not want to work for a company that is controversial.” – Respondent, Focus Group

About 42.5% of the surveyed youth job seekers ranked **company reputation** as an important factor in their decision to apply for a job posting. A company that is respected by the community and well-regarded by peers and family makes it more likely for youth to apply. Who they are working have implications on their social identities.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

“I do not like it when they do not give you many details and it is vague and it is one of those staffing agencies so you do not know how much money, or what company you may be working for, The more information, the better and more likely I will apply. It is a very time consuming to apply for jobs, so when it is a temp agency, I just cross them off my list. I have had bad experiences with them, so I do not even bother.” – Respondent, Youth Interview

Detailed instructions about **application procedures** were ranked as important by 38.9% of the youth job seekers surveyed. Such information mitigates concerns about the reliability of the job ad. While many employers would avoid posting contact numbers to prevent being inundated with phone calls, serious job seekers would take the time to contact employers to gain more information about the job and gauge their interest and fit to the position.

7.4 Unexpected Findings

The most unexpected result from the survey was the response to the question about sharing labour market information. The majority of respondents, 44.9% have not shared any labour market information online in the past six months. This indicates that either youth are not accessing labour market information or that sharing the information is difficult.

Almost all of the questions relating to social media and job searching provided unexpected results from our survey. The first question asked youth if they had ever used social media in their job search. Of the respondents, 58.7% answered that they do not use social media in job searching. The research team was expecting a higher response to this question considering how many youth use social media for personal use. The following question in the survey probed youth about why they have not used social media in their job searches. The majority, 40.9% responded that they have social media accounts but were unaware that they could be used to conduct a job search. This was a trend in our research that while youth had accounts with sites like Facebook and Twitter, they did not know it could be used to find employment or labour market information. Another 15.3% were anxious about using these sites for job searching due to privacy concerns, another trend in the team's research.



8.0 SCOT Analysis

Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

8.1 Strengths

The strengths of this project are many when considering the exploratory nature and lack of previous literature in dealing with this subject matter. One of the greatest strengths of this project is the number of individuals we were able to work with in gathering information for our research. The amount of people and the quality of answers to our inquiries is a testament to the value that this research can provide.

The sampling of individuals who participated in this project were also representative of a cross-section of people including age, education and socioeconomic status, and varied with success and opinions on the efficiency of using electronic sources to search for labour market information. This created well rounded research that touched upon the problems of many sub-groups of youth in the region. The deliverables for this project have all been documented and thoroughly researched in accordance with the project's mandate.

Reaching out to youth in the community and starting the discussion about job prospects and the economy will get them thinking on how to better position themselves in the labour market. Additionally, speaking with employers and gaining an understanding of how they search for job candidates can help us create the current between youth and employers.

8.2 Challenges

The first challenge to this project was defining our terms properly so that the research team could formulate accurate results. Labour market information has a wide range of meanings but for the purpose of this study the team defined it as information sought through electronic communication such as wages, employment, skills, education and other aspects related to the workforce beyond the opportunity itself. Creating the definition was a challenging task because the subject is so vast. The definition also had to be easily explained to all youth who participated in this project.

By far the biggest challenge that the research team faced was gathering an unbiased sample for our research. The major issues related to our ability to distribute the survey to a representative sample within the community. To be able to gather a representative sample the team would have to account for every group of youth in our community. Due to our focus on electronic means the research team had a high possibility of missing the youth segment that did not have access to the internet or a personal computer. In addition to that potential barrier the team also faced geographical boundaries in sharing the survey.

The first demographic challenge in distributing the survey was being limited to the London community. We were able to make connections to other communities in Southwestern Ontario such as Sarnia, Windsor and Kitchener-Waterloo which added an important dimension to our survey results. However, the first question in the survey which asks what city or county the participant lives in was misread by participants and many answered Canada thinking it was asking which country they lived in. This was an obstacle in analyzing results because it misrepresented our sample as Canada wide when the team believes the results came primarily from Southwestern Ontario.

It was a challenge for the team to overcome the problem of accessibility in the research project. The bulk of the data comes from the online survey that was created and distributed electronically. It was a challenge to reach the youth populations that did not have access to the internet. It was important for the research team to distribute the survey to the youth groups at Y.O.U. and at the high school where the internet is accessible to all participants and students.

8.3 Opportunities

The “Electronic Youth” project is only exploratory and our findings from this project would hopefully open other areas of research. The project has also gathered more interest from youth in their 20’s than those in their teens. Obviously, career goals and job search channels would significantly differ between one that has finished university education and one that is in high school. The results might be worth comparing.

It would also be interesting to study immigrant youth. As newcomers, they might be part of the “disconnected” members of society. It might be worth studying how they use the internet to connect to certain aspects of the receiving society - how it is aiding them to find employment and ultimately helping youth become more integrated with society.

A more in-depth study of the use of social media for job-searching may also be interesting. At the moment, youth are more inclined to using the popular online job boards and company websites. And yet, Twitter shows no sign of slowing down and it is also being used to communicate labour market information. Youth are also increasingly becoming more aware of using “back door channels” such as LinkedIn social networking to supplement applications to online job postings. Although we have come across such findings, this was not a focus of our study. It would be worth knowing how job searching would continuously evolve and how social media fits into this picture.

The “Electronic Youth” project could have potentially tapped into a larger sample size if schools and universities had permitted a mass email providing a link to our online survey. However, due to a lengthy approval process, we were unable to distribute the survey through these channels.

Youth access the internet to job search at home by an overwhelming statistic. A smaller proportion accesses internet for job searching at school. Moreover, youth are cited “not knowing where to look” as another barrier to employment. Therefore, it might be helpful to conduct job search lessons in schools to inform youth about the labour market.

8.4 Threats

Technology over the past decade has been rapidly evolving. The rise of cell phones and smart phones has grown exponentially among the youth demographic. The introduction of texting on cell phones has revolutionized the way young people communicate with each other. Texting has become overly popular among young adults. According to a United States study by the Nielsen Company, texting has become the centre piece of mobile teen behaviour. The average teen sends 3,339 texts per month, averaging to more than six texts per hour. For teens aged 13 to 17, female teens send an average 4,050 texts per month while male teens send an average of 2,539 texts per month. Other age groups don’t come close to this level of texting. The average 18-24 year-old sends only 1,650 texts per month. The average drops further with other age groups⁸

Companies are consistently introducing new and innovative products that keep changing the way youth connect with each other and to information. The popularity of texting has just only recently emerged and its popularity has grown drastically. As new gadgets are introduced, it becomes difficult to measure the overall impact these tools have in how youth access job opportunities and labour market information.

8 http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/u-s-teen-mobile-report-calling-yesterday-texting-today-using-apps-tomorrow/



9.0 Recommendations

“Creating the Current”

Based on the research, the Project Coordinator and Research Associates make the following recommendations:

Advice to advance

It is important that youth are provided with guidance in their job search. While educators, parents and friends can be helpful in assisting youth, those with experience and knowledge in the field can provide the best advice to advance. For example, Service Canada Centre for Youth Employment has launched a year round pilot program geared towards youth. They are creating opportunities reaching out to employers to see if employment specifically for youth is available. Many youth have indicated through the survey that they think experience is the main thing hindering them from finding a job. This could very well be a solution to find that experience for youth. It is recommended that this type of service remains in place.

Sharing is not just elementary

It would be fair to say that most youth at some point will conduct a job search. The ability to search for employment online has made it easier for youth to find opportunities that exist for them. Our survey showed that when youth do share information about jobs, it most commonly is done by e-mail. It is possible that this occurs because many job postings offer an “email this to a friend” option. By allowing a person to share it on their personal website, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other sites, it is likely to be seen by those who are well suited for the position.

It is recommended that employers, or job sharing sites, consider offering not just the email share option, but the option to share and post on social media outlets.

We can't just grow up, we have to step up

The reality of growing up can be tough these days. With a difficult economy, high costs of education and overwhelming technology, the world can be a confusing place. However, it is time to rise to the challenge because advantages exist for youth compared to other generations. It seems that through individual consultations with youth, many are unaware of their worth and what is available in the labour market. Teaching youth about the ‘so what’ of labour market information and what it actually means will give them a better idea to help make informed career decisions. They will be better equipped to find out what industries are on the rise, where are the jobs going to be in five years, how they can diversify themselves and what exact qualifications they need. It is recommended that youth prepare themselves because their first career is most likely not going to be their last.

Technology can't tuck you in at night

The research suggests that electronic communication is systematically changing the way that individuals search for jobs. However, electronic communication will only get you so far. Consultation with employers, community members and many other individuals conveyed that electronic communication is just a part of the process. It will allow you to follow an organization, learn about that organization and find out where to seek them out. Technology is only one in a number of steps through the process. Youth must realize that while using electronic communication resources are important, networking and face to face interaction is still an integral part of seeking employment. It is recommended that youth use both electronic and face-to-face interaction (networking) when seeking employment.

It pays to be social

It is without a doubt that most youth use or are aware of the existence of social media. However, it seems that many are unable to tap into its advantage for job searching. Only about one third know that you can use social media to gather labour market information. This valuable resource may be used not just to find jobs but to find organizations. Social media usage by employers has rapidly increased on both a recruiting and marketing basis. Employers are finding innovative new recruitment practices in how they use social media to scout new talent and find potential candidates who may be already following them on Twitter and Facebook. It is recommended that youth become better educated on the use of social media and how it can be used to their advantage in the current job market.

Two sides to transparency

When “creating the current,” one way to get the flow going may be looking to the job posting. In the research, it appears to be the area in which employer and candidate differ greatly. Several employers indicated that they want candidates who fit positions and the solution may be in the transparency from both sides. To create this transparency youth have indicated that specific qualifications, detailed job description and job requirements are important when considering a job posting. Conversely, youth transparency is created when appropriate information is given when applying, having read and understood the skills needed and ensuring they meet all requirements. It is recommended that employers clearly state their needs for employees in their postings and that youth adhere to them to the best of their ability.

If you teach a man to fish

From the very beginning of our research, employers and educators highlighted the importance of opportunities that give work experience. Youth said in our survey that the number one thing they think is hindering them from getting a job is work experience. By providing placements, coops and apprenticeships, it can break down the barrier in finding a career. However, it also provides a number of other benefits: a chance to try out a career, network and get involved in the community. The recommendation is that more opportunities of this kind need to be provided or greater awareness through avenues like social media needs to be conducted.

Loyalty is a two way street

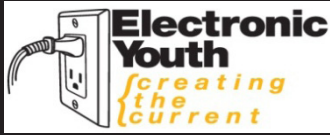
There is no doubt that many youth will change jobs a few times throughout their professional career. This raises the question of loyalty. Many employers expressed concern that youth were unaware of this important characteristic and few youth spoke about it. That being said, loyalty is not something that is guaranteed, however; it needs to be shown by both employee and employer. Employers will invest in youth but have to understand that they may take opportunities that will help them reach their goals. Loyalty is an important characteristic but it is also not something you can always put a time frame on. It is recommended that youth show commitment by acting professionally, working hard and taking initiative.

Educating to work, working to educate

If emerging technology has taught us one thing, it is that things change quickly. Many youth spend some time getting post-secondary education. However, it is recommended that education does not stop there. Employers must be aware of the need to provide education in the office. This is not just job training but further professional development that extends beyond the workplace. These additional skills can add to the creativity of the company but also get youth interest in a company. Reputation is noted as important to youth and many commented on the corporate culture. It can therefore be recommended that youth and employers ensure continuous learning once they have entered into an employee-employer relationship.

Elders and educators

It is apparent that most today’s youth have been brought up with electronic communications. The survey revealed that a majority of youth either access their job information from home or at school. Youth are being bombarded in this “age of information.” It may be important then for employers to focus marketing or employment assistant services to market towards parents and educators. Not to take the burden off youth, but rather, to help ensure they get qualified candidates. It is recommended that employers market employment opportunities for youth to educational institutions.



10.0 Conclusions

Electronic Youth - "Creating the Current" went beyond its original objective of examining how youth are connecting to the labour market. The project recognized that a systematic change is taking place in how employers and job seekers look at the labour market. It is without a doubt that this project has displayed electronic communications' rippling effect on youth employment. Youth have been and continue to be, one of the hardest hit age groups during our recent economic recession. As well, they are taking the longest period to recover. It can be concluded, by the sources consulted, that the future employment road for youth is uncertain.

Interviews, discussion groups and a survey were the main sources of information. The interviews immediately indicated a difference between youth and employers about expectations for the current labour market. The discussion groups provided an open discussion on the youth labour market that produced themes based on comments made by youth. The survey clearly defined the feelings of youth, mainly frustration, with the labour market and how it operates. As well, and most importantly, identified the objectives that were created for this project.

Youth want to use sites they can trust, are clear, but also list jobs in great numbers. Youth share jobs by sending something that is instant but are still able to recognize the importance of a face-to-face conversation. Youth want a clear look at what employment opportunities are through postings and that align with where they are (in terms of location and expenses) and who they want to be in the future.

The strength of the project was in its numbers, but this was also its challenge. Over 700 individuals were involved in some way in this project. However, this creates a challenge due to the large age range and limited resources. An opportunity arises from this project as future research can be conducted in areas such as: individual age groups, immigrants, educational institutions and those using social media. The biggest threat comes, from evolving technology, which is constantly changing the way youth connect and share things with one another.

If the Electronic Youth - "creating the current" has concluded one thing, it's that youth need assistance. Advice is a step in the right direction but also providing resources to navigate the changing labour market. Employers and youth will have to work together to create opportunities for learning about employment, new technologies like social media, and learning the lessons that go beyond the workplace. This project is only just the beginning in recognizing that by fostering youth to properly use and maximize electronic communication we can grow and maintain our workforce.

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11.3 Appendix A

Questionnaire

PART 1 - ABOUT YOU

What is your age? ____

What is your educational background?

- a) High School
- b) College
- c) University
- d) Post-Graduate
- e) Prefer not say

PART 2 - SEARCHING FOR LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

How do you go about looking for jobs and labour market information? (Choose all that apply)

Facebook

Twitter

LinkedIn

Myspace

Monster.ca

Workopolis.ca

Human Resource Development Canada

Company Websites

Online Classifieds

School Job Boards

Charity Village

Government Jobsites

Mailing List

Job Alert

Email

Other

What is it that you like about these resources? (Likert scale)

- Convenient
- Quick
- Accessible
- Organized
- Searchable
- Access to large number of employers
- Wide coverage

What is it that you dislike about these resources?

- No privacy
- Inaccurate information
- Impersonal
-

How do you access these online resources? (Choose all that apply)

- a) From home
- b) From school
- c) From employment help centers
- d) From library
- e) From mobile or smart phone
- f) I don't access online sources

How often do you search for this information online?

- a) Once a day
- b) Once every few days
- c) Once a week
- d) Once a month
- e) Not at all

How do you share and receive labour market information?

- a) Email
- b) Texting
- c) BBM
- d) Instant Messaging
- e) Phone
- f) Blogs
- g) Podcasts
- h) Face to face
- i) Facebook chat
- j) Posted links
- k) Other

How many times have you submitted an online job application in the past six months?

How many interviews have resulted from submitting an online job application in the past six months?

- a) Less than 5
- b) Between 5 and 10
- c) More than 10
- d) None

e) I don't apply online

As a youth looking for work, what do you think is the biggest barrier in your job search?

a) Not seeing enough jobs available

b) Lack of education

c) Lack of experience

d) Don't know where to look

e) Don't know

f) Other

How important are the following attributes in a job posting for you?

g) Salary

h) Working Conditions

i) Employment Status (Full Time, Part Time and Casual)

j) Specific Qualifications

k) How to apply

l) Company Reputation

m) Graphics

n) Detailed Job Description

o) Ability to advance

p) Location

q) Which online resources do you use when searching for information?

r) Name the top three tools:

PART 3 - SOCIAL MEDIA

Have you ever used social media (such as Twitter or Facebook) in your job search?

Yes

No

Why do you use social media in your job search?

a) It is comprehensive

b) It gives me more information

c) Networks give me referrals

d) Others

Why have you not used social media websites?

a) I am unaware that these are being used for job search

- b) I am anxious to use these sites
- c) I am not on these sites
- d) Don't know

How valuable would it be for you to learn how to use social media to find labour market information?

- a) Very valuable
- b) Valuable
- c) Somewhat valuable
- d) Not valuable
- e) Don't know

Do you think social media is an appropriate way to look for a job?

YOU'RE KNOWLEDGE

What do you think are the growing industries/jobs?

What do you think are the declining industries/jobs?

What are your thoughts on the economy and job market currently?

--END--

If you would like to be entered in the draw for prizes please leave your email address

(This information will only be used for the purpose of this draw)

11.1 Appendix B

Success Stories

1. Greg admits that LinkedIn got him the job. Greg was using a number of online sites like Monster.com and Workopolis but seemed to be having no success. Finally, Deena from Execulink Human Resources found him on LinkedIn and the rest is history.

“Advice for youth looking for work would be to be consistent with hunting for jobs, make sure your resume is well put together and have all the details that would stand out to employers.”

2. It was networking that got Greg the introduction to Rtraction but twitter helped him the rest of the way. By engaging with the team at Rtraction and starting up the conversation he was able to get himself noticed.

“Youth need to find a company not a job. Use social media to seek out like minded people and like minded businesses where you’d like to work. But remember to conduct yourself in a professional manner”

3. Jason left a secure job and decided to gain some valuable skills on non-profit management when he went back to school. By networking, using creative techniques and putting his work online in a unique way got him noticed. Andrea, the Executive Director of the Heritage Council was overloaded with recommendations on Jason’s hard work and he got the job.

“You have to put yourself out there and share your work online. You must use the web as a reference tool to show what you’re passionate about and always remember to be consistent.”

4. So far, most success stories have been attributed to individuals and their success using electronic means. However, the above listed program is a success in itself. For the first year, 2011, the entire application process will be electronic and is expected reach more applicants than ever before.

“Study the job descriptions and the qualifications stated on them– then look at your resume and see if they correspond. Applicants need to ensure they have the proper qualifications.” -Sally Thomson, Supervisor

5. Elyse first heard about her position through networking. However, the ad first caught her attention on the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) website. Through these two she was guided through the company’s electronic process which has lead to her successfully getting the position.

“My advice for youth is pretty simple. Youth need to stay positive and be persistent through their job search.”

6. Sarah has a rare story but it highlights that applying online is successful. After answering an ad on workopolis Sarah had almost given up all hope. A month later she moving through the interview process at Erth Corporation and now has a full-time job.

“Never be afraid of an online ad that seems intimidating. That job you think you may be a good fit probably is.”

7. Tyler was contemplating more education but still continued to job search. He had almost given up but after responding to an ad on the Western Career Central he got a call. After supplying a written sample online and having an interview Tyler took his place as Senior Research Analyst at Public Sector Digest.

“Target your job seeking and applications. Anyone can send out mass applications but you need to make yourself stand out.”

8. Amy was not even really looking for a job. As a student in Windsor she was working on her education in Human Resources. However, she received an instant message from a friend about the Border Services Officer and just like that instant message; she almost instantly had a career.

“It seems that everything is now taking place online. Be sure to maximize on this resource and use it effectively as a resource. Remember to always be professional when conducting yourself online.”

9. To say that Kevin works hard is an understatement. After receiving his education Kevin struggled to find a full-time opportunity for himself. Kevin, not discouraged, created his own opportunity and ultimately a brand. This brand gave him an online presence and also helped him land a great job.

“Online use is an extension of yourself. Always have an online presence because it shows that you care about how you represent yourself.”

10. With a name like job squad it is hard not to see why this program has been so successful. This group meets weekly and serves, at its peak, about 50 youth. It prepares them so that they can better prepare themselves for their future career and has used its online resources to attract many to the program. It is success story because of the foundation it creates for many youth.

“It really is about making the connection and providing advice for youth.”

11. Prasa may just be a student but he has to pay his tuition. His success is highlighted in that he used the facebook group for this very project. He took one of the websites that was mentioned, easy to navigate and he applied. He had an interview and is now just starting the job which he enjoys and will assist him in furthering his education.

“Start doing online and sign up for those job search alerts that the job search engines offer. From there, you can proceed to applying for jobs that you prefer.”

12. Cole is a prime example of how your field of study can really help you in your job search. It was his biology programs website that had the job posting for the position Cole is currently in. It may seem rare but Cole applied, interviewed and got the position.

“It certainly can be tough out there but remember to use every resource at your disposal. Don’t forget that networking is always part of the process.”

13. Andrew had a keen interest in health care and always kept an eye for careers in the field. He really respected the brand of St. Joseph’s and has always looked for positions online. By regularly updating himself on positions available in the industry Andrew was able to secure a position and a future with St. Joseph’s Healthcare London.

“Get to know the company, who they are and what they’re looking for. Culture is very important in today’s work environment.”

14. Jenny was very happy to receive the opportunity at the Salvation Army. Jenny had seen previous job searches and engaged in using online resources when seeking her current job. She believes thanks to her hard work and continuous searching she able to secure her job.

“Check your resume and cover letter for mistakes. You want to ensure that you’re professional as possible.”

15. Ben had first heard about his current job through social networking and took a chance in applying. As a Graphic Designer Ben understands the importance of having an online presence and how it can give you a competitive edge. It really gives employers a better chance to look at your work and see what you have to offer.

“Always check your online presence, google your own name and see what comes up. If it’s negative you want to ensure that it is removed.”

11.2 Appendix C



Do's and Don'ts- Employer Interviews

Do's

1. Create an online presence for yourself. For example, by using an online resume you can always refer to it when meeting with potential employers. It is a great way to highlight your skills.
2. Carefully read over an ad a few times before responding. You want to ensure that you addressed everything the employer is asking for and that you have the required skills.
3. Keep an update resume in pdf format. An employer will not email you back to get a resume in the right format and this is the most universal way to receive a document.
4. Take advantage of jobs alerts and online resume posting. You can receive updates daily from many sites and by posting your resume online (such as on linkedin) employers can find you.

Don'ts

1. When sending emails to employers remember that this is still a professional form of communication. A couple of kind words and good grammar can go over well as this is a chance to make a good first impression.
2. Mass apply without sending a cover letter or addressing the company or person who posted the ad. Often this will just result in the removal of your resume.
3. Use inappropriate email addresses and use correct titles. You do not want to be disqualified because you're missing basic forms of professionalism.
4. Don't just focus on education and job skills but remember to highlight outside activities you're involved in. A lot of employers are taking this into consideration as part of their corporate culture.

The Most Popular Sites (Of the employers we interviewed)

1. Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC)
2. Kighthunter (local london site)
3. Industry related sites (such as apprenticeship.com)

The HRDC site is considered popular because employers have chosen it because it's verified, generic and allows for all industries to post. Easy navigation and accessibility are important which can be concluded why the other two choices were mentioned often. Local sites like kighthunter are quickly posted, affordable and get candidates instantly. Industry related sites allow employers to ensure they get the skills certain positions require. Some other sites worth mentioning that came up during interviews were: educational institution related sites, internal company websites and social media sites.

