



GETTING STARTED WITH COMPANY RESEARCH

Updated and revised by Susan Hurst

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Please ask the **Research Help Desk** for assistance in using these sources or in locating other information.

US companies are usually designated as either **public or private**. **Public companies sell stock and are traded on stock exchanges**. They are identified by abbreviations known as **ticker symbols**. Public companies are required by law to file financial reports regularly with the **SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission)**, including annual reports to shareholders and 10-K reports. Therefore it is **much easier to locate information on a public company**. On the other hand, privately held companies do not sell stock to the public and are not required to share financial data. As most private companies do not readily give out information, it is much harder to locate data on them.

ONLINE COMPANY DIRECTORIES

Directories generally contain information such as **addresses, telephone numbers, annual sales, number of employees, major corporate officers, Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes, etc.** We have specialized print directories (listed below) as well as an online company database, **Hoovers**. To access **Hoover's**, go to the Library Homepage (<http://www.lib.muohio.edu/>) and choose **Research by Subject** area, then select **Business**.

HOOVERS

Hoover's has **basic contact information on more than 12 million US and non-US companies, both public and private**. There is also **detailed data provided for 40,000 larger US and international firms**. Information for companies with detailed coverage includes a **fact sheet, overview, company histories, key executives, products/operations, subsidiaries/affiliates, industry information, competitors, news, financial data and ratios, and SEC filings**. Use the "**Build a List**" feature to create **lists of companies** that meet specific criteria, based on size, location, type of industry, etc. **You MUST go through the library site to access this information**. The free "Hoovers.com" site does not contain all of this data.

PRINT COMPANY DIRECTORIES

Business Rankings Annual King Ref HG 4061 .B875 2008

Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries King Ref HG 4538.A1 D5

Greater Cincinnati Business Connections King Ref HF 5068.C5 G735 2006

International Directory of Company Histories King Ref HD 2721 .I574 vols. 1-92

This on-going set includes detailed summaries of corporate histories from the founding of the company to the present day. Look in the **index of the latest volume** and select the entry **in bold type** for the main entry on your company. The abbreviation **Upd.** indicates an **updated history**.

LexisNexis Corporate Affiliations King Ref HG 4057 .A217 2008 v.1-8

This contains directory listings for U.S. and international companies, both publicly and privately held. Also use this to find the parent company of a subsidiary.

Standard & Poor's 500 Guide King Ref HG 4501 .S366 2007

Standard and Poor's Corporation Records King Ref HG 4501 .S7664

These include a brief company history, financial information, and debt and credit data for thousands of companies in selected industries.

Value Line Investment Survey **Current Issues – King Reserve Desk**

Value Line Investment Survey is another source for detailed financial news, ratios, balance sheet data, growth charts, and investment information for major publicly-traded companies. Value Line also includes some industry level information. Value Line is updated every 13 weeks, with the current issues located at the **Reserve Desk, first floor, King Library.**

Ward's Business Directory of U.S. Private and Public Companies King Ref HG 4057 .A56 2007 v.1-8

As the title indicates, this is a directory of both public and private US companies. Companies are arranged alphabetically, geographically and by SIC codes.

WHICH DATABASES TO USE WHEN

To access any of these databases go to the **Library homepage** (<http://www.lib.muohio.edu/>) and choose **Research by Subject area**, then select **Business**.

For Directory Information about a Company, either Public or Private:

Hoover's

Hoover's has **basic contact information on more than 12 million US and non-US companies, both public and private.** There is also **detailed data provided for 40,000 larger US and international firms.** Information for companies with detailed coverage includes a **fact sheet, overview, company histories, key executives, products/operations, subsidiaries/affiliates, industry information, competitors, news, financial data and ratios, and SEC filings.**

For Journal Articles, Newspaper Articles And Corporate News, See:

Business Source Complete

This database provides abstracts and full-text articles from over 7,400 popular and scholarly business journals covering management, economics, finance, accounting, international business, and marketing.

LexisNexis

This database includes full-text newspaper articles, newsletters, US and international business news, as well as legal information, and corporate financial data.

Factiva

Factiva includes **full-text coverage of all the major US and international newspapers** including the **Wall Street Journal**, New York Times, London Times, etc. It also includes television and radio transcripts, and business and trade journals as well as company reports and financial data.

For Company Reports and Basic Financial Data, See:

Hoover's

This database includes information on more than **12 million US and non-US companies**. In-depth coverage of 40,000 companies includes data on company history, key executives, products/operations, subsidiaries/affiliates, industry information, competitors, news, financial data and ratios, and SEC filings.

Marketline

This database consists of **full-text research reports** on 10,000 companies in the US and internationally. Each 10-20 page report includes a business description, company history, major products and services, key biographies locations and subsidiaries, top competitors, and sometimes a SWOT analysis.

For Detailed Company Financial Data, Annual Reports, and SEC Filings:

Mergent Online

This database contains in-depth financial data for the last 15 years on 15,000 US and 20,000 international publicly held companies. Information provided for each company includes a business description, history, company financials, property, subsidiaries, officers and directors, long-term debt and capital stock data. Company archives include data on inactive companies back to 1996. Annual reports are available as PDFs for approximately the last 5 years. It also includes access to EDGAR, with full-text SEC filings back to 1993.

WEB SITES

These are some good sites to look for information on an individual company. Also remember to check the **company's own homepage**.

<http://www.forbes.com/lists/>

Each year Forbes compiles lists of the largest and best companies, both public and private.

<http://finance.yahoo.com/>

This is primarily a stock site but also includes company directory information, financial data and recent articles concerning a company's performance. It is also a source of ratio comparisons between a company and its industry, sector, or the S&P 500.

<http://www.sec.gov/edgar/searchedgar/webusers.htm>

This is the Securities & Exchange Commission's (SEC) Edgar website. This is another source for finding the full text of a public company's SEC filings, including annual reports, 10-Ks, proxy statements, etc.

<http://www.thomasnet.com/>

This is the Thomas Registry site. You can search by company name, products, or brand name.

<http://search.bbb.org/>

This is the homepage for the Better Business Bureau. You can locate reliability reports on a company or file complaints online.

Please send comments or suggestions to: hurstsj@muohio.edu