

USABILITY INFORMATION

Task	Best Sites	Completeness	Satisfaction	Resources Used	Comments	Verdict
Find It: Financial information—from tax tables to exchange rates.	First Place: CompuServe: GO QUOTES	More than 70 percent complete in 15 minutes.	"The forums available cover just about every topic imaginable." PF	Using CompuServe to Make You Rich, by Terry Dettmann and Susan Futterman (1994, The Waite Group Press)	"Some of the resources are surcharged reasonably, some are too expensive." PF	"I ignored the high-priced stuff; \$0.015 a lookup I can afford." PF
Sample Questions: What's the U.S./Canadian exchange rate? What's the best loan rate you can find? Where did IBM close on the Nikkei?	Runner Up: America Online Personal Finance				"Is that Canadian\$1.37 to U.S.\$1 or vice versa?" HB	
Find It: Market trends that early business adopters can exploit.	First Place: Internet Gopher.census.gov	60 percent complete in 10 minutes.	"Less of a net surf, more of a pleasure cruise." RS	"My trump cards: a shared T1 connection and WebCrawler (fromhttp://www/bio/tech/washington.edu/WebCrawler/WebQuery.html)." RS	"Fast, but I might eventually want more specific and tailored information." RS	"Researching gender ratios and age breakdowns on a county-by-county basis is handy. I'll definitely sell more widgets in Peoria." RS
Sample Question: What is the disposable income of 30-year-old males in Northern California?						
Find It: Industry inside information to fuel your competitiveness.	First Place: Internet quote.com and individual company Web pages	70 percent complete in 30 minutes.	"There has to be a cheaper way! I didn't find everything I wanted. Commercial services are better—you pay more, but you get exactly what you want quickly." RS	The Internet Business Book, by Jill and Matthew Ellsworth (1994, John Wiley)	"Very handy if the company you need information on is traded publicly; private companies are tougher eggs to crack." RS	"It's getting better all the time— you'll be able to access even more specific data by the time you read this." RS
Sample Question: What were the profits of Hewlett-Packard in the last quarter?					"You can order HP's annual report online, but it comes by snail mail." RS	
Do It: Find good staff online and train them.	First Place: CompuServe. GO CIS:INDEX and a word or phrase for the job. For engineers, GO CIS:SAFETYNET and GO CIS:LEAP; NetWare engineers GO CIS:NOVFORUM	60 percent complete in less than 30 minutes.	"With more time and a greater willingness to enter the surcharged areas, I know I could have found more." PF	"Asking fellow members questions is my No. 1 resource." PF	"When I need information, I need it fast. I couldn't make use of the greatest resource on C!\$ and ZNT: asking questions on the forums." PF	"Hang around forums and you will have no problem finding personnel. You will also learn many new and exciting TLAs (three-letter acronyms)." PF
Sample Questions: Where can I post my resume online? Where can I locate civil engineering graduates for hire in the next quarter?	Runner Up: America Online's Career Center and Education (Keywords: Careers, Jobs)					
Do It: Market your product online or leverage online resources.	First Place: Prodigy: Advertising is everywhere, D&B Online.	More than 60 percent complete in 30 minutes.	"I'd like to call the service to find out more." NR	None needed.	"Offering up commercials is a no-no in forums, but being helpful is a great way to build a customer base. Forum regulars spread the word." PF	"There's no direct way of doing this." NR

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Sample Question: Where can I advertise products online?	Runner Up: CompuServe GO CIS: TRADE for the International trade forum (GO CIS:classified for advertising).					
Do It: Conduct business over the wires.	First Place: America Online, (Keyword: Marketplace)	100 percent complete in 15 minutes.	"Pretty satisfied, but I'd like to know how the others are doing." HB	For America Online: "Didn't touch 'em." HB	"You have to know the products; you have no idea what you're buying." HB	"If you're buying, stick to the catalogs." HB
Sample Questions: Can I buy office furniture online? Where can I find network printer distributors?				For the Internet: O'Reilley's Global Network Navigator	"The Web's digital commerce continues to grow by leaps and bounds, but nothing beats buying direct." RS	