

# HURST ASSOCIATES, LTD.

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Information for Intelligent Decisions  
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## **10+ Tips for Finding Information... Faster...More Effectively...More Efficiently**

1. Spend a few moments thinking about “**who**” – person, government agency, research firm or company – would have captured the information that you seek, and then try those sources first.
2. **Look at company web sites.** Public companies may publish financial statements and press releases on their web sites. Private companies may present on their web sites the only information that is readily available on them.
  - § Keep in mind that there are more than 16 million companies in the U.S. Out of that, approximately 15,000 are public companies (meaning that the company’s stock is publicly held). There are specific reporting requirements for public companies that will allow you to find much more information on them. In contrast, there are very few reporting requirements for private companies, so it can be difficult to locate information on them. When researching a private company, you will need to be persistent and creative. However, remember that there is no oversight commission that ensures that a private company’s disclosures are 100% accurate; therefore, be sure to understand the source of the information as well as maintain a bit of skepticism.
3. When you use an Internet search engine, review more than just the first 10 search results. What you are looking for may be lower in the list, so **review the first 100 research results** if not more.
4. When you use any search engine, think about the words you are using to describe what you want. Are there **other terms** that are used (**alternate words**)? Should you be using broader or narrower terms?
5. **Learn the advanced features**, logical search operators and short-cuts that your search engine or database service has. Using them will make your searches more efficient and more targeted.
  - § For example, use the Advanced Search page on Google to search for specific words on the company’s web site (domain). This can find pages/files that are on the web site, but that are not linked to any of the visible pages. These files can contain information that was stored there for specific purposes or people, e.g., reports or presentations.
6. **Know your sources.** Some sources are more accurate and more up-to-date than others.
7. If a piece of information needs to be correct, **double-check** it in another reputable source.
8. **Keep track of where you find the information.** This will help you go back to the information, if necessary. It will also teach you which sources yield better information for you.
9. **People** can be the best source for information. However, when obtaining information from people, be sure to understand who the person is and how s/he got the information. Remember that even “inside” sources may not have the correct story.
10. Statistically, many **rumors** are true. However, be careful since some rumors are totally or partially false. If you cannot verify a rumor, use the information cautiously.

11. Finally, here are several sources to add to your bookmarks/favorites. Please note that these sources are the “tip of the iceberg.” As you come across others, keep track of those that you like as well as those that prove useful.
- Top search engines:
    - ú Google, <http://www.google.com>
    - ú Yahoo!, <http://search.yahoo.com>
    - ú Ask, <http://www.ask.com>
    - ú MSN, <http://search.msn.com>
  - Specialty search engines:
    - ú Google News, <http://news.google.com> – News from more than 4,500 sources.
    - ú Topix (“Local News for the World”), <http://www.topix.net> – News from more than 27,000 sources.
    - ú SEC Filings (EDGAR), <http://www.sec.gov> – Most U.S. companies, whose stock is publicly traded, must file detailed documents with the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC). Documents that you might want to review include the annual report, proxy statement and quarterly financial statements.
    - ú U.S. Patent Office, <http://www.uspto.gov> – Useful if you are interested in knowing what technology the company may have patented.
    - ú ThomasNet, <http://www.ThomasNet.com> – Information on industrial companies.
    - ú Maps and satellite photos – <http://maps.live.com> and <http://maps.google.com> – These are useful if you need to know what the physical surroundings of a business are like, without visiting it.
    - ú Businesswire, <http://www.businesswire.com>
    - ú PR Newswire, <http://www.prnewswire.com>
  - Fee-based services:
    - ú Northern Light, <http://www.northernlight.com> (\$)
    - ú Hoover’s, <http://www.hoovers.com> (\$)
    - ú Factiva, <http://www.factiva.com> (\$)
    - ú New York Online Virtual Electronic Library (NOVEL), <http://www.novelnewyork.org> (Free)