

James J. Hill Reference Library Guide to Researching an Industry

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This guide highlights some of the more frequently used sources on international business at the Hill Library. For further information and other sources, call our reference line at 651-265-5500, or email us at info@jjhill.org. The Hill Reference Library is open to the public; stop by the reference desk to consult with one of our librarians, or search our catalog on our website, www.jjhill.org. All of our Hill Business Research Guides are available online at http://www.jjhill.org/research_online/publications_and_research_guides.cfm.

General Considerations

To help you frame your research, begin by considering these factors:

Sector

In which sector does your industry operate: manufacturing, wholesale, retail, service, or a combination of these? Many industries are straightforward, but others are complex and involve many components. For example, the computer industry involves the manufacture of hardware, software, and peripherals, and operates in both business and consumer markets. For this industry, manufacturing, retailing, and service sectors are interrelated.

Industrial Classification Code

Industrial classification code numbers designate specific industries. Many indexes, directories, and statistical sources use these code numbers to organize information, so it can be a critical piece of information in your research.

The Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system, in place since 1941, is currently being replaced by the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). Over the next few years, information sources will gradually be switching to the new system.

NAICS uses six-digit codes (versus the four-digit SIC codes), allowing for greater definition of industries, as well as the inclusion of some newer industries that were poorly served by the SIC system. At this time, it may be helpful to locate both the SIC and NAICS codes for your particular industry.

To find your **SIC code**, use the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual* (Reference Desk: HD 2324.U43) or OSHA's "Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) System Search" available online at www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sicsearch.html.

To find your **NAICS code**, use the *North American Industry Classification System* (Reference Desk: HD2324.U435 2002) or check the free NAICS database at <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>.

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Pinpoint What You Want to Know

To avoid information overload, you might decide where your specific interest lies. You may find it beneficial to focus your research on such areas as recent industry trends, marketing techniques, financial ratios, major players, new products, employment trends, or new technical developments.

Size

Are only a few companies operating in your industry, or hundreds? Are there only a few products involved (supercomputers, for example), or millions (as in the automobile industry)? You will often find that subsidiaries or divisions of companies may be involved in your industry, while the parent company may be engaged in an entirely different field.

Structure

Is your industry part of, or related to, another one? For example, the automotive aftermarket industry is related to the manufacture and sale of automobiles.

Geographic Scope

Does the industry operate on a local, national, or international level? Does it rely heavily on the import or export of goods?

Target Market

Is your industry consumer-driven or primarily business-to-business? Who, in either case, is likely to purchase the product or service?

Regulation

Is the industry highly regulated? Are there government agencies that oversee operations? What types of permits, licenses, and/or professional accreditation are necessary?

External Factors

What is the larger environment in which your industry operates? Many world events have a strong impact on particular industries. A cool summer affects the sale of air conditioners, for example, just as a war in the Middle East will affect international travel to that region.

Company Research

Some major industries are well documented, and you may find yourself inundated with information. Many industries, however, are more narrowly defined, and you may have to consult a number of sources to piece together a comprehensive overview. In this case, a useful strategy may be to study particular companies within an industry. See the Hill Library's *Guide to Researching a Company* for more information.

Industry Overviews

Industry overviews will provide industry-wide statistics, covering such things as production, employment, financial ratios, and forecasts. Often the industries will be designated by their SIC or NAICS code, or industry statistics will be provided using these codes.

Encyclopedia of American Industries

Subscription database available at the Hill Library and to HillSearch members
Reference Desk: HD9721.E53 2007

The *Encyclopedia of American Industries* provides overviews, background and development, industry leaders, trends, and key statistics on hundreds of industries. See also the *Encyclopedia of Emerging Industries* and *Encyclopedia of Global Industries*.

Encyclopedia of American Industries at Answers.com

<http://www.answers.com/library/US%20Industry%20Profile>

The *Encyclopedia of American Industries* provides overviews, background and development, industry leaders, trends, and key statistics on hundreds of industries.

Hoover's Online

Web and subscription resource <http://www.hoovers.com/>

Hoover's Online provides free snapshots of over 600 industries. These snapshots list major companies in the industry, SIC and NAICS codes, plus links to associations, glossaries, industry news, and other information resources. Full access to Hoover's data requires a subscription.

Manufacturing & Distribution USA: Industry Analyses, Statistics, and Leading Companies

Subscription database available at the Hill Library and to HillSearch members

Reference Desk: HD 9724.M3 2006

Manufacturing & Distribution USA is part of a family of Gale publications that offer industry overviews, broken down by SIC and/or NAICS code, including statistics, selected financial ratios, lists of leading companies, occupations employed, and industry data by state.

MarketResearch.com Academic

Subscription database available at the Hill Library

MarketResearch.com Academic provides in-depth market research reports on various industries, products, and services. Reports often break markets into segments, discuss consumer demographics, and offer extensive industry statistics.

Special Issues Index

Subscription database available at the Hill Library and to HillSearch members

The *Special Issues Index* covers the Hill Library's periodical collection. As magazines come in, librarians review each issue for industry statistics, profiles, forecasts, buyers' guides, salary surveys, and other such special features. The *Special Issues Index* is a great way to find the most current statistics, "State of the Industry" reports, and directories within the top industry trade journals.

Standard & Poor's Industry Surveys

Subscription database available at the Hill Library (via NetAdvantage)

Reference Desk: HD 9724.S73 2008

The *S&P Surveys* give current, historical, and forecasted information on 52 major U.S. industries. Statistics are provided for major companies within each industry, as well as for the industry overall. The individual industry surveys are updated twice a year.

Valuation Resources: Industry Resources Reports

<http://www.valuationresources.com/IndustryReport.htm>

Industry Resources Reports provides Internet links to resources available from trade associations, industry publications, and research firms that address subjects such as industry overviews, issues, trends, outlook, financial benchmarking, compensation surveys, and valuation resources.

Value Line Investment Survey

Reference Collection: HG 4501.V26

Oriented to the investor, with stock rankings, analysis, charts, statistics, and projections for thousands of public companies, *Value Line's Ratings and Reports* edition provides analysis of 91 specific industries, including retrospective statistics and forecasts. *Value Line* is updated monthly.

Directories

Directories of companies usually include such basic information as company name, address, telephone number, industry codes (NAICS and SIC), number of employees, and annual revenues. They may also contain other data, such as fax numbers, email and Internet addresses, officers, and date established.

Chain Store Guide Online

Subscription database available at the Hill Library

The *Chain Store Guide* includes a series of databases that cover several industry sectors, including supermarkets, discount stores, hardware chains, drug stores, food service, and restaurants. Use the database to research individual chain stores or to build lists of companies based on very detailed criteria. An excellent source for finding distributors, key executives, and other internal company information to inform your industry research.

CorpTech Directory of Technology Companies

Subscription database available at the Hill Library

Some industries are covered in great detail by industry-specific directories, and the *CorpTech Directory* is a prime example. It has a detailed product index for U.S. and Canadian high-tech and bio-tech industries, as well as information on company growth and ownership.

Dun & Bradstreet

Subscription database available at the Hill Library and to HillSearch Members

Dun & Bradstreet covers 14 million public and private companies in the U.S. and Canada, as well as an additional nine million companies abroad. The database may be searched by industry, geography, size of company (employee or sales size) and other criterion such as location type, year established, employment trends, and import/export. Company lists can be downloaded or printed.

LexisNexis Directory of Corporate Affiliations

Subscription database available at the Hill Library

Reference Collection: HG 4057.A1N3 2009

LexisNexis Corporate Affiliations provides detailed portraits of corporate structures, listing corporate divisions and subsidiaries, and specifying their relationships within a corporation. The directory is flexible in its criteria for inclusion, but generally requires U.S. companies to have over \$10 million in annual revenue or over 300 employees. International companies must have revenues of over \$50 million to be included. The directory is indexed by company name, brand name, geography, and SIC code.

Manta

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

Manta offers free access (with registration) to very basic information on 45 million companies worldwide. 13 million companies in the database are given deeper coverage. Search by company name or browse the database by broad industry heading. Some features may require payment.

Reference USA

Subscription database

The *Reference USA* database covers over 14 million U.S. companies, and is searchable by SIC code, line of business, geography, and/or sales. Listings for companies include address, phone number, sales,

number of employees, line of business, SIC codes, NAICS codes and a contact name. Sales and employees figures are listed as within specified ranges, and some records include fax numbers, multiple officers, and links between subsidiaries and headquarters locations. A principal source of information for the database is yellow-page directories from around the country. The database is particularly useful when searching for smaller companies. This database may be available to you through your local public or academic library.

Thomas Register / ThomasNet

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

The Thomas Register is a directory of U.S. manufacturers, with a detailed product index to help you locate companies that manufacture very specific products. Registration is free.

**Business Periodicals,
Newspapers, and
Trade Journals**

Business magazines and trade journals are valuable sources of information on industries, particularly those niche industries too narrow to be followed in detail by the standard industry sources. Articles on particular companies within an industry may include data on the size of the overall market, recent trends, and major competitors.

Scanning recent issues of an industry-specific trade journal can give you a feel for trends in the industry, while a search of a periodical database can provide you a great deal of current information on a subject from a variety of sources. The Hill Library subscribes to hundreds of different periodical publications, and several online databases that can help you search hundreds of magazines swiftly and thoroughly. Your local public or academic library may subscribe to one or several of these databases as well.

The Hill Library Periodical Collection

Periodicals Collection, Reference Desk

The Hill Library subscribes to hundreds of different business magazines, newspapers, and trade journals, including such titles as *Advertising Age*, *Décor*, *Business Week*, *Franchise Times*, *Gifts & Decorative Accessories*, *Gourmet News*, *ICIS Chemical Business*, *Music Trades*, *Pizza Today*, and *Technical Communication*. The Library also maintains the *Special Issues Index*, covering the Library's periodical collection, providing quick access to journal articles offering industry overviews, forecasts, trends, rankings, and statistics.

BizJournals.com

<http://www.bizjournals.com>

Full text access to articles from business journals in over 40 U.S. metro markets.

BNET (previously FindArticles.com)

<http://www.findarticles.com>

BNET is an archive of free and premium articles dating back to 1998 from more than 3,000 magazines and journals. Journals cover a variety of topics, including business and industry.

Business Wire

<http://home.businesswire.com>

Business Wire provides the latest full-text business and industry news releases from the past week.

EBSCO Business Source Corporate

Subscription database available at the Hill Library and to HillSearch members

This resource contains over 3,300 full-text industry and management journals; over 70 local and regional U.S. newspapers, newswires, and business journals; company profiles; and country economic reports. Search this database to find company and industry news; management trends and topics; and information on smaller companies and international business.

Gale InfoTrac

Subscription database available at the Hill Library and to HillSearch members

The *InfoTrac* family of databases includes *Business & Company Resource Center* and *PROMT*. These databases provide citations, abstracts, and full-text articles from trade journals, business magazines, and newspapers from around the country as well as from important international sources. *Business and Company Resource Center* provides quick access to company histories, directory listings, industry overviews, rankings, market share information, and investment reports.

Index to Minnesota Business Periodicals

http://www.jhill.org/research_online/publications_and_research_guides.cfm

Although this Hill publication is no longer updated, it is an important source of historical information on local privately-held companies and executives (1977-2007). It provides citations to articles in several Twin Cities and Minnesota business periodicals (e.g. *The Business Journal* and *Twin Cities Business Monthly*), and it is an important source of information on local privately-held companies and executives.

Minneapolis StarTribune and St. Paul Pioneer Press

StarTribune: subscription database available at Hill Library and to HillSearch members, 1986 - present

Pioneer Press: subscription database available at Hill Library and to HillSearch members, 1988 - present

Articles from the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and *St. Paul Pioneer Press* are available in full text. Keyword searching is allowed, as well as specific date and field searching. Local newspapers are often important sources of information on local companies and industries.

NewsLink.org

<http://www.newslink.org>

Links to local and international news source Web sites for access to current and archived news stories.

ProQuest Direct: ABI/INFORM and ProQuest Newspapers

Subscription database available at the Hill Library and to HillSearch members

This database provides citations, abstracts, and full-text articles on topics in business, management, and finance. International in scope, *ABI/INFORM* indexes over thousands of publications, most available in full text. The database is updated weekly, with limited coverage extending as far back as 1971. The Newspapers database provides full-text access to several hundred U.S. and international news sources, including over 150 U.S. and international newspapers, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. While coverage depth varies in these newspapers, the *Wall Street Journal* is available in full text back to 1984.

PubList.com

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

Searchable database listing over 150,000 magazines, journals, newsletters, and other periodicals. Find information on familiar and hard-to-find publications from around the world, including frequency, publisher contact information and Web site where applicable. Free registration required.

RDS TableBase

Subscription database available at Hill Library

RDS *TableBase* indexes tabular data dealing with companies, products, industries, brands, markets, demographics, and countries from around the world. All records contain a table and the originating textual article when available.

Yahoo: Trade Magazines

http://dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Business_to_Business/News_and_Media/Magazines/Trade_Magazines/

Yahoo provides links to trade journals under 53 broad industry classifications.

Industry-Specific Publications

In many cases you may find annual publications, directories, or industry reviews devoted entirely to your industry. Use the Hill Library's online catalog to identify industry-specific publications.

Chain Store Guide Online

Reference Collection and subscription database available at the Hill Library

The *Chain Store Guide* includes a series of databases that cover several industry sectors, including supermarkets, discount stores, hardware chains, drug stores, food service, and restaurants. Use the database to research individual chain stores or to build lists of companies based on very detailed criteria. An excellent source for finding distributors, key executives, and other internal company information to inform your industry research. Also available in print.

Veronis Suhler's Communications Industry Forecast & Report 2008-2012

Reference Desk: P 96.E25V47 2008

If you are researching any aspect of a communications industry, from training to motion pictures to magazines to Internet, you will want to look at *Veronis Suhler*. This annual publication offers five years of spending history and five years of projections on such things as recorded music, consumer Internet purchases, magazine advertising, radio and television, and numerous other categories.

Datamonitor Industry Profiles

Subscription database available at the Hill Library and to HillSearch members

In *EBSCO Business Source Corporate*, select "Business Searching Interface," then "Industry Profiles". Datamonitor's industry profiles provide market sizes and segmentations for key country and global markets; five-year market forecasts; analysis of current and emerging market trends; and analysis of each market's competitive landscape, including main players, distribution channels, and regulatory issues.

Plunkett's Industry Research Almanacs

Plunkett Research Ltd. publishes a series of industry almanacs offering competitive intelligence, market research, vertical industry marketing data, and analysis. Sectors include advertising and branding, health care, financial services, retailing, entertainment, energy and information technology, and many more.

The Rauch Guides

Acquired by Grey House Publishing from Rauch Associates in 2005, these guides profile U.S. industries ranging from paint and plastics to cosmetics and toiletries. Each guide covers economic data, technology and raw materials, major product segments, associations and events, leading companies, and more.

Statistical Fact Book

Reference Collection: HF 5415.126.F32 2007

Published by the Direct Marketing Association, this resource contains industry growth and usage trends; expenditure, production, and operating cost figures; trends in consumers' direct marketing purchasing habits; average salaries by job functions and region; and more.

Wards Automotive Yearbook

Reference Collection: HD9710.U52W3

This annual publication tracks the auto industry, providing statistics on auto production, exports, and sales from around the world and detailed information on the U.S. auto industry, including info on dealers, registrations, and production, as well as marketing data.

Statistical Sources

Statistical information on industries often originates from government sources. This information is frequently updated and repackaged into more usable forms by private companies.

Almanac of Business and Industrial Ratios

Reference Desk: HF 5681.R25T7

RMA Annual Statement Studies

Reference Desk: HF 5571.R6

D&B Industry Norms and Key Business Ratios

Reference Desk: HF 5550.D73

Fintel Industry Metrics

Subscription Database available at Hill Library and to HillSearch members

These four sources will provide the ratios and financial norms commonly used in evaluating corporate financial performance within specific industries.

BizStats.com

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

This Web site offers financial ratios, business statistics, and benchmarks useful to small business. Select an industry and enter an annual sales amount to see what businesses in that industry and of that size spend on various operating functions.

CenStats databases

<http://censtats.census.gov/>

The CenStats Web site provides online access to a number of popular U.S. Census Bureau databases, including *Building Permits Data*, *County Business Patterns*, *Census Tract Street Locator*, *International Trade Data*, *Occupation by Race and Sex*, *USA Counties*, and *Zip Code Business Patterns*. Use the CenStats databases to search for data sets keyed to geographic areas, such as industry and employment data for specific counties.

County Business Patterns

<http://censtats.census.gov/cbpnaic/cbpnaic.shtml>

This resource offers three search options with business information keyed to county, zip code, and metropolitan statistical area (MSA) respectively.

Financial Studies of the Small Business

Small Business Collection: HF 5500.F53

This annual collection, published by Financial Research Associates, focuses on the financial data of small firms, under \$1,000,000 in total capitalization.

Industries at a Glance (U.S. Dept. of Labor)

<http://www.bls.gov/iag/iaghome.htm>

This resource consists of profiles of 12 industry supersectors, ranging from construction to retail. Each profile contains a variety of facts and links to additional statistics.

Statistical Abstract of the United States

Reference Desk: HA 202, and online at <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>

Updated annually, the *Statistical Abstract* contains a wealth of well-indexed industry statistics. Footnotes to the statistical tables will direct you to complete reports or sources of information.

Statistics of U.S. Business

<http://www.census.gov/csd/susb/susb.htm>

Statistics of U.S. Business provides data on the number of businesses by state, MSA, county, etc. and number of businesses by employee and sales size. This resource also has data on business "births" and "deaths," expansions & contractions, and more.

STAT-USA/Internet (U.S. Dept. of Commerce)

<http://www.stat-usa.gov/>

This service is a single point of access to authoritative business, trade, and economic information from across the federal government. It consists of two databases: *State of the Union* (SOTU), which serves as a repository of economic indicators, and *GLOBUS & NTDB*, which compiles documents on export opportunities, world political and socio-economic conditions, and more.

Survey of Current Business

<http://www.bea.gov/scb/index.htm>

The *Survey of Current Business*, published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, provides reports, statistics, and articles about trends in industry, business situation, and outlook.

U.S. Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov>

The Census Bureau is a prime source of statistical data on U.S. industries, publishing such titles as *The U.S. Economic Census*, the *Annual Survey of Manufacturers*, the *Annual Retail Trade Survey*, and the *Service Annual Survey*, as well as many monthly reports that follow particular sectors, such as construction. Much of this data is freely available from the Census Bureau Web site.

U.S. Economic Census

<http://www.census.gov/econ/census02/> and <http://www.census.gov/econ/census07/>

The U.S. Economic Census is conducted every five years and provides a statistical snapshot of the current state of business and industry in the U.S. The most current full data available is from the 2002 Economic Census; the data from the 2007 Economic Census is being released now. Statistics are provided for the U.S. as a whole, as well as by state, and within MSAs.

Business & Professional Associations

In many cases, the best source of industry statistics and information will be the trade associations that promote and follow an industry. They may publish a related trade journal, conduct and publish surveys, and distribute reports and other materials that can be useful to the business researcher.

American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Gateway to Associations Online

<http://www.asaecenter.org/Directories/AssociationSearch.cfm>

The ASAE sponsors this site, which provides a searchable database of links to thousands of association Web sites. This is a great place to begin looking for free industry-specific info.

Directory of Minnesota Business and Professional Associations

Reference Desk: AS 8.D57, and also available online at Hill Library and to HillSearch members
This Hill Library publication provides contact information of nearly 300 business and professional associations located in Minnesota. The *Directory* is updated annually.

Encyclopedia of Associations

Subscription database available at Hill Library
Reference Desk: AS 8.E6

The *Encyclopedia of Associations* lists contact information for thousands of U.S and international trade and professional associations, while also describing their particular areas of interest, membership size, services, and publications.

Google Directory: Business Associations by Industry

[http://www.google.com/Top/Business/Associations/By Industry/](http://www.google.com/Top/Business/Associations/By_Industry/)

This Web site features hundreds of associations and professional groups organized into dozens of categories.

Questions? Consult with a Business Information Specialist!
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