

CHAPTER 2

INTERNET SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH ENGINES, ONLINE RESOURCES, AND SCAMS

The Internet is an invaluable tool in your scholarship search. It has significant amounts of up-to-date information in easily searchable form. There are numerous free scholarship searches on the web, as well as individual organization's web pages that can inform you about scholarships. Don't be discouraged by the seeming enormity of this task. Keep searching diligently and exhaust as many Internet sources as you can find.

Below is a listing of some of the major free scholarship search engines on the web, along with our opinions of them. Our list is not exhaustive, so be on the lookout for other search engines. These sites often require you to input some information about what you are looking for or to register with them. It is important when entering the search criteria, such as academic major, gender, interests, race/ethnicity, extracurricular activities, etc., that you try many different combinations, because the search fields you are asked to input information in can often limit your returns.

1. AVOIDING SCAMS

Be aware of scholarship scams. You should **never** have to pay someone to find scholarships for you. All the information you could possibly need to complete the process is offered **free** in databases available from your local public library, college financial aid office, and the Internet. If a scholarship search program requests money from you, steer clear of them. Also be wary of anything that says money for college is "guaranteed." Financial aid and scholarships are never guaranteed! The Federal Trade Commission has issued a consumer alert on scholarship search scams and can be viewed at: www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship. FinAid.org also discusses scholarship scams, lists common scams, and how to evaluate scholarship services: www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml.

2. SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH ENGINES AND GATEWAYS

➤ **Fast Web**

www.fastweb.com

Many high school counselors and financial aid offices recommend Fast Web. The scholarship entries are clearly laid out. The deadlines are very clear. The primary drawback to this site is the numerous pop-up ads. Fast Web also publishes *The Complete Scholarship Book*, which lists many of the scholarships found on the website.

➤ **U.S. Department of Education**

www.students.gov/index.html

The U.S. Department of Education aids students pursuing education beyond the high school level. It offers an impartial overview of the types of funding available. This site has information on both foundation and government grants, in addition to lists of other helpful databases.

➤ **Scholarships.com**

www.scholarships.com

Scholarships.com discusses a variety of funding sources from grants to loans to government assistance. It is easy to navigate and has no pop-up ads.

- **Tennessee Colleges and Universities**
www.college-scholarships.com/tennessee.htm
 Tennessee Colleges and Universities offers a list of schools in Tennessee with links to their financial aid and admissions pages.
- **College Scholarships.com**
www.college-scholarships.com/free_scholarship_searches.htm
 College Scholarships.com links you to information regarding all aspects of the scholarship search process, from helpful tips to virtual campus tours.
- **CollegeNET**
www.collegeNET.com
 CollegeNET links you to colleges and universities and to financial aid sites. The site has both key word and profile searches. CollegeNet does not require you to register. Also, you can sort your selections by amount awarded, application deadline, and percentage of applicants awarded.
- **College Board**
http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp
 The College Board site is informative and it does not require you fill out extensive questionnaires. It delivers wide array of scholarship types that match your qualifications. There is also a function that allows you to simultaneously collect loan information. This site is best used in conjunction with other sites.
- **Free-4U**
www.free-4u.com
 Very well organized and clear, but the incessant pop-up ads are distracting. The search engine offers you the choice of browsing the database for scholarships by academic major, state, religion, minority status, and other categories.
- **Free Scholarship Search**
www.freschinfo.com/index.phtml
 Free Scholarship Search focuses exclusively on college- and graduate-level scholarships. It gives you a choice of undergoing a “Power Search” for scholarships that are specific to you and the characteristics you have given them, or a general search, which allows you to look at other scholarships organized in various ways. Entering your personal information for the Power Search takes 20 minutes and works best when used by U.S. citizens or permanent residents. There are also informational pages for non-traditional students and international students.
- **Wired Scholar**
www.wiredscholar.com
 Wired Scholar is run by Sallie Mae, the nation’s largest student loan company. They offer a scholarship search, for which you have to register. You can do a broad search as well as a more specific search of their scholarship database. The site also offers information about financial aid and loans.

➤ **Black Excel–The College Help Network**

www.blackexcel.org

The Black Excel College Help Network is primarily directed at African American families and first generation college students. It offers students information about attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as well as a scholarship gateway.

➤ **United Negro College Fund**

www.uncf.org

The United Negro College Fund offers students a scholarship search engine that allows you to search by state, academic major, and scores. It also has details of scholarships that UNCF co-sponsors with large corporations.

➤ **American Indian College Fund**

www.collegefund.org

The American Indian College Fund offers a series of four booklets designed to help American Indian students through the college and financial aid process. These booklets can be downloaded from the website. It also has a list of scholarship opportunities.

➤ **Hispanic Scholarship Fund**

www.hsf.net

The Hispanic Scholarship Fund offers information about going to college as well as a scholarship gateway to search for scholarships aimed at Hispanic students.

➤ **Scholarships for Hispanics**

www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org/directory

Scholarships for Hispanics offers a searchable database of over 1000 scholarships aimed at Hispanic students for which you must register to use. The list can be searched by citizenship, field of study, deadline, state, and/or college.

3. OTHER USEFUL SITES

➤ ***www.petersons.com/ugchannel***

Petersons offers a college search, test preparation information, college application tips, financial aid resources, and a scholarship search.

➤ ***www.mapping-your-future.org***

Mapping Your Future offers college and career planning information.

➤ ***www.schoolfinder.com***

SchoolFinder offers assistance on identifying interests, colleges, and scholarships.

➤ ***www.usnews.com***

US News and World Report offers a guide to the best colleges for the money, an application checklist, and financial assistance information.

➤ ***www.edupass.org***

EduPASS contains financial aid information specifically for foreign students.