

**Workplace
representatives
guide to the web**

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This guide book is downloadable in PDF format from
www.unitetheunion.com

■ 1. INTRODUCTION

As increasing numbers of Unite workplace representatives gain access to the internet, either at work or at home, so the benefits of this facility can be used to enhance the support and knowledge of representatives. Whether it is preparing a pay claim, checking out health and safety issues, understanding new issues in the workplace or checking basic employment rights, the internet can provide a useful first stop for information.

None of this can replace the professionalism and experience which representatives will obtain from the union's full time officer force or support departments but it does provide an additional access to information.

The union's research department has produced this guide which contains links to a wide range of sites which have been found to be useful in meeting the needs of workplace representatives. Many of you experienced in using the internet will have discovered your own favourites but for those less familiar it is hoped that this will provide a starting point for you to build up your own internet favourite site list.

This guide, as with all other Unite guides is available on the Unite web site, and if accessed through that medium will enable you to directly click on the sites contained in the guide to browse the suggested sites. You are also encouraged to use the information contained on the Unite site specific to your sector and the more general information available under Health & Safety and Equalities. In particular your attention is drawn to the regularly updated "Information for negotiators" which can be found at: http://www.unitetheunion.com/resources/information_for_negotiators.aspx

The rest of this guide is divided into general topic areas with a brief explanation as to the type of information that each site will provide.

Roger Jeary
Director of Research

■ GENERAL NEGOTIATING INFORMATION

Centre for Economic Performance - <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/>

One of the leading economic research groups in Europe. The Centre studies the determinants of economic performance at the level of the company, the nation and the global economy by focusing on the major links between globalisation, technology and institutions (above all the educational system and the labour market) and their impact on productivity, inequality, employment, stability and wellbeing.

Office of National Statistics - <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/> Home of official UK statistics and will provide detailed information on inflation, the labour market and other economic indices.

Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) -

<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/facts/>

A quick reference point to some key economic and social facts about the UK and wider afield. A series of fact sheets, designed to provide succinct overviews across a range of subjects. The fact sheets have been split into two sections - UK Fact Sheets and International Fact Sheets.

Scottish economic and labour market statistics -

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/>

A regional view of key Scottish economic factors and labour market performance.

Welsh economic and labour market statistics -

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/?lang=en>

A regional view of key Welsh economic factors and labour market performance.

Northern Ireland economic statistics -

http://www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/get_util?site=4&util=2

A regional view of useful Northern Ireland statistics.

Unite the union pay and conditions database -

<http://www.lrd.org.uk/payline/index.php>

Available to all Unite members this data base not only contains existing Unite agreements on terms and conditions but also those supplied by other trade unions. The generic username is Unite and the password is opal961.

■ HOW TO RESEARCH YOUR EMPLOYER

If you are trying to improve your organisation in your workplace, get a better wage deal or fighting back against concessions, information on your employer is key to exerting pressure to win. For example, you can find out the location of other company sites; who owns your employer and what other firms are owned; the key players in the firm; the company's business strategy; the key business relationships.

Company web site

The best place to start is the company web site. Enter your company name in Google (www.google.com) and you should be able to find the web site. Check out the web site map to see what's covered. One of the most useful places to look the section headed information for investors or investor relations where you should find financial statements and annual reports.

The TUC site <http://www.worksmart.org.uk/company/> is also worth a look.

Company Insight Centre <http://investing.businessweek.com/>

This pulls together up to 33 pages of data, charts, profiles and news stories on more than 42,000 public companies. Also available are reports on some 320,000 private companies, though since they're private, the data is more limited. It includes profiles of chief executives, recent mergers and acquisitions, earnings reports. Scroll to the bottom of each page to make sure you see all information covered. Once you are on the web site, on the right hand side of the page under the heading "Stock quote" click on Company Look up. This takes you to a new page. Under "Public Company Search" or "Private Company Search" enter the name of company you are looking for. A set of results will come up. Scroll down the list and click on the symbol next to the name of the company that you want.

Securities and Exchange Commission <http://www.sec.gov>

Your company may sell bonds in the USA even if it is not a USA firm. If so the documents that the company has to file with Securities and Exchange Commission rate as one of the top sources for company research. Some company web sites provide a direct link to the SEC as does the Company Insight Centre above - this is the easiest way to get SEC information. The annual report on Form 10-K provides a

comprehensive overview of the company's business and financial condition and includes audited financial statements. Additionally the proxy statement DEF 14a is sent to shareholders and details executive compensation.

<http://www.freeedgar.com> is a searchable database of SEC EDGAR filing.

<http://www.aflcio.org/corporatewatch/research/index.cfm> also provides useful links.

Other Guides to researching your company

<http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=2301>

has a downloadable guide

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/camguide.pdf>

page 120 onwards of this is a useful guide to researching your company as well a further information on the SEC

http://community.foe.co.uk/tools/right_to_know/ tells you how to access information using the Freedom of Information Act in the case of public authorities and information held by the Environment Agency about a public authority organisation.

■ EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

There are a multitude of sites which provide information on employment rights. This guide directs you to a few of them which are easy to navigate and reliable. You are again reminded that in the event of requiring specific legal advice regarding members' rights you should always contact your regional officer who has access to the union's full legal services.

ACAS - <http://www.acas.org.uk/>

This provides a comprehensive guide to rights at work and a whole lot more. Whether it is individual rights at work, Codes of Practice or guidance on representation, this site will provide a factual overview of all this and more.

Worksmart from the TUC - <http://www.worksmart.org.uk/>

WorkSMART aims to be a one-stop shop for everything to do with your working life. As well as rights at work it also covers health and money and usefully provides a company data base search. The money section contains tools for calculating pay, pensions, salary and tax.

There is a useful jargon buster as well to help understand the terms that are sometimes taken for granted.

Department for Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/employment/index.html>

This part of the government's DBERR site provides information on employment legislation covering everything from public holidays to redundancy pay and a whole lot more.

For detailed information on employment rights the page provides a link to the following site DirectGov

DirectGov -

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/index.htm>This

site is a comprehensive guide to everything an employee may need to know about the world of work and their rights. As well as employment rights the site also provides links to information about tax and benefits, training and skills and discrimination.

■ EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The equalities page on the Unite web site is a good starting point for information and links to other sites on this subject and can be found at: <http://www.uniteunion.com/resources/equalities.aspx>

Included on this page is a small selection of some sites which we think provide a broad coverage of the more common issues that you are likely to come across.

Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

The Commission was established in October 2007 and brings together the previous commissions - the EOC, the CRE and the Disability Rights Commission. The EHRC also takes on responsibility for other aspects of equality: age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, as well as human rights. Access to all areas of equality is through the EHRC website at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

TUC - LGBT Rights -

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=21&minors=21>

This site provides on line access to guides published by the TUC which complement the materials published by Unite.

TUC - Black Workers -

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=14&minors=14>

This site provides on-line access to guides published by the TUC complementing materials published by Unite.

TUC - Disability Issues -

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=17&minors=17>

This site provides on line access to guides published by the TUC on disability issues.

TUC women's Issues:

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=313>

TUC Age Equality:

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=437>

■ HEALTH & SAFETY

The health and safety page on the Unite web site is a good starting point for information and links to other sites on this subject and can be found at:

http://www.uniteunion.com/member_services/health_and_safety.aspx

Below are 6 additional sites that we believe will enable you to gather all the information you are likely to need for most health & safety issues in the workplace.

Health and Safety Executive – HSE

<http://www.hse.gov.uk>

The HSE is the national body responsible for health and safety regulation in Great Britain. The HSE's job is to protect people against risks to health or safety arising out of work activities. The site provides advice and guidance covering specific industries and a wide range health and safety topics, research information, links to health and safety legislation applying to Great Britain and dedicated “workers” web pages. You can also sign up for regular e-bulletins covering a range of issues and industries.

Health and Safety Executive (Northern Ireland) – HSENI

<http://www.hseni.gov.uk>

HSENI is the lead body responsible for the promotion and enforcement of health and safety at work standards in Northern Ireland. Similarly, HSENI provides a range of advice and guidance and links to health and safety legislation applicable to Northern Ireland.

Health and Safety Authority – Republic of Ireland – HSA

<http://www.hsa.ie/eng/>

The HSA is the state sponsored body in the Republic of Ireland with responsibility for securing safety, health and welfare at work and operates under the Irish Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. HSA provides a wide range of advice and guidance, safety alerts and links to official copies of Irish health and safety legislation.

Trades Union Congress – TUC

http://www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/index.cfm

The TUC publishes a wide range of health and safety guidance and information on its website.

Hazards Magazine and website

<http://www.hazards.org>

Hazards campaigning website has won several awards and carries a wide range of information aimed at union safety representatives. Hazards – the workers' health and safety magazine supported by the TUC and Unite - is published quarterly.

European Agency for Safety and Health

<http://osha.europa.eu/en>

The Agency brings together and shares knowledge and information to promote a culture of risk prevention in the European Union. Based in Bilbao, Spain, they publish a wide range of information and research on their website in all the European Union languages.

■ ENVIRONMENT

Environmental issues are increasingly part of the workplace agenda and the following sites provide an introduction to some key environmental information.

TUC www.sustainableworkplace.co.uk

The TUC's guide to going green at work, with reports and bargaining materials.

Environment Agency <http://www.netregs.gov.uk/>

Explains environmental regulations in simple terms – covers environmental management schemes (like ISO14001 and EMAS) as well.

Carbon Trust www.carbontrust.co.uk

The Carbon Trust is a government agency that offers advice on workplace energy efficiency and information on help available – including free consultancy for larger employers.

Envirowise www.envirowise.co.uk

Envirowise delivers free, independent advice to assist companies to reduce environmental impact.

Waste Online www.wasteonline.org.uk

This organisation offers general and free advice on waste in the workplace and elsewhere.

Department for Transport

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/>

This page offers lots of information on better, environmentally friendlier travel to work, including guidance for trade union negotiators.

This is everything now so subject to these additions we should be ready to proceed to print and place PDF on web.

■ OTHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For those of you who choose to dig a little deeper and widen your horizons on relevant issues which may be used in a workplace environment or broader trade union activities, the following sites offer a useful starting point.

International

The following sites will enable you to make international comparisons on a range of employment and labour statistics and understand the core labour standards upon which basic trade union rights are based.

<http://www.global-unions.org/>

http://europa.eu/pol/socio/index_en.htm

<http://www.etuc.org/>

<http://www.oecd.org/home/>

<http://www.ilo.org/>

Think Tanks

A small selection of research/think tank sites that provide useful information and data for trade unions.

<http://www.ier.org.uk/node/6>

<http://www.compassonline.org.uk/>

<http://www.psi.org.uk/>

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/index.aspx>

<http://eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/>

<http://www.psiru.org/>

Political

There is a plethora of political websites but the following will provide a useful starting point and provide links to many others including the main political parties.

<http://www.epolitix.com/EN/>

<http://www.parliament.uk/>

Media

Likewise with the media there are sites for every major newspaper and TV news coverage. The following three sites are used for general news stories.

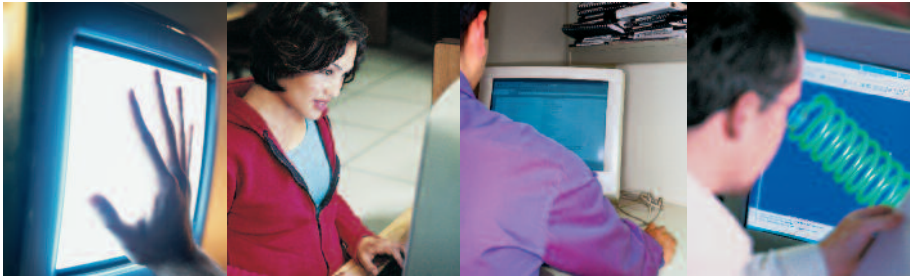
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

<http://news.google.com/>

<http://www.reuters.com/home>

■ NOTES:

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