

CareerTransitions offered at library

New computer program makes changing careers easier for unemployed

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Losing a job is difficult. The same can be said for starting over.

But with a new program at the Norfolk Public Library, some of that stress should be eased.

The library recently began offering Web-based CareerTransitions, an electronic resource offering a comprehensive guide to career change.

Developed as part of Cengage Learning, CareerTransitions is offered free to library patrons, which could be a helpful benefit for financially-burdened job seekers.

“This is an initiative we started last year in response to what was going on in the economy to help people going through job change,” said David Forman, business publisher of Cengage Learning. “The offering, in a nutshell, is an end-to-end complete solution that walks people through the known steps for job transition.”

Users are guided by clear and concise information about career paths, industries, economies and companies — organized around simple-to-navigate portals that combine overviews with statistical information and Web tools to help make

What it's about

Users will find that CareerTransitions:

- Is a complete, guided, self-paced application that walks the individual through the process of finding a new career;
- Takes stock of the current situation;
- Assesses users' strengths and interests;
- Explores new opportunities;
- Improves a patron's chances of getting a job and finally taking the plunge and pursuing the next opportunity.

well-planned career choices.

Forman said CareerTransitions is as much of a service as it is a product.

“One, we're literally extending the reach of the librarians, making them that much more able to serve the users,” he said. “And two, we've taken something that can be overwhelming and daunting, and we've made it simple and easy — draw out the stress and build up the hope of an opportunity.”

CareerTransitions can be used at the Norfolk Public Library, or can be accessed through the library's Web site.

“You won't find it on the World Wide Web,” Forman said.

The first step in the CareerTransition process is “discover my interests.”

This step “unpacks” career ideas for

the user, Forman said.

“So often, when people think about career transition, they look to do more of the same. With the economic environment that we're in, that's not an option,” he said. “We give them alternative choices they may not have thought of. We get them thinking outside of the box.”

Next on the list is “explore careers.” In this step, users will take a deeper look at the careers they're interested in. They'll look at what preparation is required and what opportunities exist for that career in specific areas.

“The ‘explore careers step’ is like Turbo Tax for career change,” Forman said. “The goal of the Turbo Tax product is to minimize taxes owed or to maximize the refund. We did something

similar. We are maximizing the opportunities.”

CareerTransitions then helps users prepare their résumés.

“It walks the user through building a résumé,” Forman said. “It's a very common issue. It can be very daunting for people.”

This section walks users through filling out simple forms and gives them tips and suggestions along the way. At the end of this step, the résumé will be completed. It can then be posted to the Web, e-mailed out or copied into a Word document.

The fourth step in CareerTransitions is “improve your chances.”

“The fourth step gives you all sorts of information you can do to improve your career change, like taking classes at community colleges in your area,” Forman said. “It finds classes that you need to get there; and it find opportunities located near you automatically.”

Then it's time to find a job. CareerTransitions “scrapes” the Web for career opportunities and lays them out for the users, Forman said.

“This is one of the most compelling aspects of the product. It gives you real world opportunities immediately,” Forman said.