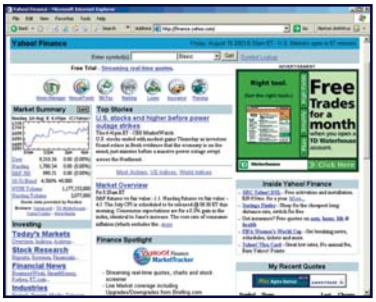
Comprehensive



Comprehensive investment Web sites offer a complete range of financial information and analytical tools for the typical investor. Expect to find portfolio management and analysis tools, market and economic news and data, detailed stock and mutual fund data, charting, stock and mutual fund screening tools, message boards, as well as financial planning tools. Some sites offer access to all areas for free, while others may charge for premium features or more detailed information.

The sites differ in the depth and type of data provided and the sophistication of the tools offered; your particular needs will steer you to the site that can help you the most.

CNBC on MSN Money

moneycentral.msn.com

FREE

Combines the news content of CNBC-TV with the powerful tools of MSN Money.

What We Like: Offers an advanced on-line portfolio manager that calculates rates of return and alerts users to news stories and research updates. Mutual fund screening and research is basic but more than adequate. On the other hand, stock screening and research is top-notch with an advanced stock filtering tool, detailed company reports, free real-time quotes, good charting, and a valuation module.

What We Dislike: Tools are not consistent between Mac and Windows systems; screening and portfolio management functions are more basic on the Mac.

Morningstar.com

www.morningstar.com

FREE–$109/yr.

Full-featured site providing portfolio tracking and analysis, alerts, market monitoring, stock and fund screening and research, educational articles, and message boards.

What We Like: Much of the site is free, with additional research and screening available through the premium service. Portfolio X-Rays help to analyze portfolio asset allocations and holdings. Free screening is basic, but the premium screening module is well-executed. Stock reports emphasize ratios, ratings, rankings and analytical information over raw line items. The premium reports add analyst reports. As expected, mutual fund reports are very detailed and complete. Strong collection of articles with a focus on current market issues, interviews, and detailed educational features.

What We Dislike: Detailed analyst reports limited to 1,000 stocks and 2,000 mutual funds. Presentation of stock financials limited.

Quicken.com

www.quicken.com

FREE

Free site that offers all the basic tools required to monitor an investment portfolio.

What We Like: Provides both a basic and advanced portfolio management module. The site includes all the basic tools required for research including quotes, news, portfolio tracking, company fundamentals, links to full SEC filings, basic stock and fund screening, insider transactions, and analyst ratings and earnings estimates. Includes a simple worksheet for estimating the intrinsic value of a stock and a "one-click scorecard" that rates a company using the investment philosophy of Warren Buffett, the NAIC, Geraldine Weiss, or the Motley Fool.

What We Dislike: Investor news and research now "hidden" within the Brokerage tab of Quicken site. Screening criteria cannot be saved for use at a later time. Limited analyst reports. Advanced portfolio manager not available for Mac users.

Combines the high-grade editorial content of its magazine with a rich array of useful investment tools and research.

SmartMoney.com

www.smartmoney.com

FREE–$109/yr.

What We Like: The site covers all of the bases: portfolio management, market news and updates, charting, company and mutual fund research, mutual fund screening, as well as educational articles on financial planning and investment analysis. Features a unique set of analytical tools that go beyond the standard set of repackaged data found at most investment Web sites. Daily and weekly E-mail updates provide a handy notice of new articles posted to the site. Premium service offers additional analysis and commentary, stock screening, real-time quotes, and portfolio tracking.

What We Dislike: Stock screening only available for premium users.

Yahoo! Finace

finance.yahoo.com

FREE

Pulls together data from throughout the Internet to provide investors access to a basic, but complete set of data .

What We Like: All the necessary tools for monitoring a stock or mutual fund portfolio are in place. Once registered, users can customize the default display of information. Yahoo! Finance leverages its linking expertise to bring together news, fundamental stock

(Continued on next page)

data, earnings estimates and brokerage recommendations, and insider transactions from a wide range of sources. Offers the most popular message boards on the Internet. The message boards in the stock area are divided into industry groups such as basic materials, energy, financial, and utilities. You can also perform a search for message boards based on keywords.

What We Dislike: Screening module is very basic.

IPOs

An initial public offering (IPO) is the first sale of stock by a company to the public. Sites in this category typically provide registration statements, including a prospectus, which are filed with the SEC prior to an IPO. Also, you'll usually see information on the IPO's "cooling off" period (the period after a company files its prospectus with the SEC, but before the actual IPO) and the "lock-up" period (the period of time during which employees of a company cannot sell stock received from an IPO). Also, look for calendars of upcoming IPOs.

123Jump IPO Center
www.123jump.com/ipo/
FREE

Global network of analysts and writers includes area on IPOs.

What We Like: Lists IPOs for the coming week with a sentiment indicator related to interest in the IPO. Lists IPOs in registration, recently priced IPOs, and those IPOs that have been postponed or withdrawn. IPOs are also broken down by sector. Calendars are available that show IPO pricings on a monthly and annual basis going back to 2000. Company reports for IPOs contain a company description, ownership data, and financials.

What We Dislike: No information on lock-up period for new IPOs and no charts for recently priced IPOs.

Alert-IPO!
www.alertipo.com
FREE–$99.95/yr.

Comprehensive source of IPO information.

What We Like: Users can create a watchlist of IPOs. An archive of IPO-related news is provided along with lists of upcoming IPOs. Calendars show upcoming IPOs and expirations of quiet periods and lockups. You can search IPOs based on over 20 different data elements. Pricings are listed by most recent, date, industry, state, or country. An IPO performance table can be sorted by company, symbol, or performance over various time periods. Lists best- and worst-performing IPOs over various time periods. Bull/bear ranking for upcoming IPOs are based on technical indicators. Company reports offer description, financials, risk factors, and SEC (EDGAR) filings. Subscriptions offer E-mailed reports; weekly summary reports; nightly news; and real-time alerts of when an IPO starts trading.

What We Dislike: Company reports for recent IPO pricings do not include price histories or charts.

Hoover's Online IPO Central
www.hoovers.com/global/ipoc/
FREE

Business information site that maintains an IPO area.

What We Like: Quarterly IPO Scorecard shows total number, total value, and average value of IPOs for last quarter, same quarter one year ago, and the quarter prior to last. Also provides breakdown of IPO pricings by industry, best/worst returns over the last quarter and biggest first-day increases and drops. Lists latest filings, pricings for the current month, and IPOs filed but not yet trading. Lists of past pricings are available for the past six months and on a quarterly basis back to 1996. Hoover's company reports provide description of company's business, key competitors, and selected financial statement data. Detailed company profiles and in-depth financials available for a subscription fee.

What We Dislike: Large amount of content has been eliminated. No information provided regarding lock-up expirations.

IPO Monitor
www.ipomonitor.com
FREE–$290/yr.

Site devoted to venture capital, IPOs, and secondary offerings.

What We Like: Free area offers listing of recent IPO filings and secondary offerings for the last three weeks, and a breakdown of funds raised—by industry segment—over the last six months. Quarterly IPO reviews offer commentary on the current IPO market environment and a rundown on the deals for the quarter, along with a comparison to the quarter one year ago. There is also a discussion of the top IPOs from the same quarter one year ago and how they have performed since they debuted, a recap of key IPOs for the current year, and a preview of upcoming IPOs. This site also offers free access to the quarterly reviews going back four quarters and annual reviews for each of the last three years. Free weekly newsletter also available. Subscribers have access to recent pricings, IPO calendar, withdrawals, and aftermarket price performance. E-mail alerts for real-time pricings, daily IPO report, and weekly wrap-up.

What We Dislike: Some subscription-based services are offered free of charge elsewhere.

Wednesday, November 5 –
Friday, November 7, 2003
Las Vegas Riviera Hotel & Casino

Smart Investor Exhibit Hall

The AAII Investor Conference includes FREE access to the Smart Investor Exhibit Hall … a hands-on forum for our members to access all the tools and education they need to become better investors. The following exhibitors will be in attendance:

Amex
www.amex.com
Al Frank Asset Management
www.alfrank.com
Barron's
www.barronsmag.com
Best Choice Software
www.bestchoicesoftware.com
BP, plc
www.bp.com
Colonial Properties Trust
www.colonialprop.com
Concorde Forex Group, Inc.
www.cfgtrading.com
Corporate Office Properties Trust
www.copt.com
Glenborough Realty Trust, Inc.
www.glenborough.com
Inve$tWare Corporation
www.investware.com
Investor's Business Daily
www.investors.com
Investors FastTrack
www.fasttrack.net
Morningstar, Inc.
www.morningstar.com
NAREIT
www.investinreits.com
Navellier
www.navellier.com
Oberweis Funds
www.oberweis.net
Options Industry Council
www.888options.com
Pan Pacific Retail Properties
ww.pprp.com
Red Chip Review
www.redchip.com
Reuters Research
www.multexinvestor.com
SEC
www.sec.gov

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Learn How To

- Pick Winning Stocks
- Become a Computerized Investor
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- Protect Your Portfolio
- Use Technical Analysis
- Profit From Small- & Mid-Cap Stocks
- Select Mutual Funds
- Become a Smart Investor

And Much More!

Key Speakers Focus on Today's Investment Opportunities

Don Phillips Morningstar	Kenneth Fisher Fisher Investments	Mark Hulbert Hulbert Financial Digest
Jonathan Pond Financial Columnist	Janet Brown NoLoad Fund *X	Louis Navellier Navellier & Associates

AAII Investor Conference attendees receive:

- Over 20 "must-attend" investing classes
- Comprehensive handouts
- Continental breakfasts & luncheon
- Welcome reception
- AAII certified instructors
- Renowned professional money managers
- Access to the Smart Investor Exhibit Hall

Call Today to Register!

(800) 428-2244 or (312) 280-0170

Attendance for this program is limited and registration will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Please let us know when you register if you have a disability and how we can accommodate you. All programs are registered in all states for CPE credits for CFPs and CPAs. The program qualifies for 12 CPE credits.

This Conference offers over 20 educational sessions guaranteed to expand your investment knowledge and turn you into a better investor.

All sessions include a question and answer period, plus you'll receive detailed handouts that will continue to provide learning throughout the year.

The Conference starts Wednesday afternoon with pre-conference special events. See scheduled presenters and program times below for more information.

The Riviera Hotel & Casino—Las Vegas
Located on the Strip, the Riveria Hotel and Casino offers spacious and comfortable sleeping rooms, four specialty restaurants, a large food court and the World's Fare Buffet featuring five theme stations. There's also a swimming pool, spa and exercise facility, nightly show and a 100,000-square-foot casino for your entertainment.

Enjoy Luxury Accommodations at a Discount: Sleeping room rates—$99 (single/double)

A hotel reservation card will be sent to you after registering for the program. Special rates and rooms will be available on a limited basis—**call (800) 634-6753 to reserve your room.**

Discounted Air Travel
Call Southwest Airlines Group for up to 10% off qualifying fares: (800) 433-5368, reference Group I.D. Code B0269.

Scheduled Presentations and Speakers

Conference Schedule

Wednesday, November 5	**1:00 pm – 5:30 pm**
Thursday, November 6	**7:30 am – 5:00 pm**
Welcome Reception	*5:00 pm – 6:00 pm*
Friday, November 7	**8:30 am – 12:30 pm**

Wednesday Afternoon

Keynote Panel Discussion:
An Expert's Approach to Today's Market
John Markese, Ph.D., president, AAII
Jonathan Pond, president, Financial Planning Information, Inc.
Kenneth Fisher, chairman, Fisher Investments
Don Phillips, managing director, Morningstar, Inc.

Thursday Morning

Las Vegas & Wall Street: How to Get a Fair Shake
Laszlo Birinyi, president, Birinyi Associates, Inc.

How to Find Stocks You Should Own
Louis Navellier, founder & CIO, Navellier & Associates

New Tools for Analyzing Your Portfolio
Don Phillips, managing director, Morningstar, Inc.

Evaluating Risk in Investments
Jonathan Pond, president, Financial Planning Information, Inc.

Screening: The First Step to Finding a Winning Stock
John Bajkowski, editor, AAII's Computerized Investing

Retirement Investing in Bull and Bear Markets
Maria Crawford Scott, editor, AAII Journal

The Current Market's Effect on Your Securities
Susan Ferris-Wykerko, director, office of investor education and assistance, SEC

REITs: Investing for Dividends and Diversification
Michael Grupe, senior vice president, research and investment outreach, NAREIT

Luncheon With Panel Discussion:
Viewing the Market Through the Eyes of Newsletter Writers
Mark Hulbert, editor, Hulbert Financial Digest
Louis Navellier, CIO, Navellier & Associates
John Dessauer, editor, John Dessauer's Investor's World
Michael Murphy, editor, California Technology Stock Letter
John Buckingham, editor, The Prudent Speculator
Janet Brown, managing editor, NoLoad Fund*X

Thursday Afternoon

The Coming Shocker: The Pessimists Are WRONG!
John Dessauer, editor, John Dessauer's Investor's World

Is the Market Linked to Your Behavior?
Kenneth Fisher, chairman and CIO, Fisher Investments

Newsletters Today vs. 25 Years Ago—
and What Those Differences Mean to the Individual Investor
Mark Hulbert, editor, Hulbert Financial Digest

What's Next For Technology & Biotechnology?
Michael Murphy, editor, California Technology Stock Letter

How to Stay in Sync With Changing Market Leadership—
Upgrade to the Winning Funds
Janet Brown, managing editor, NoLoad Fund*X

Using Investor's Business Daily and
investors.com to Achieve Huge Potential Profits!
Joe Burns, national speaker for Investor's Business Daily (IBD)

Friday Morning

Best Value Stocks to Buy Right Now
John Buckingham, editor, Prudent Speculator

Chicken Investing—Keys to Investing in Volatile Markets
Charles Carlson, editor, DRIP Investor

Stocks for All Seasons
Tom Howard, Ph.D., finance professor, Denver University

AAII's Guide to the Top Investment Web Sites
Wayne A. Thorp, CFA, associate editor, AAII's Computerized Investing

Catching Winners Early—
Finding Tomorrow's Super Growth Stocks Today!
James W. Oberweis, CFA, president, Oberweis Asset Management

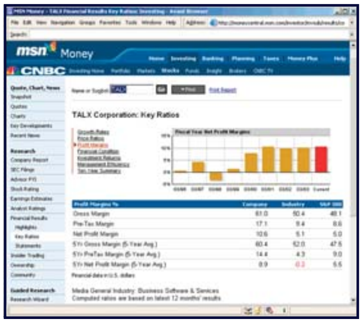
Registration Fees

- $295 AAII Member
- $245 Immediate Family Member
  (accompanying member)
- $335 Non-Member
  (includes a one-year membership in AAII)

To register, contact AAII Member Services

- By phone at (800) 428-2244 or (312) 280-0170
- By E-mail to members@aaii.com
- By fax to (312) 280-9883
- By mail, using the enclosed postpaid envelope

Stock Data



Researching company fundamentals on-line is becoming easier as Web sources become more robust, less expensive, and easier to use. Most of these data services offer basic financial statement data, earnings estimates, and company and industry analysis. The depth and range of data given are what distinguish these sites from each other.

Bonus features found at these sites may include market and industry comparative statistics and education on stock valuation techniques.

Fundamental data is typically accessed by typing in a ticker symbol or company name at a quotes or research prompt on the home page.

CBS MarketWatch
cbs.marketwatch.com
FREE

Comprehensive site.

What We Liked: Offers detailed income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow statement data for last four fiscal years and last four fiscal quarters. Lists insider buy and sell transactions as well as plots transactions on price chart. Option chains for put and call options also available. Limited financial ratios and multiples.

What We Dislike: Lacking institutional ownership data and comparative market, industry or sector data. Limited number of financial ratios. Cannot format pages or reports for printing.

CNBC on MSN Money
investor.msn.com
FREE

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: Able to generate customized company report with quote detail, charts, analyst information, financial highlights and ratios, annual and/or quarterly financial statement data, and insider trading activity. Reports comparative industry and S&P 500 data for financial ratios. A unique feature is the StockScouter rating system that assesses a stock's potential for outperforming the broad market based on fundamentals, insider ownership, valuation, and technical analysis. Advisor FYI alerts for price or financial activity. Provides listing of insider transactions and planned sales filings.

What We Dislike: Individual pages cannot be formatted for printing.

Morningstar.com
www.morningstar.com
FREE–$109/yr.

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: Quicktake Reports, which can be formatted for printing, contain stock performance data, Morningstar stock grades, selected stock valuations, growth rates, ratios, institutional ownership data, selected financial statement data, earnings estimates, analyst ratings, and insider activity. New diagnostics section (free to registered users) discusses company stock performance, valuations, earnings and sales growth, profitability, financial health, and dividends in context of how they compare to the company's respective industry. Year-to-date and annual total return data going back five years, historical stock charts, and dividend and split history back to 1998 are also included. Selected financial statement data goes back 10 fiscal years. Listing of institutional owners, percentage of shares held, percentage of fund assets, change in ownership, and Morningstar rating for fund shareowners. Paid subscribers have access to analyst reports and Morningstar stock ratings.

What We Dislike: Financial statement data not as extensive or deep as some of these other sites.

MultexInvestor
www.multexinvestor.com
FREE

Stock data and screening site.

What We Like: Offers comprehensive collection of company financial data. Most pages can be formatted for printing. Provides an extensive collection of financial ratios, multiples, and growth rates as well as industry, sector, and S&P 500 comparison data. In-depth insider and institutional ownership and activity data are available. Five quarters and five years of detailed income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow statement data are provided, along with normalized income statement data. Stock performance, insider trading, short interest, and institutional ownership data also available. Provides access to an array of free and for-purchase analyst reports.

What We Dislike: Lack of historical ratio and multiple data to track trends over time. Site reformat has led to removal of some data; also, certain pages no longer offered in printer-friendly format.

(Continued on next page)

Quicken.com
www.quicken.com
FREE

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: The One-Click Scorecard allows you to see whether a given stock would pass screens based on strategies used by the NAIC and investment pros such as Warren Buffett and Geraldine Weiss. The Security Evaluator allows you to view historical trends for a company as well as make comparisons to its industry and the overall market. Can create a report comparing company's stock chart, analyst ratings, and fundamentals to those of its industry peers. Also available are insider activity and holdings data, valuations, growth rates, financial ratios and multiples, analyst ratings, and annual and quarterly financial statements.

What We Dislike: Limited financial statement data. Institutional ownership and activity data not available.

SmartMoney.com
www.smartmoney.com
FREE–$109/yr. (SmartMoney Select)

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: The Competitive Analysis section allows users to compare a company to four of its industry peers based on selected financial statement items, financial multiples and ratios, growth rates, and share statistics. Offers a price chart with insider buy and sell transactions, as well as insider gain/loss data and an insider timing grade. Subscribers to SmartMoney Select have access to a tool that allows company comparisons based on multiples, ratios, growth rates, and analyst recommendations. This functionality is also integrated into Stock Snapshots to allow you to compare a stock to its competitors.

What We Dislike: Not able to specify which companies to use for comparison. Financial statement data not as detailed as that found at other sites.

ThomsonFN.com
www.thomsonfn.com
FREE

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: Offers a good array of financial ratios and multiples, price momentum data, and earnings estimates. Allows for comparison of the price performance of a company to companies in its sector or industry, as well as those with similar market cap. The I-Watch section provides a unique collection of institutional trading data and charts. Also gives information on insider buy and sell activity, the exercise of stock options by insiders, and insider buy and sell performance. Put and call option data and charts provided as well. Seasonality Tracker provides average monthly returns and monthly stock performance going back to 1986.

What We Dislike: Offers very little financial statement data. Pages are not formatted for printing.

Wall Street City
www.wallstreetcity.com
FREE–$9.95/mo.

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: Provides one of the more extensive collections of technical statistics for a company along with fundamental data. A corporate snapshot page can be edited to include any of almost 200 data points, including fundamental and technical data elements. A technical data report contains general (fundamental) data and technical indicators covering stock performance, volume, moving average convergence/divergence (MACD), moving averages, stochastics, Wilder's relative strength, and least squares. Includes Telescan rankings based on categories such as short- and long-term growth, value, and technicals. Offers unique graphing of insider buying and selling activity. Paid subscribers have access to additional financial data and detailed financial statements as well as market and industry comparisons.

What We Dislike: Detailed financial statement data available only to subscribers. Limited institutional ownership and activity data. Navigation somewhat difficult.

WSJ.com
www.wsj.com
FREE–$79/yr.
(non-print Journal/Barron's subscribers)

Financial news site offering company data and research.

What We Like: Valuations and ratios for last fiscal quarter and year as well as trailing 12 months. Company stock performance relative to its industry over various time periods up to five years back. Lists top 10 insiders based on percentage of shares held, cumulative insider activity over the last three, six, and 12 months and individual transactions over the last 12 months. Also lists the 10 institutional investors and the mutual funds with the 10 largest holdings. Provides income statement, balance sheet, and statement of cash flow data for last five fiscal quarters and last five fiscal years. Printer-friendly pages available.

What We Dislike: Comparative industry or sector and market data not as extensive as other sites.

Analyst Estimates & Recommendations

When quarterly earnings are released, investors typically are rewarded for holding companies exceeding expectations and are punished for owning companies that happen to fall short of their earnings projections. Changes in expectations and recommendations can also have a dramatic short- and long-term impact on a firm's stock price.

Consensus earnings estimates and analyst recommendations are usually found in a Web site's quotes area. You type in a ticker symbol and then select earnings estimates or analyst reports from a list or tab. Most sites provide this information for free; a few charge a subscription fee for in-depth data.

The top sites in this category will provide consensus earnings estimates for the current fiscal quarter and year as well as going forward for the next few quarters and years. Look for the trend in estimates over the last several weeks as well as the number of upward or downward revisions made by analysts. In addition, the top sites will offer consensus buy/hold/sell ratings for a given security and track this rating over time.

Another estimate that has gained in popularity over the last few years is "whisper numbers." Whisper earnings are considered the actual earnings expectations of the analysts tracking the company free of any company guidance or influence. They are passed (whispered) between analysts and to the analysts' best customers, but are not posted to estimate tracking services. Whisper numbers are thought to carry weight with institutional investors. A company might meet or even exceed its consensus estimate, only to see its stock price plummet because it fails to meet the whisper numbers.

CNBC on MSN Money

moneycentral.msn.com

FREE

Comprehensive site with earnings estimates provided by Zacks Investment Research.

What We Like: Provides average earnings estimate, number of analysts, high/low estimate, year ago earnings per share, and growth rate for the next two fiscal quarters and years. Shows earnings surprise data for the last five fiscal quarters, along with consensus trends going back 90 days. Earnings growth rates for the last five years and next five years are reported for company, industry and S&P 500. Also provides analyst ratings and number of analysts giving recommendations currently and for each of the last three months.

What We Dislike: Does not track upward or downward earnings revisions and does not provide whisper earnings.

EarningsWhispers.com

www.earningswhispers.com

FREE—$249.95/qtr.

Site devoted to tracking whisper earnings.

What We Like: Lists companies announcing earnings that day, as well as those that have offered earnings guidance (i.e., issued a statement that may impact estimates). Provides both whisper earnings and analyst estimates as well as members' estimates (when available). Provides an indication of current trend in stock price; trend in analyst target, estimate, and recommendation; and trend in site users' sentiment (when available). Lists current analyst recommendations and price targets and estimates from individual analysts. Various "play" lists include companies that reported upward earnings guidance over the past day, companies that are expected to release earnings and that have a whisper number that is greater than or equal to the consensus estimate, and companies that reported earnings within the past day that were above the consensus estimate and the whisper number. Subscribers can also create a watchlist of companies and receive real-time guidance information.

What We Dislike: No consensus earnings data beyond current fiscal quarter, and no annual earnings estimates.

Marketperform.com

www.marketperform.com

$149/yr.

Site that measures the performance of financial institutions' stock recommendations.

What We Like: The site collects recommendation data and analyzes it using a proprietary formula to show which firms have the best record when recommending stocks. Lists the top five financial institutions based on the return of their recommendations over the last month, three months, and six months. Lists the major financial institutions and brokerage firms that issue stock recommendations and the performance of the recommendations; performance is also broken into sectors and industries. For individual stocks, the site gathers recommendation data on a daily basis and tracks performance: There is a price chart and recommendation history for each stock, including the number of days that have passed since the rating was issued, and the stock performance over that period. Two investment firms can be compared to see how they have performed over the last year. E-mail alerts on individual investment firms, stocks, industries, or sectors notify you when new ratings are issued or revisions are made. "What-if" simulations allow users to design and adjust recommendation-based trading strategies and view portfolio returns based on selected criteria.

What We Dislike: No financial data provided for stocks such as financials, ratios, or earnings estimates.

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Analyst Estimates & Recommendations (con't)

Morningstar.com
www.morningstar.com
FREE—$109/yr.

Comprehensive site with earnings estimates provided by Multex.

What We Like: Provides graphical comparison of same-quarter earnings for the last four quarters and next two quarters. Gives growth rates in estimated earnings for the next two fiscal quarters, a graph of earnings surprises from the last four quarters, and annual earnings estimates for the next two fiscal years—along with trends in these figures over the last 90 days. Also available are analyst opinions and average ratings (current and one month ago). Average analyst ratings for stocks in the industry and S&P 500 stocks are also given for comparison. Paid subscribers can access Analyst Reports, which outline a company's prospects based on growth, profitability, financial health, and valuations and assigns letter grades for each category.

What We Dislike: Does not show the trend in quarterly earnings over the last few months, offer whisper earnings figures, or track upward or downward earnings revisions.

MultexInvestor
www.multexinvestor.com
FREE

Semi-comprehensive site providing in-house earnings estimates and stock data from Market Guide/Multex.

What We Like: Reports the mean quarterly and annual earnings estimates for next two fiscal quarters and years along with number of analysts, high and low estimates, and standard deviation. Also provides projected price-earnings ratio for next two fiscal years and long-term estimated growth rates. Offers quarterly earnings surprise data for the last five fiscal quarters, quarterly and annual earnings estimate revisions over the last week and four weeks, and trend in quarterly and annual earnings over the last three months. Current analyst recommendations and revisions are given as well as those tracking back 13 weeks.

What We Dislike: Does not provide whisper earnings.

Quicken.com
www.quicken.com
FREE

Comprehensive site with earnings estimates provided by Zacks Investment Research and analyst upgrades/downgrades from Briefing.com.

What We Like: Reports analyst ratings and average overall current rating as well as ratings for each of the last three months. Provides a list of top-rated stocks that are releasing earnings each day. Extensive collection of free and fee-based research reports is offered. Lists history of analyst actions and firms covering a particular company. Reports average earnings estimates for the next two fiscal quarters and years, along with number of analysts, high and low estimates for each period, and projected five-year earnings growth rate. Charts show the distribution of estimates for the next two fiscal quarters and years. Analyst estimate trends are given for quarterly and annual estimates going back 90 days. Also provided: quarterly earnings history (including surprises) for the last five fiscal quarters.

What We Dislike: Does not provide whisper earnings.

SmartMoney.com
www.smartmoney.com
FREE—$109/yr.

Comprehensive site with earnings estimates provided by Zacks Investment Research and analyst upgrades/downgrades from Briefing.com.

What We Like: A competitive analysis chart ranks the company against its key competitors using estimated earnings growth for the current fiscal year and next fiscal year, long-term estimated growth rate in earnings, and forward price-earnings ratio. Also provides same statistics for the industry and S&P 500. Current analyst recommendations and trend are shown for the last three months. A chart ranks the company against its key competitors over the same time periods. Also, reports current earnings estimates for the next two fiscal quarters and years, long-term estimated growth rate in earnings, and the trend for the last three months.

What We Dislike: Does not provide or track earnings revisions, or provide whisper earnings. On comparison charts, you cannot specify those companies to include for comparison.

ThomsonFN.com
www.thomsonfn.com
FREE

Comprehensive site with earnings estimates provided by First Call.

What We Like: Reports current consensus First Call recommendation, current consensus earnings and earnings surprise data for each of the last four quarters. Provides current median consensus earnings estimates; number of estimates; and high and low estimates for the current fiscal quarter, the three quarters going forward, and for the next two fiscal years. Tracks the number of upward and downward revisions for the last week and month for next four quarters.

What We Dislike: Does not provide whisper earnings or earnings revisions for annual estimates.

(continued on next page)

Analyst Estimates & Recommendations (con't)

Wall Street City
www.wallstreetcity.com
FREE–$9.95/mo.

Comprehensive site with earnings estimates provided by Zacks Investment Research.

What We Like: Free subscribers may access current analyst opinions, average recommendation, and current quarter percentage surprise. Analyst summary report lists current brokerage/analyst coverage. Site also tracks changes in analyst recommendations for the past week; gives a distribution of earnings estimates for the next two fiscal quarters and years; provides surprise history for the last three fiscal quarters; and reports estimated growth rates for a company, its industry, and the S&P 500 for the next two fiscal years, along with a long-term estimated growth rate. Paid subscribers have access to detailed earnings estimates reports that also track the mean annual and quarterly estimate over each of the last eight weeks as well as week-to-week earnings revisions.

What We Dislike: Does not provide whisper earnings.

WhisperNumber.com
www.whispernumber.com
FREE

Site devoted to tracking whisper earnings.

What We Like: Provides current mean whisper number for the earnings and revenue estimates for the current fiscal quarter and their trends over the last 20 days. Offers historical earnings and revenue data, including consensus estimate, whisper number, actual reported earnings/revenue, and 24-hour and five-day price movement following the announcement for each of the last four quarters. Stock performance history shows number of times company has beat, met, or missed whisper numbers and the average stock increase/decrease over the proceeding 24-hour and five-day periods, as well as industry and sector comparisons. Earnings sentiment ranking groups stocks based on a weighted percentage between the estimated earnings number and the whisper number.

What We Dislike: Does not provide quarterly estimates beyond the current quarter and does not provide annual estimates. Does not track analyst recommendations or earnings revisions.

Zacks Investment Research
www.zacks.com
FREE

Leading provider of earnings estimates.

What We Like: Reports earnings for each of the last five fiscal quarters, along with corresponding consensus estimate and surprise data. Provides average earnings estimate, high and low estimate, and number of estimates for current and next fiscal quarter as well as current and next fiscal year. Displays consensus earnings trend for current fiscal quarter and year over last 30 days—including consensus estimate and number of upward and downward revisions. Also gives current analyst ratings and trend over the last three months.

What We Dislike: Does not offer whisper numbers and no longer provides detailed breakdown of analyst recommendations.

Stock Screening

A screening system can be a very effective tool in a disciplined approach to investing. Screening consists of looking through a large universe of stocks to locate a few that possess one or more desirable quantitative characteristics indicating that they merit further attention. The particular characteristics that investors seek vary depending upon individual investment philosophies and even timeframes.

On-line tools that allow users to search a database for stocks that match their specified criteria may provide predefined stock screens or modules that allow users to create their own custom screens. The core feature of any screening system is its screening capabilities. The site should allow you to screen against a constant value or another field. Some sites even allow you to compare a value against industry norms.

CNBC on MSN Money
moneycentral.msn.com/investor
FREE

Comprehensive site offers screening on a database of over 8,000 stocks.

What We Like: Two hundred fields are available for screening using the Deluxe Screener module. There are 12 predefined basic and deluxe searches. Basic searches simply list those stocks or funds matching a few common measures. Deluxe screening is interactive with passing companies displayed as criteria are added. The criteria encompass a full spectrum of elements ranging from basic company information, such as market capitalization, to changes in analyst recommendations. Criteria can be compared to constants, other fields or even another company. Criteria can be saved for later use.

What We Dislike: Tools are not consistent between Mac and Windows systems; on Mac systems, displays a more basic screening module.

Stock Screening (con't)

Morningstar.com
www.morningstar.com
FREE–$109/yr.

Comprehensive site offers screening on a database of over 8,000 stocks.

What We Like: Free screening module provides 19 different screening variables, focusing mainly on Morningstar grades and stock style characteristics. Subscription gives users greater flexibility, with 600 data fields per company and 125 data fields to choose from for screening and sorting. Comparisons can be drawn to constant values, S&P average, or sector norm.

What We Dislike: Free screening restricted to 19 variables and users cannot save filters for use at a later time.

MultexInvestor
www.multexinvestor.com
FREE

Offers powerful screening tool coupled with access to detailed company and industry data.

What We Like: Offers a full range of free stock data including company snapshots, real-time quotes, fundamental data, earnings estimates, charts, and analyst recommendations. Screening tool provides access to over 80 data items. Users can even create their own custom fields, a rare feature among Web-based tools. Screening criteria can be very powerful. A single line in a filter can include mathematical and logical manipulations. The results table can even be saved as a spreadsheet file. Screens can be saved for use at a later time.

What We Dislike: Screening module slightly cumbersome. Filters cannot compare firm and industry.

Quicken.com
www.quicken.com
FREE

Comprehensive site offers screening on a database of over 9,000 stocks.

What We Like: Offers six predefined screens covering basic growth, value, momentum, and market-capitalization approaches. Results are displayed in a standard table view, but Quicken has a nice feature that allows users to switch between different views, such as financials or growth rates. The Full Search screening module allows users to construct custom screens using any of 41 well-chosen elements. Users can select predefined ranges for each element or specify a minimum and maximum range.

What We Dislike: Custom screens cannot be saved for future use. Screening elements cannot be compared against other data fields or industry values.

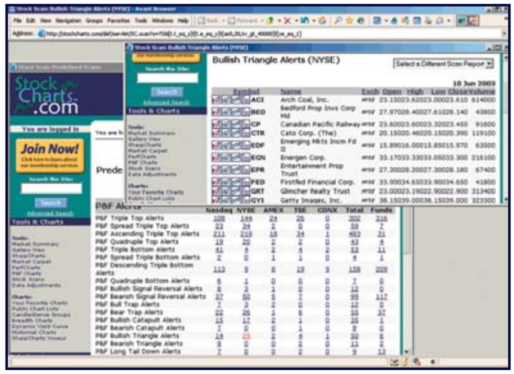
Wall Street City
www.wallstreetcity.com
FREE–$9.95/mo.

Comprehensive site offers screening on a database of over 14,000 stocks.

What We Like: Includes a flexible and powerful screening module that covers a wide range of fundamental and technical factors. Up to 40 criteria can be combined at one time from the 700 technical and fundamental screening criteria. Criteria can be weighted to create custom company scores. A unique backtesting feature analyzes the historical success of a screen using various holding periods and market capitalization concentrations. Wall Street City tracks its predefined screens and reports on the performance of these strategies. What's Working Now identifies the best- and worst-performing stock groups and predefined stock screens. The predefined screens cover a wide range of fundamental and technical screening strategies. You can also view the filters that make up the screen, a list of the passing companies, historical performance charts, and statistics for the strategy.

What We Dislike: Screening criteria cannot be saved for later use. Comparison of company to industry factors limited.

Stock Charting & Technical Analysis



Technical analysis attempts to forecast price movements in a security—stock, bond, mutual fund, or option—by examining how the market price and volume behave over time. Technical analysis is dependent upon large quantities of historical price and volume data. Technicians normally use charts to plot price and volume data along with any derived indicators.

These sites allow users to create price charts of securities and indexes, as well as overlay technical indicators. The better sites in this category allow users to modify the parameters of indicators, such as the time period over which they are calculated. With Java technology, sites such as BigCharts and Prophet Financial Systems can offer users the ability to draw custom trendlines. These sites may also provide educational material on technical analysis.

BigCharts
www.bigcharts.com
FREE

Site specializing in stock charting.

What We Like: Provides over 30 years of chart data (when available). Offers Java charts that allow users to draw their own trendlines. Free end-of-day charts delivered via E-mail. Offers high level of flexibility when creating charts, including time period covered, frequency (one-minute, daily, weekly), price display (bar, candlestick, etc.), chart size, and over 20 technical indicators. Chart settings can be saved for future use.

What We Dislike: Limited ability to modify parameters underlying the technical indicators. Can plot only three indicators per chart. No technical analysis educational content.

ClearStation
www.clearstation.com
FREE

Comprehensive site offering stock charting, technical analysis, and education.

What We Like: Provides an indication of up/down trends on charts. Good collection of technical analysis educational materials covering chart basics, technical indicators, and chart patterns. The "Tag & Bag" area lists stocks that have been screened and sorted based on technical, fundamental, and Web site community events. A technical events area breaks out stocks based on trending, timing, price action, most active, and continuation trend.

What We Dislike: Not able to alter the parameters underlying the technical indicators.

Dorsey Wright & Associates
www.dorseywright.com
FREE–$45/mo.

Unique site specializing in point and figure charting.

What We Like: The PnF University is free to registered users and is dedicated to education in point and figure methodology. The university is broken into lessons that each contain a test; there are also additional exercises to practice what you learn and a glossary of point and figure terms. Subscribers have access to point and figure charts on over 6,200 stocks, relative strength charts on each stock, mutual fund charts (for an additional fee), and columns written by company analysts about the market, sectors, stocks, and trading philosophies. Subscribers can also search the database by sector, price, trend, momentum, and buy and sell signals. Can save charts in portable document format (PDF).

What We Dislike: Since the point and figure charts are pre-drawn, users are limited in the control they have over the way the charts look. Can only alter scale and size of chart. Devoted exclusively to point and figure charting.

MarketScreen.com
www.marketscreen.com
FREE–$439.95/yr.

Financial analytic engine providing comprehensive stock screening and market alerts based upon technical and fundamental elements.

What We Like: Offers one of the most comprehensive collections of technical scans. Results of scans can be exported. Subscribers can create their own scans and save them for future use. Backtests scans and provides historical performance.

What We Dislike: Cannot scan the universe of stocks for those exhibiting specific chart patterns. Does not offer real-time charting.

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Stock Charting & Technical Analysis (con't)

Prophet Financial Systems, Inc.
www.prophet.net
FREE–$34.95/mo.

Site specializing in technical analysis and charting.

What We Like: Provides over 40 years of historical chart data (when available). Covers stocks, mutual funds, futures, and options. SnapCharts is a free end-of-day charting service with data back to 1968 (when available) that allows the overlay of up to five customizable indicators. JavaCharts provide additional interaction, including the ability to select a point on a chart and receive the open, high, low, and closing prices and volume for that particular point in time. These charts also allow users to draw custom trendlines and choose from over 20 technical indicators, all of which can be customized. Other subscriptions provide real-time dynamic charts and indicators.

What We Dislike: Limited technical analysis educational content. Cannot create custom scans/screens.

StockCharts.com
www.stockcharts.com
FREE–$29.90/mo.

Site specializing in charting, technical analysis and education.

What We Like: Chart School provides extensive discussion of various chart types and technical indicators as well as an in-depth discussion of the features of the site. Offers fully customizable point and figure charts that also provide indications of recently formed chart patterns. Gallery View gives you short-, medium-, and long-term views of any stock, index, or mutual fund. Over 70 preinstalled scans will search for stocks and mutual funds based on price performance, technical indicator values, candlestick patterns, and point and figure patterns. Subscribers can plot intraday charts, create on-line portfolios, plot up to 24 indicators per chart, and create their own stock scans.

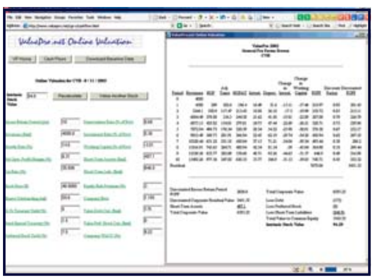
What We Dislike: Premium subscription required to plot intraday charts or to save chart settings. Free service only offers six months of data for charting.

Wall Street City
www.wallstreetcity.com
FREE–$9.95/mo.

Comprehensive site that offers charting and extensive coverage of technical indicators, including capability to screen on technicals.

What We Like: Can see 12 months of screen results. Users can plot any of up to 12 customizable indicators on a chart. Also able to modify chart size, chart type, time period plotted, and graph scale. Screening mechanism provides extensive searches using technical indicators. Plots buy/sell signals for selected indicators and gain/loss information.

What We Dislike: No educational content for technical analysis. Can only "save" custom screens by bookmarking Web pages. Cannot plot specific date ranges. Does not offer candlestick charts.



Stock Valuation and Ratings

While it is easy to look up the selling price of a stock, determining its true value is a much more difficult process. Many techniques are in use today to assign value to stocks. They range from the relatively simple single variable models, such as the dividend discount model (DDM), to proprietary models that calculate a valuation estimate based on numerous variables.

Sites offering stock valuations will typically provide a fair intrinsic value for a company's stock. Fair value represents an estimate of what a stock should be priced at given current estimates of growth, risk, and market conditions. Others rate a stock on a numerical scale. Keep in mind that the valuation and/or ratings provided by such sites are based on estimates and assumptions. The old saying "garbage in, garbage out" holds true no matter how complex a given model.

When evaluating these sites, consider the level of involvement you have in specifying underlying assumptions, such as growth discount rates. Also, look for documentation of the model(s) used and their underlying assumptions.

Business Week Online
www.businessweek.com
FREE

Comprehensive financial and economic news site.

What We Like: Selected stocks have both a fair value ranking and price. Weekly fair value is based on fundamental data such as earnings growth potential, price-to-book value, return on equity, and dividend yield relative to the S&P 500 index. Stocks are also ranked in five tiers—one to five—with a rating of five indicating those stocks considered to be the most undervalued. The ranking also provides a timing index that determines whether a stock's price trend is strengthening or

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Stock Valuation & Ratings (con't)

weakening. An earnings surprise ranking of A to E is also provided, with "A" stocks most likely to show future positive earnings surprises.

What We Dislike: No detailed information regarding the methodology used to arrive at fair value. Users cannot alter underlying assumptions or parameters. Does not offer side-by-side comparison of "fair" value and current price.

CNBC on MSN Money
investor.msn.com
FREE

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: The Stock Scouter model ranks stocks from one (poorest) through 10 (best), based on four "factors": fundamentals, ownership (insider and institutional), valuation, and technicals. Each factor is assigned a letter grade from A to F and is also broken down into subfactors, which are rated as positive, negative, or neutral. System also considers the risk/reward relationship, with stocks with high future return and high volatility receiving a lower rating than those with high expected return and low volatility. Also considers market preferences that tend to affect stock prices in the near term—sector, market cap, and style (value or growth). In-depth description of Stock Scouter system provided.

What We Dislike: Proprietary model does not allow for any user intervention.

Morningstar.com
www.morningstar.com
FREE–$109/yr.

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: Morningstar fair value and star ratings—one to five stars—are available to site subscribers. The star rating compares a stock's current price with that of the Morningstar fair value number. The lower the current price relative to the fair value, the higher the rating. Fair value is calculated using a proprietary discounted cash flow (DCF) model based on assumptions regarding estimated growth in sales for each of the next five years, profitability over the next five years, and asset efficiency based on asset turnover. Offers an article outlining valuation methodology.

What We Dislike: Proprietary model does not allow for user intervention. Fair values given for a small number of firms.

Quicken.com
www.quicken.com
FREE

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: The stock evaluator allows users to examine company factors such as growth trends, financial health, management performance, market multiples, and intrinsic value—either individually or across multiple companies. At the intrinsic value area, a stock is given intrinsic value per share based on multiple assumptions provided by the evaluator or specified by the user. Provides a wide variety of "default" assumptions from which to choose and explains each input category. Includes discussion of how intrinsic value is calculated. Company-specific commentary is offered regarding the intrinsic value calculation and underlying assumptions.

What We Dislike: Intrinsic value can only be calculated for a firm with positive earnings over the last five years.

Stockworm
www.stockworm.com
FREE

Stock research and valuation site.

What We Like: Five different models are used to arrive at fair stock price. Models range from modified dividend discount model (DDM), to PEG value model and forward PE value model. Comparisons are made to the median values for the market and the company's industry.

What We Dislike: Proprietary models do not allow for any user intervention. Somewhat vague in calculation methodologies. No data provided about the past performance of the site's valuation models.

ValuEngine.com
www.valuengine.com
FREE–$19.95/mo.

A stock valuation and investment forecasting service.

What We Like: Fair value derived from proprietary model that is based primarily on three fundamental variables—trailing 12-month earnings per share, consensus forecasted earnings per share for the next 12 months, and the current 30-year Treasury yield, all of which are updated throughout the day. Model also makes use of firm-specific parameters such as long-term earnings growth, the nature of company's business cycle, sensitivity to macroeconomic risk factors, and interest rate parameters. Then its forecast model uses common market trends such as momentum and price reversals, and runs simulations to determine the most probable price outcomes over three years. Site provides a screener that will show you how to create a market-neutral portfolio of shorts and longs. Registered users have access to valuation summaries updated in real-time. You can rate the attractiveness of a stock depending on the type of investor you are—day trader, momentum investor, conservative, etc. Subscribers have access to detailed stock valuation analysis.

What We Dislike: Little information available regarding the process by which the fair value is derived. Benchmark portfolios do not disclose portfolio picks.

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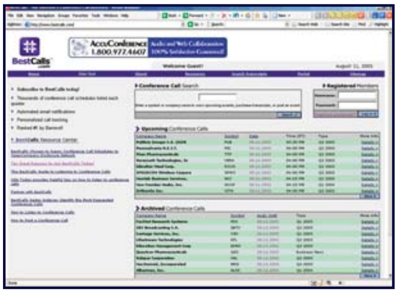
Stock Valuation & Ratings (con't)

ValuePro
www.valuepro.net
FREE

Stock valuation service.

What We Like: Discounted cash flow (DCF) approach is used to arrive at company's intrinsic value. Model entails forecasting expected cash flows and estimating a discount rate, which is used to discount expected cash flows to arrive at an estimated cash flow from operations value. From this, the value of the company's liabilities is subtracted and the resulting value is divided by the number of shares outstanding to arrive at intrinsic value per share. In all, 20 data inputs are used in the calculation of the intrinsic value, all of which can be modified by the user. The Cash Flows option allows investors to see the valuation in action by breaking down the calculation year by year. Description of methodology and the assumptions underlying the model are given.

What We Dislike: Ability to modify all inputs may complicate process.



Webcasts

Webcast sites offer broadcasts of streaming media content, including live and archived investor relations on-line events such as earnings conference calls, analyst conference calls, shareholder meetings, and other announcements. Sites may also function as audio/video programming guides with directories, schedules, and calendars of events.

Key features to look for when evaluating sites in this category include any organized calendars and/or schedules of upcoming, live, and archived events. Also, check for the option to set up a personal profile/portfolio of stocks that you wish to monitor and receive E-mail alerts on concerning upcoming events. The better sites go beyond offering conference calls in on-line media. Some sites offer multiple media player choices, while others simply utilize a co-branded media player. Another plus is multiple search engines that include company ticker, company name, and keywords.

BestCalls.com
www.bestcalls.com
FREE–$49.95/yr.

A directory for on-line conference calls that tracks conference call schedules and provides a link to these calls.

What We Like: Subscribers to CallTracker receive automated E-mail alerts for the companies specified. You can track an unlimited number of companies, download event schedules into Microsoft Outlook, and receive E-mail alerts for last-minute conference call events. Includes a vast resource center with "how-to" guides for listening to conference calls.

What We Dislike: Not much available to non-subscribers. No archive of calls for individual companies.

Company Boardroom
www.companyboardroom.com
FREE

A directory for on-line conference calls and a broadcaster of investor relations streaming media content.

What We Like: Directory of Webcasts, earnings announcements, stock splits, IPOs, dividends, economic events, and investment conferences. Free access to archived company conference calls.

What We Dislike: Scaled back significantly on the content provided; no longer tracking analyst recommendations, earnings estimates, etc. Does not provide whisper earnings. Depending on the company, may not provide Webcast or archive of past Webcasts.

Vcall
www.vcall.com
FREE

A broadcaster of investor relations streaming media content.

What We Like: Covers investor relations events such as earnings conference calls, analyst conference calls, shareholder meetings, merger announcements, press conferences, and product announcements. Able to filter calls by industry. With PrecisionAlert, registered users can receive E-mail reminders for future broadcast events.

What We Dislike: Lacking an archive of historical Webcasts for many big-name companies.

Market Index Statistics

Investors follow market indexes to keep abreast of movements in various segments of the market and to compare investment performance with an appropriate market benchmark. Most sites that supply stock quotes and charts also report on the prices of indexes; you will need to use the site's "look-up" function to find the ticker for a desired index.

However, if you need more in-depth data on an index—background information, monthly total return values, composition, characteristics, even information on the methodology used to construct and calculate the index—check out the sites below.

Barra

www.barra.com

FREE

Provides style and capitalization performance results for S&P indexes.

What We Like: The Research + Indexes segment of the Web site provides detailed information about the S&P and Canadian investment style indexes. Summary returns, descriptions, performance charts, sector breakdowns, fundamental characteristics, and downloads of monthly returns are available. Indexes are broken down by size (small, mid, and large) and by growth versus value style.

What We Dislike: Limited to monthly updates.

MSCI (Morgan Stanley Capital International)

www.msci.com

FREE

Provides indexes measuring the performance of the world markets.

What We Like: Offers stock and bond country indexes and several regional indexes. Countries and regions are separated into developed and emerging markets. Benchmarks for various asset classes are provided, including fixed income and global small-cap stocks. Growth and value style indexes are available as well as sector and industry indexes. The indexes can be tracked in local country currency or translated into a single currency, such as the dollar, to measure the actual performance for a U.S.-based investor. The data can be downloaded as ASCII-comma-separated and Excel files.

What We Dislike: Extensive data set leads to a complex Web site.

Russell

www.russell.com

FREE

Investment adviser and money management firm provides indexes for various markets, including small-capitalization stocks.

What We Like: Known for its stock indexes covering the U.S., Japanese, and Canadian markets; the Russell 2000 is widely followed as an index for small-capitalization stocks. Indexes are broken down by size and by growth versus value style. Site provides returns, index values, construction and composition data, and commentary. Provides daily, monthly, and annualized total returns for the last one, three, five, and 10 years.

What We Dislike: Lacks display and download of month-by-month returns, but provides daily returns that can be constructed to any timeframe by user.

Wilshire Associates

www.wilshire.com

FREE

An investment advisory firm that provides information on both sector and broad market indexes.

What We Like: Produces a number of indexes to track the performance of various segments of the market. Indexes cover the broad market, investment style using size and growth versus value, Internet stocks, and real estate. Index return calculator lets you pick time periods and indexes to determine resulting return. Descriptions and fundamental data are also provided.

What We Dislike: Index return calculator may be too complex for novice user.

Mutual Fund Data

Top Web sites offering mutual fund data cover the complete universe of funds and provide all the relevant data to select and monitor your mutual fund portfolio. Fund information is usually divided into three areas: performance statistics, which include return and risk; portfolio composition and characteristics; and fund operation and services.

Performance statistics usually include annual total returns and annualized total returns over three-, five-, and 10-year periods and longer. Returns for shorter periods—usually year-to-date, one month, three months and the last 12 months—are also common. It is important to consider relative performance, so comparisons to an index or a category average should be provided. Percentile or decile ranks for performance are sometimes displayed to put the absolute performance differences into perspective.

Expect to find risk measures as well as risk-adjusted return figures. Common risk measures include standard deviation; beta for stock funds; maturity, duration, and average credit quality for bond funds; as well as rankings and comparisons to indexes or other funds.

Portfolio information helps to reveal the fund's investment style and investment approach. Common information includes top holdings, industry/credit quality percentages, asset allocations, as well as summary statistics such as the average price-earnings ratio for a stock portfolio.

Fund operations and services describe loads, fees and expenses along with minimum initial and subsequent investment amounts. You should also find the fund manager's name and tenure in addition to the fund telephone number and other fund features, such as automatic withdrawal and investment programs.

Business Week Online

www.businessweek.com

FREE

Combines Business Week articles, Standard & Poor's mutual fund data, and Wall Street City portfolio management and screening.

What We Like: Provides a wide range of pre-packaged S&P-developed screens that filter for top performers and top-yielding funds or allow users to create their own screens from scratch. Maintains library of current and archived articles and special reports on fund analysis. Fund reports provide over 150 data fields on mutual funds including performance comparisons relative to fund peer group indexes.

What We Dislike: Collection of mutual fund tools, data, and articles are not well integrated. Quote information not tied into mutual fund data.

CNBC on MSN Money

moneycentral.msn.com

FREE

The mutual fund research area offers fund reports, articles regarding mutual fund selection and fund screening.

What We Like: Basic performance and holding reports using Morningstar data are combined with interesting analysis from Value Line. A research wizard helps to analyze a fund through a narrated exploration of a fund's category, price history, management, risk, and relative performance. The fund screening module shines with a good combination of power, flexibility, and access to a diverse set of criteria. Predefined screens and a fund directory are also available.

What We Dislike: Screening module for Mac systems is very basic. Data set not as complete as that found on other sites.

Morningstar.com

www.morningstar.com

FREE–$109/yr.

Full-featured site providing all the tools and data required for a mutual fund investor.

What We Like: The majority of the information on the site is free, with additional research and screening available through the premium service. Comprehensive fund reports provide summary statistics to gain an understanding of a mutual fund's characteristics as well as detailed performance data—complete with index and category comparisons. Premium service provides access to proprietary analyst reports that discuss individual fund prospects.

What We Dislike: Detailed analyst reports provided for only a limited number of funds.

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Mutual Fund Data (con't)

Quicken.com
www.quicken.com
FREE

Comprehensive site offers screening, Morningstar mutual fund data, and educational articles.

What We Like: All the basic performance, risk, composition, and fund operation information is available. Provides fund evaluator for any covered mutual fund, which helps investors better understand fund reports by walking through three primary fund concerns: return vs. risk, fund holdings, and cost of ownership. Fund screening can be approached using predefined criteria in a simple step-by-step module or using a full search with 20 mutual fund variables. Separate listings offer top-performing funds in 50 different categories and a fund family directory.

What We Dislike: Navigation more confusing since research tied to Quicken Brokerage by Siebert. Screens do not cover risk factors and cannot be saved for use at a later time.

SmartMoney.com
www.smartmoney.com
FREE–$59/yr.

Combines the writing efforts of the magazine, fund data from Lipper, and a unique set of analysis tools.

What We Like: Frequent articles discuss current trends and highlight noteworthy funds. Fund data is well organized and is combined with useful tools to compare performance, risk, holdings, and fees with other funds or benchmarks. Premium access Fund Map highlights the relative performance of various style segments and funds in a graphical manner. Fund portfolio builder helps to understand the interaction of various funds in a portfolio context. A good screening module guides you through the creation of screens and offers assistance by providing low, average, and high statistics for applicable fields, such as historical returns, based upon all funds in the current database. A Best & Worst section offers two quick-search functions for screening the top 25 and the bottom 25 funds, and tables of weekly top 10 gainers and losers.

What We Dislike: Fund screening module only posted once the screen has filtered the database down to a respectable viewing level—under 50 funds, according to our tests. Premium features geared toward analysis and screening of stocks.

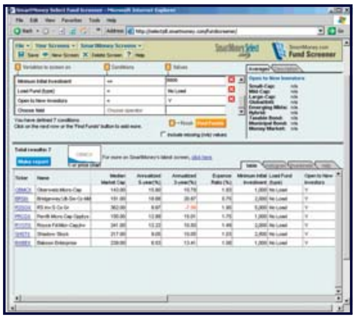
ThomsonFN.com
www.thomsonfn.com
FREE

Offers mutual fund data and screening using Wiesenberger information.

What We Like: Free screening tool covers all the basic elements while also allowing investors to screen for industry exposure. S&P 500 benchmark and database averages are displayed as you develop a screen to serve as useful reference points. TipSheet report includes a summary of performance statistics while a full report provides over 350 data fields. The full report has tons of data. A category averages report helps to track the performance of various market segments, while a mutual fund guide provides educational guidance on the selection and analysis of funds.

What We Dislike: Screening module divided over too many separate pages and cannot be saved.

Mutual Fund Screening



Mutual fund screening modules help make analyzing funds easier by filtering a universe of funds down to a reasonably sized group. Fund quotes, data, charts, reports, and profiles are also found at these sites to help further individual fund analysis.

Key features to look for when evaluating sites in this category include the number of funds in the complete universe; the number and types of fields that can be used for screening and sorting or ranking; and the conditions and values that can be specified for each screenable field. Also, consider the frequency of data updates and how often performance returns are made available, such as daily, weekly or monthly. Look for annualized returns over long time periods such as three, five or 10 years, in addition to returns for individual years.

Business Week Online

www.businessweek.com

FREE

Comprehensive site for research and analysis offers screening on a database of over 11,000 mutual funds.

What We Like: The screening tool provides 50 data fields available for use in creating screens. Daily and weekly returns are given. A strong set of risk-related features is offered. There is a good amount of portfolio information data. Complete screening capabilities include monthly returns as an option.

What We Dislike: Screens cannot be saved for use at a later time. Can only screen for absolute value, not relative performance.

CNBC on MSN Money

moneycentral.msn.com

FREE

Comprehensive site offers powerful screening on a database of over 11,000 mutual funds.

What We Like: The screening tool features 100 data fields available for use in creating screens. Software-like screen creation for Windows users is a plus. Screens can be saved. Screen results are displayed directly below the screening criteria, allowing for easy adjustments to be made to criteria or for adding additional filters. Collection of predefined screens.

What We Dislike: No screening for individual year returns. Advanced screening missing on the Mac.

Morningstar.com

www.morningstar.com

FREE–$109/yr.

Powerful fee-based screening tool with more basic companion available for free.

What We Like: Morningstar offers a basic screening function for free and an advanced product available only with a subscription to the Premium Service. The free Fund Screener features separate menus for selecting 19 criteria in a single screen. The Premium Service Fund Screener offers access to over 150 fields for creating filters. The Premium Fund Screener is much more intuitive of a screening application and offers more screening options. Criteria selection is seamless and dynamic screen results appear on the same page for easy adjustment of the criteria.

What We Dislike: Screens cannot be saved for use at a later time for the basic module.

Quicken.com

www.quicken.com

FREE

Comprehensive site offers screening on a database of over 12,000 mutual funds.

What We Like: The screening tool features 20 data fields available for screening. Comparisons can be made against constant value or relative to the S&P 500, MSCI World, or LB Aggregate Bond indexes. Returns are given for the last 12 quarters and last 10 years. Fund evaluator educational tool is full of raw data, rankings, and comparisons. Offers 50 different top 25 mutual funds lists. Collection of predefined screens available.

What We Dislike: Somewhat limited screening capabilities. Fund screening tools buried within the research section of the Quicken brokerage tab.

SmartMoney.com

www.smartmoney.com

FREE–$59/yr.

Comprehensive site offers both free basic screening and an advanced fee-based screening tool.

What We Like: The free screening tool features 30 data fields available for screening. Comparison values are provided to help construct meaningful screens. Daily and weekly returns are reported. The premium Fund Screener offers access to over 60 screening variables and allows comparisons to a wider range of indexes and averages. The premium screener is interactive, allowing you to view the results as the criteria are added and modified. Results can viewed as a table, histogram or thumbnail one-year price chart of each passing fund.

What We Dislike: Screens cannot be saved for use at a later time for the basic module.

Exchange-Traded Funds

Exchange-traded funds are baskets of stocks similar to mutual funds that track an index, but their shares trade on an exchange. Usually, their share prices trade very close to the net asset value of the underlying stocks in the portfolio. Exchange-traded funds can be categorized by the indexes that they track: broad-based indexes, sector groups, or international segments. Unlike traditional open-ended mutual funds, exchange-traded funds can be bought and sold during the course of the trading day and must be purchased through a broker.

Traditionally, the Web sites providing the deepest information on exchange-traded funds were run by the exchanges trading the funds and the sponsors operating the funds. However, sites rating and tracking mutual funds are also now reporting on exchange-traded funds.

American Stock Exchange (Amex)

www.amex.com

FREE

Site maintained by the Amex, which lists many of the exchange-traded funds.

What We Like: While competition has increased, the Amex has served as the primary exchange for exchange-traded funds. The exchange-traded funds segment of the Web site gives information on the wide range of these funds available, divided into three segments—broad-based indexes, sector indexes, and international indexes. Information includes fund objective, sponsorship and trustee data, performance and distribution history, holdings, sector breakdown, and downloadable prospectus. Screening allows for performance and composition filters.

What We Dislike: Lacks easy side-by-side comparisons of various exchange-traded funds.

IndexFunds

www.indexfunds.com

FREE

Site devoted to open-ended and exchange-traded index funds.

What We Like: Features news, commentary, educational articles, an exchange-traded fund screener, and fund data. Data on exchange-traded funds includes expense data, return information, top holdings, sector breakdowns, stock fundamental characteristics of the portfolio, premium discount data, and fund management information. Screener covers several elements, including market capitalization, value versus growth style, expense ratio, one- and three-month and one- and three-year returns, and total net assets.

What We Dislike: No comparison values are provided for return data.

Morningstar.com

www.morningstar.com

FREE–$109/yr.

Comprehensive site offering education and data on exchange-traded funds.

What We Like: The exchange-traded funds area serves up educational articles as well as reports on individual exchange-traded funds. Exchange-traded fund reports follow the standard mutual fund format, which provides style data, return and risk information, Morningstar ratings, sector breakdowns and a listing of top holdings. Also shows a chart listing the premium or discount of the share price to the underlying net asset value of the fund's shares. Premium subscribers gain access to written commentary on a select number of exchange-traded funds.

What We Dislike: Limited additional features for premium membership in exchange-traded funds area.

Nasdaq

www.nasdaq.com

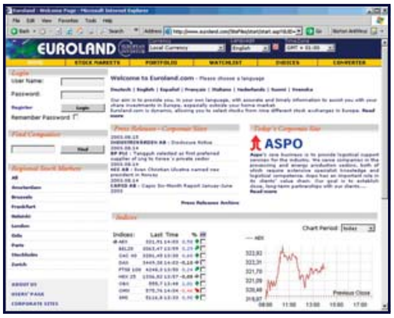
FREE

Provides education, data and screening for exchange-traded funds.

What We Like: Provides detailed segment on Nasdaq 100 exchange-traded fund as well as education, screening and data on exchange-traded funds in general. Lists all the exchange-traded funds and allows users to sort them based on their performance over various time periods. Screener divides funds by investment style, sector concentration, domestic vs. international focus, trading price range and return. Heatmap provides graphical display of strong and weak funds on an intraday basis.

What We Dislike: No links to primary exchange-traded fund tools on main exchange-traded funds page.

International



Foreign investments can range from direct currency speculation to traditional bond and stock investments. However, direct investment in foreign-traded securities is difficult and costly for the individual investor. American depositary receipts, known as ADRs, offer a convenient alternative: ADRs make investing abroad both simpler and less costly by allowing foreign-traded stocks to also be listed and traded on U.S. exchanges. Additional information on ADRs can be found by doing a simple keyword search for the word "ADR." Since the needs of the investor seeking international investments are so broad, top sites listed here provide a range of features or links to additional resources that may more closely match your interests.

ADR.com

www.adr.com

FREE

JPMorgan created the first American depositary receipt in 1927 and runs the site along with Thomson Financial/Carson.

What We Like: The site is a rich resource for screening and researching ADRs. Investors can seek out ADRs by name, ticker, exchange, country, and industry. Search results are displayed in a table that indicates the type of ADR, its country of origin, and industry. Research links are provided to detailed reports that include items such as charts, financials, and earnings estimates. Portfolio tool tracks foreign stocks and provides alerts. International news and announcements help to keep track of international events.

What We Dislike: Financials only presented in local currency. ADR list does not cover all securities.

BNY Depositary Receipts

www.adrbny.com

FREE

Rich resource for ADRs and HOLDRS maintained by the Bank of New York.

What We Like: Covers extensive list of sponsored and unsponsored ADRs. ADRs can be searched by country, industry, exchange, ADR type, or depositary. Summary table lists issue, symbol, CUSIP, exchange, conversion ratio, country of origin, industry, depositary, sponsorship, and date of last update. It can be viewed on-line or downloaded as an Excel file. Printer-friendly version of tables available as well. Links are provided for further research on individual listings. Offers educational information about ADRs, along with links to additional research.

What We Dislike: Lacks detailed financials for ADRs.

CIA World Factbook

www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html

FREE

Link to U.S. government Central Intelligence Agency annual publication that reports data on foreign countries.

What We Like: Source of information on every government, country, and territory in the world. Each country's page includes a brief description of the country; the geography of the country; type of people and government; information on its communications, transportation, and military; any transnational issues; and a review of its economy. The economic review covers items such as GDP (gross domestic product), labor force, unemployment rate, budget, industries, imports and exports, currency, fiscal year, and debt.

What We Dislike: Feels more like a book than a Web site—lacks items such as a search routine and cross-links.

Euroland

www.euroland.com

FREE

Resource devoted to primary European markets.

What We Like: Provides a database of financial events for major developed markets in Europe. Search database by symbol, name, or country of origin, or industry. Provides quotes, charts, news, portfolio tracker and converter. Company database can be sorted by factors such as market cap, gains or losses, and year-to-date return.

What We Dislike: Does not provide company financial statements.

Yahoo! Finance

finance.yahoo.com

FREE

Comprehensive site offers a little bit of everything.

What We Like: The International Finance area at Yahoo! includes a currency converter, international news stories, and up-to-date reports on major world indexes. Economic profiles, news, exchanges, and more are also provided through foreign country links organized by continent. Not surprisingly, the depth of the information varies from country to country, with more active, prominent markets having access to a wider range of resources. At a minimum, links to Web sites run by each country's major exchanges are available. Expect to find exchange links, background information, forecasts, and currency information for major markets.

What We Dislike: Geared toward sophisticated investors with knowledge of desired information.

BONDS

The bond market has been much slower than the stock market to develop a significant presence on the Internet, but it is starting to catch up. Interestingly, the Web site that has been the leader in the bond market's move to the Web is the U.S. government's TreasuryDirect system, which allows individual investors to easily buy newly issued Treasuries directly from the U.S. Treasury without paying a commission.

For the most part, the Internet is primarily useful to bond investors as a source of information both on the bond market in general, as well as individual bond issues. The bond market is a dealer's market, and there is no single source that can provide a complete listing of all bond issues available. The Internet, however, does offer an ideal way to shop around, ask questions, and compare offers. Several sites offer more extensive listings than are available in the daily print financial press.

Individual investors can get information on the pricing of certain bonds that have either recently traded or are being traded—providing a general sense of what issues to look for and where. Bonds covered by most sites include Treasuries, municipals and corporates. Several sites include search engines that will find bonds that meet specified criteria, such as type of issuer, coupon or maturity date. Most bond sites also provide rates for various bond market indexes, commentary on the fixed-income markets and the overall economy, and educational information. One Web site, Municipalbonds.com, is devoted exclusively to municipal bond prices in the secondary markets in an attempt to bring more transparency to the market, which often has wide spreads among bid and asked prices.

Bondsonline
www.bondsonline.com
FREE

Current bond market information, bond quotes and details on bond issues. New to the site are preferred and convertible preferred listings.

What We Like: Current information on bonds and the bond markets. Search for and analyze specific bond issues that are currently being traded from an extensive database, including corporate, Treasury and municipal bonds. Excellent amount of data provided for individual issues, including S&P and Moody's ratings, yield to maturity and call provisions. Site also provides historical rate information.

What We Dislike: Part of the site is merely promotional links to products for purchase. And, although the site is designed with individual investors in mind, the bond pricing information and bond trading is geared more toward institutional investors and high net worth individuals.

InvestinginBonds.com
www.investinginbonds.com
FREE

Semi-comprehensive bond site and educational information on bond investing.

What We Like: Extensive educational information on bonds and bond investing. Also provides information on recent bond trades, including municipal bond transactions—giving an indication as to what is currently available and whether a bond is actively traded (actively traded bonds trade several times a month). Current market information includes benchmark spreads. The tax-free vs. taxable yield calculator helps you decide if municipal bonds make sense based on your current tax bracket.

What We Dislike: Information on individual bond issues is not as extensive as at Bondsonline.

MunicipalBonds.com
www.municipalbonds.com
FREE

Devoted to exposing price disparities in the municipal bond secondary markets; provides extensive pricing data based on recent trades.

What We Like: Extensive pricing data on the municipal bond market, including voluminous lists of trades and prices occurring the previous day, with some spreads included. Web site also publishes annual lists of the 100 worst trades for the preceding year, both nationally and for individual states. Provides daily red-flags on trades where commission costs exceed 5%. Crusading Web site operator is a former municipal bond trader who believes spreads are too wide in the muni market because the general public does not receive accurate current market pricing information.

NASD BondInfo
www.nasdbondinfo.com
FREE

Site provides pricing information on corporate bonds based on recent trades reported to the NASD.

What We Like: Individual and summary transaction data on corporate bonds, gathered by the NASD in an attempt to provide more transparency to the corporate bond market.

What We Dislike: Information on individual bond issues not as extensive as Bondsonline, and there is no information on current market conditions, bond news or commentary. Educational material is provided via a link to Investinginbonds.com.

(Continued on next page)

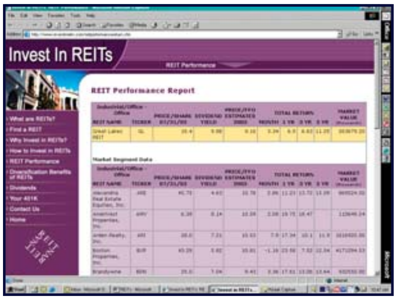
Bonds (con't)

Offical Web site for information on and purchasing of U.S. Treasury securities.

TreasuryDirect
www.treasurydirect.gov
FREE

What We Like: On-line service for purchasing U.S. government Treasury securities (bills, notes and bonds, including the new inflation-indexed TIPS, or Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities) directly from the government without paying commissions. The system also allows you to maintain an account with TreasuryDirect for reinvesting interest payments and maturing securities. This site provides extensive information on all Treasury securities, including rules and regulations for investing in Treasuries, as well as special tax features and concerns.

What We Dislike: Renaming of the two services (Treasury Direct Accounts for savings bonds and Electronic Services for Treasury Bills, Notes, and Bonds for Treasury securities) is confusing.



REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts)

Real estate investment trusts own income-producing real estate. Around 180 REITs are publicly traded on the stock exchanges, so in many cases you can find data on REITs at the sites that offer stock data. The sites listed here are devoted to REITs and explain these instruments in detail, defining terms for novices. Look for lists of REITs organized by type and substantive data on individual REITs and the REITs industry as a whole. Commonly, sites will charge a fee for comprehensive and up-to-date statistics or analyst commentary, when offered.

Educational REIT site sponsored by NAREIT (see below).

Invest in REITs
www.investinreits.com
FREE

What We Like: Thorough instructional materials on REITs are geared to the individual investor. Provides access to NAREIT's search tool for REITs and publicly traded real estate companies. Also lists REIT mutual funds and REITs with dividend reinvestment and stock purchase plans. REIT performance page reports dividend yield and total returns compared to other REITs in the same sector. Links to news items pertaining to REITs are provided on the home page.

What We Dislike: Data on REITs is scant; too many pages devoted to why you should invest in REITs.

NAREIT is the national trade organization for real estate firms.

NAREIT Online
www.nareit.com
FREE

What We Like: Good instructional materials on REITs have been recently updated and include the history of REITs, FAQs and a glossary. Current news articles on REIT industry prominent on home page. Research includes industry and index statistics and reports. Links to REIT home pages and Yahoo! quote data. Provides name and contact info of analysts who cover REITs and transcripts of analyst conference calls.

What We Dislike: Membership, which gives access to data on individual REITs, is for industry professionals only.

Provides information on REITs and real estate related mutual funds.

REITNet
www.reitnet.com
FREE–$75/yr.

What We Like: Educational section explains the basics; a comprehensive glossary and Q&A section are also offered. Presents a valuation of REITs using the dividend discount model. Free services include a basic REIT search tool with links to current quote data and a sortable list of real estate mutual funds with ticker, net asset value and total returns. Detailed market reports and journal abstracts on REIT topics available for a fee.

What We Dislike: No detailed fundamentals on REITs; little industry/index information.

Informational resources and analytical tools and commentary on real estate stocks and mutual funds.

RealtyStocks & Funds
www.realtystocks.com
FREE–$39/yr.

What We Like: Tons of links to statistics on REITs. Also, links to many REIT home pages. Free E-mail newsletter on realty stocks. Extra data and benefits for paying members.

What We Dislike: Must visit several sites to get complete data on one REIT.

Options/Futures

These sites provide educational information and statistics on stock and index options and futures. Look for in-depth explanations of the various instruments and how to use basic strategies. Sites should also fully explain the risks involved. The best sites provide comprehensive and up-to-date statistics that are easy to locate and interpret. Sites that offer advisory services for researching and tracking options carry hefty fees and are not covered here.

Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT)

www.cbot.com

FREE

Futures exchange site that provides current statistics and contract information on listed futures and options, along with market data and educational information.

What We like: Thorough knowledge center offers interactive tutorial and on-line educational publications at no charge, along with FAQs and a glossary. Comprehensive statistics cover individual securities and the market. Free E-mail newsletters provide updates in several areas covered by the exchange. Calendars show report release dates as well as contract expiration dates.

What We Dislike: Small type on most Web pages.

Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE)

www.cboe.com

FREE

This exchange site provides current statistics and educational information on futures contracts and options listed on the CBOE, along with market statistics.

What We like: Gives a full description of each product and complete list of contracts. Delayed market quotes and data are free; monthly fee for real-time streaming quotes. Trading tools include an equity research center highlighting corporate announcements and an options calculator. New area called Index Sites provides in-depth information on popular index options. Also, offers E-mail alerts. Extensive learning center includes a tutorial, plus pages explaining options basics, advanced concepts, FAQs, and a glossary. Options Toolbox allows simulation of options strategies either on-line or through a downloadable program. Index Workbench teaches about exchange-traded securities.

What We Dislike: Small type on most Web pages.

Options Industry Council

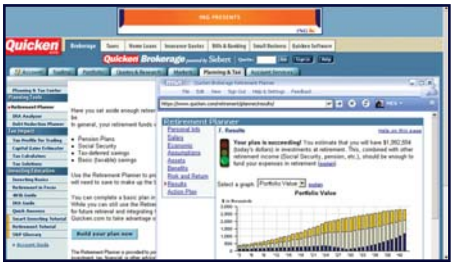
www.888options.com

FREE

Association sponsored by exchanges offers education and information about exchange-traded options.

What We like: Statistics on options contracts and extensive educational material including free on-line interactive classes, CDs and seminars. Also, free quotes, FAQs, options pricing calculator, and E-mail alerts.

What We Dislike: No market statistics. Navigation bar disappears on interior pages.



Personal Finance/Retirement Planning

Personal finance covers all the financial bases—banking, insurance, investing and savings, taxes and retirement planning.

There are few investor Web sites that don't cover one aspect of personal finance or another. The "comprehensive" sites listed below offer the most extensive coverage. These sites provide information on mortgages or other personal loans, credit cards, auto loans, CDs, money market accounts and insurance. Most also have numerous calculators, planning tools and educational materials that can help you with various financial decisions including budgeting, tax planning, investing and asset allocation, simple estate planning, and retirement planning. Many of these pages, though, are also loaded with promotional material.

Special mention in our listings is given to retirement planning tools. Most of the comprehensive sites have calculators for determining how much you need to plan and save for retirement, but less focus is given to planning during retirement. The retirement planner in Quicken.com provides the most flexible tool that would enable you to analyze your post-retirement cash flows. And Financeware.com, a specialized site, offers a free trial version of its sophisticated retirement plan calculator to help you evaluate whether your savings will last you throughout your retirement.

Bankrate.com
www.bankrate.com
FREE

Site that features interest rate comparisons for mortgages, credit cards, and personal loans, as well as fixed-income products.

What We Like: This is the site to visit if you want interest rate and supporting information to help in the selection of specific products and services such as bank CDs and savings accounts, money market accounts, credit cards, mortgages, car loans, home equity loans and other personal loans. This site also has numerous personal finance calculators (e.g., how much you can spend on a home, whether refinancing makes sense, how much to save for a child's education, etc.), as well as educational articles on all aspects of personal finance.

What We Dislike: This site is stronger on the debt and fixed-income side of personal finance.

CNBC on MSN Money
moneycentral.msn.com
FREE

Comprehensive site that includes extensive personal finance functions and features.

What We Like: Easy-to-use and well-organized site covers all of the personal finance basics, including banking, loans, insurance and tax planning. Extensive interest rate data for product comparisons on home loans, mortgages, and bank CDs. Also includes personal finance calculators and other planning tools, as well as educational articles and links.

This site's Retirement Planner (under Planning, and powered by mPower) provides tables and charts showing the probability of success of your retirement plan, including the range of expected retirement income, probable net worth at time of retirement and potential worst-case losses based on your current asset allocation and suggested allocations.

What We Dislike: Retirement Planner calculator is not very sophisticated and is designed more for individuals who are saving for retirement rather than individuals concerned with post-retirement issues.

Also, it is difficult to tell at times whether a piece is useful or is designed to promote a specific product; some of the tools are comprehensive but first direct you to specific MSN partners.

CNN/Money
money.cnn.com
FREE

Comprehensive site that includes extensive personal finance functions and features.

What We Like: Site has many feature articles covering all of the personal finance basics, including banking, loans, insurance and tax planning. Also includes interest rate data for product comparisons on home loans, mortgages, and bank CDs, as well as personal finance calculators and other planning tools.

Retirement Planner (under Your Money) estimates the return you would need in order for your planned savings to meet your retirement needs and the likelihood of achieving that return based on your asset allocation; indicates how much more you would need to save to increase your probabilities. Also shows estimated retirement cash flows.

What We Dislike: Retirement Planner is not very sophisticated, and focuses more on planning for retirement rather than post-retirement planning.

Busy layout and organization makes it somewhat confusing to find specific features and tools. Also too much promotional material and annoying pop-ups.

(continued on next page)

Personal Finance/Retirement Planning (con't)

Financeware.com

www.financeware.com

FREE

Retirement planning and forecasting system designed for professionals with a short trial version available to individuals.

What We Like: Measures the likely success of any financial plan, based on personal financial information (including savings and investments, your salary, rate of savings, etc.). Probability analysis is used to determine the likelihood of meeting your retirement goals.

What We Dislike: Results are based on asset categories; does not include any analysis of individual stock or specific mutual fund holdings, and results are also based on historical modeling. More sophisticated analysis is available, but for a substantial fee.

Financial Planning Toolkit

www.finance.cch.com

FREE

Extensive and very detailed discussions of all areas of personal finance.

What We Like: Provides extensive information on financial planning, investing, insurance and risk management, retirement planning, estate planning and tax planning. Each section provides extensive discussions of the topic, along with calculators, planning tools and worksheets.

Retirement Planner and Retirement Shortfall Calculator (under Financial Calculators) allow you to determine whether your current rate of savings will meet planned needs at retirement. It allows you to adjust various assumptions, and provides year-by-year account balances and post-retirement cash flows.

Web site sponsor CCH Inc. is a major provider of up-to-date business, legal and tax information and software for professionals in those areas.

What We Dislike: Retirement calculators do not perform very sophisticated analyses. Very little graphics or illustrations on site.

Quicken.com

www.quicken.com

FREE

Comprehensive site that includes extensive personal finance functions and features.

What We Like: Well-organized site covers all of the personal finance basics including banking, loans, insurance and tax planning. Also features calculators and other planning tools, as well as educational articles.

Quicken Retirement Planner (under Planning & Taxes) provides a basic but very good retirement planning tool that allows you to see if your plan will remain on track both pre and post retirement; it also provides portfolio values at retirement and beyond, as well as year-by-year post-retirement cash flows. The Planner allows you to see the impact of changing certain factors such as your savings rate, asset allocation, time to retirement, inflation assumptions, life expectancy, and retirement benefits. Provides good explanation of how the planner makes its calculations as well as other assumptions used.

What We Dislike: Retirement Planner is not a sophisticated analysis. Overall, Web site is not as in-depth as other comprehensive sites. Does not have extensive comparative data for certain products and services, such as home loans and mortgages. Also, too promotional—you have to wade through many ads and articles that merely promote specific services and products to find useful information.

SmartMoney.com

www.smartmoney.com

FREE

Comprehensive site that includes extensive personal finance articles and functions.

What We Like: Covers all of the personal finance basics including banking, loans, insurance and tax planning. A unique feature is the set of articles that discuss the various personal finance issues—they are more in-depth than those offered on the other comprehensive sites, and they point to related articles that are also useful. The site also features product comparisons (for instance, home loans and mortgages, with data provided by Bankrate.com), calculators and other planning tools. Promotional ads less prominent than other comprehensive sites.

Retirement Worksheet (under Personal Finance) allows you to enter personal financial information including your salary and benefits, current and planned savings, expenses during retirement, and retirement goals; the Planner determines how much you will need to accumulate by retirement, whether your current savings plan will reach that amount, and how much more you may need to save to reach that goal. The worksheet allows you to analyze post-retirement expenses in more detail.

What We Dislike: Retirement worksheet does not provide any graphical depictions, charts or other details on post-retirement account values and cash flows. Magazine design—with lots of feature articles—makes it somewhat more difficult to find specific features and tools.

Tax Information

The tax code generates lots of money not just for the government, but for tax-prep businesses as well. Tax preparation software is immensely popular, and on-line tax preparation services are growing quickly.

There is also considerable information available on-line, and the Web sites we list below offer the best chance for you to find the explanations you are looking for before turning to an accountant or other costly source. These sites typically offer explanations of general tax issues, tips on cutting taxes, tax planning tools and estimators, and overviews of recent tax law changes. (Tax preparation software and services are not covered.)

The other site that most taxpayers will want to visit at some point is the IRS' own Web site, www.irs.gov, for official publications and explanations of the tax code, as well as downloadable forms.

CNBC on MSN Money

moneycentral.msn.com

FREE

Comprehensive site with extensive tax section, including tax explanations, tips on reducing taxes, and tax planning tools.

What We Like: The Web site is a partnership between MSN MoneyCentral and H&R Block and provides information on a variety of tax-related topics, including recent tax law changes, tax estimators, links to IRS forms and publications, and articles and tools that will help you plan, prepare and reduce your taxes.

What We Dislike: Heavy promotion of tax and financial services and software products.

Financial Planning Toolkit

www.finance.cch.com

FREE

Detailed discussions of tax issues.

What We Like: Provides extensive information on taxes and tax planning. Sponsor CCH Inc. is a major provider of up-to-date tax information and software for professionals.

What We Dislike: Site is disorganized, making it difficult to find specific topics. Very little graphics or illustrations on site.

Internal Revenue Service

www.irs.gov

FREE

Official explanations, publications and downloadable tax forms and instructions from the IRS.

What We Like: Numerous explanations of the tax code available from the IRS on almost every tax issue, some in plain English. The downloadable publications, tax forms and instructions are valuable, particularly for less common tax issues and last-minute situations.

What We Dislike: Taxes.

Quicken.com

www.quicken.com

FREE

Comprehensive site with an extensive tax section, including tax explanations, tips on reducing taxes, and tax planning tools.

What We Like: Quicken uses the resources of its popular tax preparation software, TurboTax, for the tax section of its site. This site is more detailed and better organized than TaxCut.com, with numerous tax calculators—including a deduction finder and Roth IRA calculator—plus many explanations of a variety of tax issues and strategies.

What We Dislike: Heavy promotion of tax services and software products crowds out tax information.

Sister States Tax Directory

www.sisterstates.com

FREE

Links to state tax forms, publications and information for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, New York City, and U.S. territories.

What We Like: Provides a one-stop source of tax information for all states.

TaxCut.com

www.taxcut.com

FREE

Comprehensive site with tax explanations, tips on reducing taxes and tax planning tools.

What We Like: The official site for TaxCut, the popular tax preparation software published by H&R Block. In the Tax Resources section, there are explanations of many tax issues concerning cutting taxes, tax planning, a summary of recent tax law changes, a tax glossary and a tax estimator to see if you have withheld enough for the current year. Also links to HRBlock.com, which provides tax tips and generalized tax planning information.

What We Dislike: Heavy promotion of tax services and software crowds out explanations and other tax resources, making them somewhat difficult to find.

(Continued on next page)

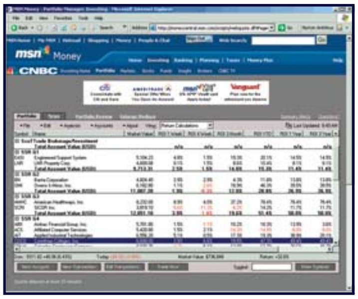
Tax Information (con't)

Yahoo! Tax Center
taxes.yahoo.com
FREE

Comprehensive site with an extensive tax section that links to tax explanations, tips on reducing taxes, and tax planning tools.

What We Like: Provides state and federal tax forms, a refund estimator, tax calculators, tax tips, a tax glossary, a tax calendar, a state tax profile, and a tax preparation checklist. The tax guide for investors links to articles that cover tax-related topics including the tax consequences of stock grants and incentive stock options, a guide to Roth IRAs, and discussions on capital gains and losses. Site also provides tax message boards and links to Yahoo! tax tools. Well organized, with less promotional/advertising material than some of the other comprehensive sites.

Portfolio Tracking



These Web sites offer portfolio management functions via portfolio tools called on-line portfolio trackers. On-line portfolio tracking tools help you keep abreast of what is happening with your portfolio and notify you of current events that might affect your investment holdings. This is accomplished by the ability to receive automatic portfolio data updates and timely E-mail alerts, as well as access multiple news services.

Key features to look for when evaluating sites in this category include the number of portfolios and securities that can be tracked, types of securities and transactions handled, and the number and breadth of newswire services. Also, consider whether or not portfolio data can be automatically refreshed, the type of E-mail alerts available (if any), if brokerage statements can be dynamically imported, and compatibility with desktop software for in-sync updates.

Business Week Online
www.businessweek.com
FREE

Comprehensive site that integrates portfolio manager with S&P rankings and valuations.

What We Like: Designed to perform standard monitoring and evaluation of portfolios comprised of stocks and mutual funds. Eight different on-screen view options are available covering both portfolio information and security statistics and news. Free E-mail alerts are triggered by news and price targets. E-mail alert updates are sent out with full news content. Portfolios are updated automatically every two minutes.

What We Dislike: Limited number of newswire services. Static refresh timeframe.

CNBC on MSN Money
moneycentral.msn.com
FREE

Comprehensive site with one of the most powerful portfolio management tools on the Web.

What We Like: Portfolio tracker is designed to perform sophisticated monitoring and evaluation of portfolios. Solid number of security choices offered. Free E-mail alerts are triggered by price targets. Portfolios are updated automatically as frequently as every minute; timeframe can be adjusted. Performance report options and printed reports are top-notch. Works with Money software and major on-line brokers.

What We Dislike: Dynamic ActiveX interface missing on Mac. Mac users get a standard html page with limited features.

GainsKeeper
www.gainskeeper.com
FREE–$149/yr.

Tax lot accounting services and portfolio management tools for retail investors and financial institutions.

What We Like: Portfolio manager designed to monitor and analyze portfolios and individual portfolio holdings. The site can also handle investment cost-basis adjustments as well as calculate capital gains and losses. Includes GainsTracker tool for monitoring cost basis. Sell simulation, "what if" analysis, and trading tips are offered via GainsAdvisor tools. Five views are available for displaying diversification goals and rebalancing strategies. Also provides links to breaking corporate action news. Works with Money and Quicken software and major on-line brokers.

Morningstar.com
www.morningstar.com
FREE–$109/yr.

Comprehensive site with portfolio management tool.

What We Like: Portfolio manager is designed to perform standard monitoring and evaluation of portfolios comprised of stocks and mutual funds. Unique "X-Ray" views break down your portfolio. Diverse set of news offerings. Solid performance report options. A between-periods return is available via movable tabs called sliders. Works with Money and Quicken.

What We Dislike: Premium service is a little bit pricey relative to additional features. No automatic data refreshes.

(continued on next page)

Comprehensive site that features one of the most powerful on-line portfolio management tools on the Web.

Quicken.com
www.quicken.com
FREE

What We Like: Designed to perform semi-sophisticated monitoring and evaluation of portfolios, and can track portfolios comprised of stocks, mutual funds, and bonds. Portfolio tracker has been significantly retooled. Diverse newswires are offered. Portfolios are updated automatically every 10 minutes. Performance report options and printed reports are top-notch. Works with Quicken software and major on-line brokers.

What We Dislike: Mac users get a standard html page. Confusing report print functions.

Unique site that allows investors to analyze the risk characteristics of their portfolios.

RiskGrades
www.riskgrades.com
FREE

What We Like: Site specializes in evaluating the risk characteristics of specific investments, as well as entire portfolios. The My Portfolio function allows you to enter your portfolio and see its risk characteristics—in particular, how well diversified it is by various measures including sector, style and size. You can also see how the risk has changed over time, and how it compares to various benchmarks and other investment strategies. The What If function shows you the impact of buying or selling different investments. Also provides a good explanation of how the analysis is determined and what it means.

What We Dislike: Site geared toward risk analysis, not portfolio tracking. Not a comprehensive portfolio tracking site.

INSURANCE PRODUCTS

Insurance sites provide educational information or quote comparisons for life insurance products including, in some instances, annuities. An interactive calculator to help you determine your insurance needs is also a staple of these sites. Unfortunately, annuity information on the Web is not particularly comprehensive and is too promotional. Some sites devoted to annuity comparisons also provide misleading information concerning the benefits of annuities.

The top sites listed here provide education on the different types of life insurance and when they are appropriate. Sites that list insurance companies and offer comparative quotes should provide ratings from the major services such as S&P or A.M. Best.

Consumer insurance information service.

Insure.com
www.insure.com
FREE

What We Like: The life insurance area has a multitude of educational articles covering a wide range of insurance issues and news reports. Interactive tools help you estimate your life insurance needs and explain the tax consequences of actions such as surrenders, loans, and early payouts. Quote search engine provided by Quotesmith.com includes policy profile and ratings from A.M. Best, S&P, Moody's, Fitch and Weiss. Also includes an annuities area with educational articles and quote comparisons. Offers E-mail newsletter.

What We Dislike: Home page now more focused on promoting on-line purchasing of insurance than providing educational information. Articles are buried in a search tool. No longer supports a forum for posting questions.

Consumer insurance resource.

Insurance.com
www.insurance.com
FREE

What We Like: Provides solid explanatory articles focusing on consumer needs, FAQs, and a life insurance calculator. Quote search gives ratings from A.M. Best, S&P, Moody's and Fitch and a policy summary detailing available options. Quotes can be saved in an on-line account. Offers E-mail newsletter.

What We Dislike: Question and answer forum no longer supported.

Fee-only life insurance advisor and AAII Journal columnist.

Katt & Company
www.peterkatt.com
FREE

What We Like: Library of in-depth articles written for consumers. Headlines area includes current articles on life insurance issues from financial newspapers and journals. Life Insurance Perspectives newsletter covers specific policies and policy trends for estate planning professionals, but can also be instructive for consumers.

FINANCIAL NEWS & ANALYSIS

These Web sites offer links to current market, economic and individual company or mutual fund news. News items most often appear in the form of linked headlines, breaking news stories, in-depth reports, and feature articles. Company and fund quotes, charts, reports, and profiles are also found at these sites to help further your analysis.

Key features to look for when evaluating sites in this category include the number and breadth of newswire services; stories and articles; and the availability and timeliness of market snapshot reports. Other features that can make a site stand out: weekend news coverage; in-depth market data and statistics; coverage of international/world market indexes; and links to audio/video/Webcast programming.

Bloomberg.com
www.bloomberg.com
FREE

Comprehensive financial and economic news for the U.S. and international markets.

What We Like: The primary function of the site is to be a source for news, but market data and research and analysis tools are offered. News on bonds, commodities, and currency rates is available. What's Hot and Movers by Exchange offer lots of data and information across all world markets. Abundance of data for world and international indexes.

What We Dislike: Initial company news links do not identify source of news items.

Business Week Online
www.businessweek.com
FREE

Comprehensive financial and economic news for the U.S. and international markets.

What We Like: Combination of news and features from the Business Week magazine, S&P Outlook and newswires. Updated Daily Briefing section. Top international stories are broken out by country. Popular resources include the BW Scoreboards, Word on the Street reports, and the Mutual Fund Maven. Markets section features data, current news, a Market Snapshot report and World Watch. Access to company audio and video broadcasts.

What We Dislike: Many, many layers to this can make navigation confusing.

CBS MarketWatch
cbs.marketwatch.com
FREE

Comprehensive site with financial and economic news for U.S. and foreign markets.

What We Like: Strong collection of current news from newswires as well as original content and commentary. CBS MarketSnapshot news report is updated throughout the trading day. Market Overview utility features detailed data for U.S. and foreign markets. Rich collection of data for world and international indexes. Latest news pop-up links appear under each menu. This site also features market data, solid research and analysis tools, and interactive charting. E-mail company news alerts available.

What We Dislike: The many layers of the site lead to complex navigation. Free site dictates many big and little ads scattered throughout pages.

CNN/Money
money.cnn.com
FREE

Comprehensive site with financial and economic news for U.S. and foreign markets.

What We Like: Features a wealth of market news and standard suite of research and analysis tools, as well as links to other tools on the Web. News and data provided for stocks, markets, bonds, interest rates, commodities, initial public offerings (IPOs), and ADRs. Access provided to Multex Investor Network database for free research reports. AM & PM Market Calls filled with valuable data. World markets snapshot given. International news is broken out by country.

What We Dislike: Company news not presented in combination with initial company quote and chart.

Quicken.com
www.quicken.com
FREE

Comprehensive financial and economic news offerings and a wealth of data for U.S. and international markets.

What We Like: One of the best, most comprehensive investment resources on the Web. In addition to news and data, this site features top-notch research and analysis tools. Market Update report is updated throughout the trading day, with latest headlines, most active stocks, biggest gainers and losers, upgrades/downgrades, etc. News broken by U.S. versus world markets. Calendars list upcoming earnings announcements and economic releases.

What We Dislike: Quotes, research and market news under the Brokerage tab.

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Financial News & Analysis (con't)

Comprehensive site for business and economic news for the U.S. markets.

SmartMoney.com
www.smartmoney.com
FREE–$109/yr.

What We Like: In addition to news and data, this site features a solid roster of research and analysis tools, as well as interactive charting functions. Nice list of breaking news stories on home page. Lots of market commentary and opinion are available. News coverage and commentary articles expand within separate Stocks and Funds sections. Hot topics are discussed and explained in the On the Street article. Daily Briefing page along with several current market data and statistics lists offer mounds of data.

What We Dislike: Many sections of the site devoted to pushing you to their fee-based research tools.

Comprehensive financial and economic news for the U.S. and foreign markets.

WSJ.com/Barron's Online
public.wsj.com
www.barrons.com
FREE–$79/yr.
(non-print Journal/Barron's subscribers)

What We Like: Companion sites provide current and archived content of print publications with additional on-line content. Provide a wealth of market data and statistics. Both sites maintain a searchable archive of articles. Personal Journal on WSJ.com includes favorites, profiled news and links, and portfolio tools. Separate links are provided for What's News World-Wide, Asia, Europe, and The Americas.

What We Dislike: Added cost to search for older news stories on WSJ.com.

Comprehensive investment resource with a focus toward news.

Yahoo! Finance
finance.yahoo.com
FREE

What We Like: Comprehensive financial and economic news offerings and a wealth of data for U.S. and international markets. Solid roster of research and analysis tools. Today's Markets page provides links to news, statistics, and tools pulled from other sources. Full Coverage page lists all current news stories. International market news and data is provided for world indexes and individual countries.

What We Dislike: Primarily just links on the home page, but a market summary is also featured. Lots of layers to this site.

Government

The official investor Web site resources of the U.S. government are surprisingly accessible, providing a considerable amount of information as well as education. They also give you instant access to information and forms that may otherwise be difficult to find or request when wading through massive bureaucracies. The sites listed below are ones that most individual investors will want to visit at some point in time.

Official Web site for information on and purchasing of all government bonds.

Bureau of the Public Debt
www.publicdebt.treas.gov
FREE

What We Like: Extensive information on all government bonds, including Treasuries as well as U.S. savings bonds. Includes rules and regulations for investing in savings bonds and Treasuries, as well as special tax features and concerns. Savings bond calculators determine current values for savings bonds you already own and accrued interest each year for tax reporting. The site also serves as the on-line resource for purchasing U.S. government securities and U.S. savings bonds directly from the government (TreasuryDirect).

Provides links to statistics from over 100 federal agencies.

FedStats
www.fedstats.gov
FREE

What We Like: Links go to such data as economic and population trends, health care costs, foreign trade and farm production. Users can browse the site's topic menu, select from specific program/subject areas, browse by agency, or use the keyword search.

What We Dislike: Provides no original data at site. Must link to other sites to retrieve data/analysis. Also does not provide any type of economic analysis of its own.

Official explanations, publications and downloadable tax forms and instructions.

Internal Revenue Service
www.irs.gov
FREE

What We Like: Numerous explanations of the tax code available from the IRS on almost every tax issue, some in plain English, and even Spanish. The Web site is easily accessible and navigable. Also the downloadable publications, tax forms and instructions are valuable, particularly for less common tax issues and in last-minute situations.

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Government (con't)

Social Security Online
www.ssa.gov
FREE

On-line explanation of Social Security programs and benefits.

What We Like: Detailed information on Social Security programs and benefits, rules and regulations, as well as explanations of how to apply for benefits. Calculators estimate your future benefits. On-line request form to receive your personal earnings and benefit estimate statement, stating how much you have already contributed and an estimate of your accrued benefits.

What We Dislike: Some of the sections are confusing to use and some of the charts are difficult to read.

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
www.sec.gov
FREE

Official source for on-line corporate and mutual fund reports and filings.

What We Like: EDGAR filings for all public companies and mutual funds, including annual reports, 10Ks, proxies, prospectuses, etc. Also, on-line educational publications on investing and information on avoiding and reporting fraud, as well as links to sites that can help you check out individual brokers, brokerage firms, and investment advisors.

What We Dislike: EDGAR filings can be confusing.

Message Boards

Message boards are a good place to learn about investment-related resources available through the Internet. The more popular investment message boards such as Yahoo! boast groups for virtually every U.S. publicly traded company—although there is no guarantee that the board will contain active discussion. When using message boards, be very mindful of the motivation behind the postings. Read any post on a message board with a healthy dose of skepticism. The top sites in this category provide active discussion on individual securities as well as general investing topics. Users are able to read messages posted by other users as well as post their own opinions and thoughts. In addition, some sites allow you to block messages from specific users.

ClearStation
www.clearstation.com
FREE

Site for technical analysis-based stock analysis and ideas.

What We Like: Discuss area contains forums for a broad range of topics as well as individual stocks. Enter in a company ticker and see member recommendations—either long or short. You can "ignore" specific users.

What We Dislike: Most non-company-specific forums have little recent activity. Activity at widely held company forums is not as heavy as at other message board sites.

Lycos Finance Powered by Raging Bull
ragingbull.lycos.com
FREE

Investing resource offers area with message boards.

What We Like: Daily Herd on the Boards segment and E-mail (for registered users) lists the top posts for the day. Listing of most active boards, as measured by current activity relative to traffic over the last 30 days. Can ignore postings of specific users.

What We Dislike: Discontinued their Member Power Ratings that rated user's credibility based on feedback from other users.

Morningstar.com
www.morningstar.com
FREE

Comprehensive site.

What We Like: At Conversations area, forums are maintained by topic, stock, and fund. Users can search conversations by keyword, user/author, or ticker/company name. Stock forums are broken down by sector. Topic forums, in general, have seen recent activity. For individual company and mutual fund forums, there are links to free Morningstar Quicktake Reports.

What We Dislike: You cannot block specific users. Traffic for widely held stocks not as heavy as at other sites.

The Motley Fool
www.fool.com
FREE–$29.95/yr.

Investment education site with message boards covering broad range of topics.

What We Like: Discussion Boards are some of the more actively monitored message boards on the Web. Wide selection of topics, such as stocks, investment books, industries and markets, and personal finance. The Best Of section provides listing of most popular posts. Active discussion at boards on widely held stock. Can block specific users.

What We Dislike: Not sure the benefit is worth the cost just to access messages from others, let alone post your own messages.

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Message Boards (con't)

Site for stock research and investing message boards.

Silicon Investor
www.siliconinvestor.com
FREE–$129.95/yr.

What We Like: Search for forums by subject or search text for keywords. You can customize your account to display those forums and/or users that most interest you. You can also track the postings of specific users, as well as block postings.

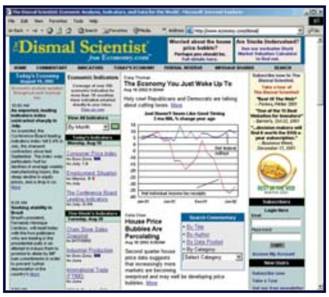
What We Dislike: Requires paid subscription in order to post to boards. Many widely held companies do not have very active boards.

Investing resource offers area with message boards, live chats, and conversations.

Yahoo! Finance
messages.yahoo.com
FREE

What We Like: Investment message boards are broken down into investment type or sector. You can perform keyword searches on subject, message text, and author. Ignore User filter allows registered users to ignore the posts of other designated users and the Profanity filter allows registered users to block commonly-used profanity from their viewing environment. Users can recommend the posts of others and can also express their sentiment—from strong buy to strong sell—for a given stock. Most investment message boards have seen recent activity.

What We Dislike: Message boards tend to have more profanity than other message sites.



Economic Data

The current and expected economic climate has a significant impact on the investment decision-making process. Consequently, having access to economic data and information can be especially useful to the individual investor. The government releases data on the GDP (gross domestic product) and GNP (gross national product), income trends, employment, trade, and inflation, among other statistics, on a regularly scheduled basis. Statistics like these describe the current health of the economy and can aid investors in their decision making.

The vast majority of these sites either allow users to download series of economic data or provide hyperlinks to data series provided by other sites. The Dismal Scientist site also provides tools and analysis regarding the world economy.

Government site geared toward supplying articles and data on U.S. and international economic issues.

Bureau of Economic Analysis
www.bea.gov
FREE

What We Like: Provides articles and analysis on U.S. gross domestic product sorted by industry and output, as well as international and regional articles. Presents detailed economic data on items such as disposable income, income consumption, and wages and salaries. Features a news release section that provides current economic news from around the world. Information can be retrieved interactively for national income and product accounts tables, international transaction accounts, and state and regional statistics—including gross state product and local and personal income.

One of the top sites for economic data and analysis.

Dismal Scientist
www.dismal.com
$189/yr.

What We Like: Provides thorough information and commentary on the U.S. economy and also some information relating to international economies. The site provides a calendar of upcoming economic announcements from around the globe, over 75 economic releases from over 15 countries, articles covering a wide variety of economic topics and industries, and a collection of economic and financial calculators. Message boards are available where visitors can seek out the opinions of other users or offer their own observations and insights into economic events and principles. You can view labor, income, real estate, and other statistics for specific states and/or metropolitan areas.

What We Dislike: Does not provide any downloadable data series (see sister site FreeLunch.com).

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ECONOMIC DATA (CON'T)

EconData.Net
www.econdata.net
FREE

Links to economic data.

What We Like: A good collection of links to a wide variety of regional economic data available on the Internet. Topic areas include employment, income, output and trade, price, economic assets, and industry sectors. List of links indicates whether the site provides free data/information or if it is subscription-based.

What We Dislike: Provides no original data at site. Must link to other sites to retrieve data/analysis. Also does not provide original economic analysis. Provides links to statistics from over 100 federal agencies.

FedStats
www.fedstats.gov
FREE

Provides links to statistics from over 100 federal agencies.

What We Like: The FedStats Web site is maintained by the Federal Interagency on Statistical Policy and offers free access to a collection of information for every bureau of the United States government. Links take you to such data as economic and population trends, health care costs, foreign trade, and farm production. Users can browse the site's topic menu, select from specific program/subject areas, browse by agency, or use the keyword search.

What We Dislike: Provides no original data or economic analysis at site. Must link to other sites to retrieve data/analysis.

FreeLunch.com
www.freelunch.com
FREE

Provides economic and financial data series.

What We Like: A large collection of free economic, financial, and industry data broken up into 14 categories, covering over one and a half million time series in all. Users can find data by browsing the site's data dictionary or by searching the databases. Data can be downloaded directly into Microsoft Excel.

What We Dislike: Provides no economic analysis or news. Strictly a provider of data series.

INVESTMENT WEB LINKS

InvestorGuide.com
www.investorguide.com
FREE

Information, tools, and investment-related resources.

What We Like: A concise Links Directory tab lists recommended "top pick" sites to pare down search time, numerous additional links are available if desired. The Quotes and Research area features an efficient stock research tool—enter a ticker and get up to 70 company-specific links. The tool automatically searches each subsequent link so that there is no need to re-enter the ticker. A university area caters to investors of all levels, offering educational articles on investing and personal finance, including a link to sister site InvestorWords.com. Keyword and phrase search engine available, along with optional free daily and weekly E-mails.

What We Dislike: Cramped blue hyperlinks.

InvestorLinks.com
www.investorlinks.com
FREE

Financial directory site with links and descriptions for over 12,000 financial Web sites.

What We Like: Well-organized Financial Directory with a wealth of extensive links. Categories include advisories, brokerages, exchanges, global markets, software and research. Users can jump to message boards through the Stock Talk area, browse news headlines or sign up for a financial newsletter.

What We Dislike: Out of date links (such as the blank Top Links list).

Momentum
www.momentumcd.com
FREE

Provides links to over 5,000 investor-related sites.

What We Like: Mutual Funds area with links to exchange-traded and closed-end funds, supermarkets, a listing of load and no-load funds from A to Z, index funds, software and screens. Other main sections are devoted to Futures, Stocks & Options and General Investments. The latter covers spreadsheets (shareware, commercial and free), data vendors, historical data, financial calculators and calendars. Home-page link to Markets at a Glance provides ready access to the day's market happenings. Search engine available.

What We Dislike: Navigating bargains and free offers pages.