Did you know that most jobs are not advertised? Believe me, it’s true. When you see a job posted on (insert leading job board name here) somebody paid to have it advertised there. You know where it’s free for a company to post all of their jobs? Come on, guess… If you suspected a company’s own careers website, you would be correct!

In terms of percentages, it has been estimated that online job board postings represent about 15-20% of the total jobs out there. Click here to do some research and see for yourself. Why such a small percentage? Hey, the cost of advertising those opportunities adds up! Such being the case, you might be wondering how you can have access to all of those gigs. Well, I have three options to present to you.

Option one for finding these unadvertised jobs is to go to the careers section of every company you have an interest in and do a manual search. This could prove to be quite laborious if you have an interest in several companies or you don’t care where you work so long as a check arrives on the 15th and 30th.

Option two for finding hidden opportunities is to spend some quality time on US.jobs. US.jobs is owned and facilitated by “DirectEmployers,” a nonprofit association of employers. What I like about this site is that when you search for a job it searches the career sections of various companies rather than a list of promoted positions a la (insert leading job board name here). As such, you are able to search a richer database of jobs you most likely are not privy too. Now, is EVERY company’s career section available via the US.jobs system? No. However, a great deal of them are and many (if not all) are from Fortune 500 companies. Click here for a list.

Option three is a bit more technical and needs a bit of explaining but is so worth it. Do you know what an applicant tracking system is? Wikipedia defines it as “a software application that enables the electronic handling of recruitment needs.” As a jobseeker, you refer to it as the electronic blackhole that eats up resumes. Specifically, it’s the system you interact with when you apply for a job on a company careers website. One of the more popular applicant tracking systems is produced by a company called “Taleo.”

With a little help from Google, you will be able to search company websites that are using the Taleo system. In this way, you will be able to find jobs that are not posted on (insert leading job board name here) and have an edge on your competition. Let me show you how.

In the Google search below, I am asking Google to look only on the Taleo.net website (where their system hosts various unadvertised jobs that are typically obtainable when a jobseeker does a search on a company’s careers
website). I do this when I search: “site:taleo.net” Afterward, I ask Google to find only those webpages that have “careers” in the title. This is what “intitle:careers” means. Finally, I add in the job title “programmer” because that is the job I am looking for.

Of course, just adding a job title is giving me too many broad results. I narrow it down by adding more keywords like “SAS” and “macro.”
What I like about this is that I now get fewer results but, more in line with the type of job I am seeking. More importantly, I am accessing jobs that my job-seeking competitors may not be privy to yet. Excuse me a moment as I release an evil maniacal laugh of victory. Bwah-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha…

Okay, enough of that. What do you think of these ideas, especially the last option? I look forward to reading your comments.