

ADVANTAGES AND SHORTCOMINGS ON THE CV-ONLINE CAREER VORTAL IN LATVIA

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Abstract

CV-Online is Latvia's leading personnel selection service provider on the Internet in Latvia. It uses the Internet environment to seek out personnel, and it offers a full scope of services to employers and employees alike.

The aim of this research is to study the advantages and shortcomings of the recruitment procedure insofar as the CV-Online Latvia vortal is concerned.

The author has mostly made reference to the works of Anderson, Salgado and Weddle in the paper. The research cohort was made up of two groups – 163 employers and 7,426 employees (the survey method was used). There were also structured interviews with senior staff at CV-Online Latvia.

The hypothesis of the author is that when personnel selection is conducted in the Internet environment, shortcomings include the impersonal nature of the process, the large number of applications that are at an unacceptable level of quality, as well as discrimination against those who have no access to the Internet or do not use it. Advantages include speed, which allows clients to save on time and financial resources, as well as the establishment of a broad target audience in the process. The hypothesis was proven.

Key words: *Personnel selection, Internet selection, employers, employees*

Introduction

The labour market in Latvia today can be described as highly fluctuating and unstable. If a year ago companies could still seek to survive under conditions of serious competition, then right now there is a struggle to stay in the marketplace at all. In any economic situation and at any level of a country's development, employees are always the most important resource for a company. Employees are the only resource which can be directed purposefully in pursuit of a company's goals. Accordingly, personnel selection is of decisive importance in any company's operations. It is a time-consuming and very responsible process, and so the strategy for personnel selection and the selection of relevant resources in that process are of key importance (Certo & Certo, 2006). The labour market today dictates terms for employers and employees alike, which means that types of personnel selection are changing, and new trends are appearing. As the economic situation changes, there are also changes in the need for staff, as well as in the profile of necessary employees and the criteria that are brought to bear in personnel selection. The availability and number of employees are the most important aspect in determining types of selection and changes therein. The main indicator in regulating personnel selection at this time is the unemployment level, which regulates and changes the number of applications for each available job vacancy.

The use of new approaches in personnel selection is closely linked to opportunities that are provided by technologies and to changes therein (Hutson, 2008). This has an effect not just on personnel selection processes, but also on the internal processes of companies (Certo & Certo, 2006). As technologies have developed and been improved, personnel selection procedures have taken on new methods, opportunities and ways of making selection processes simpler, faster and of greater financial advantage. As the world of the Internet has expanded, importance and development in personnel selection marked out new trends – the increasing importance of technical competence, the lesser need for direct contacts, a practically endless field of information, and the high level of mobility in the labour force (Weddle, 2003). Each company must understand the way in which information technologies can be brought to bear in personnel selection so as to improve the results of the process and to make successful use of human resources in pursuit of the company's goals.

Internet-based personnel selection as a new approach in evaluating a company's resources and their potential will be successful and with positive results if the relevant

company is familiar with the advantages and shortcomings of this selection process. CV-Online Latvia, as the leading provider of Internet-based personnel selection services in Latvia, characterises the selection of personnel on the Internet and the provision of the widest possible array of services to employers and employees alike. CV-Online Latvia has been working successfully in Latvia for 10 years, and at this time it offers the widest range of opportunities in terms of Internet-based personnel selection services. Since 2002, CV-Online Latvia has been the leading company in its sector in Latvia, and it has also proven itself to be an international Internet-based personnel selection company (Zegele, 2009). CV-Online is the stable market leader in the Baltic States not only in terms of revenue, but also in terms of innovations in the development of the Internet-based personnel selection market in the Baltic States (Brodins, 2009).

The goal of the research

The goal of the research is to identify the advantages and shortcomings of using the CV-Online Latvia career portal for the purpose of personnel selection.

Materials and methods

The process of personnel selection is very important in that it establishes the future relationship between the employer and the employee (Forands, 2002). There are two basic theories when it comes to the process of personnel selection – the predictive perspective and the constructive perspective. In the former case, if the number of applications exceeds the number of jobs that are on offer, then recruitment companies conduct the selection process and decide on which candidates should be forwarded in the process and which ones should not. The predictive approach considers candidates to be “subjects” of the selection process, and control over them is handed over to the organisation (Anderson, 2008). Of primary importance in this case is the extent to which each candidate is appropriate for the relevant vacancy. From the perspective of the constructive approach, in terms, both parties in the recruitment process are of equal importance – the company which is selecting the employee and the candidate. Both parties take decisions in the process. They meet during the process and establish a “sustainable psychological contract” that is the basis for further job relations (Salgado & Schinkel, 2008). The constructive approach looks at recruitment and a set of social episodes, allowing both parties in the process to examine the issue of whether the relationship in future will be successful. This makes it possible to exchange information and to develop mutual expectations and obligations (Anderson, Salgado, Schinkel & Cunningham-Snell, 2008). The selection of which approach should be used in personnel selection is determined first of all by the overall situation in the labour market, as well as by the extent to which the relevant company needs employees. The former approach is concentrated more on an existing and rapid resolution to the situation, while the latter focuses on the importance of the recruitment process as a long-term investment not just for the organisation, but for business as such.

Demands related to a competitive business environment have changed over the last several years, with the focus now being on flexibility and the extent to which employees satisfy market requirements (Verhoeven & Williams, 2008). At the same time, however, the market still demands fast and immediate solutions on the one hand, but durable solutions and long-term activities on the other hand. One resource that helps to fulfil both of these functions is the Internet as a recruitment resource in personnel selection.

Figure 1 displays, 66.7% of all of the world’s Internet users live in Europe and Asia.

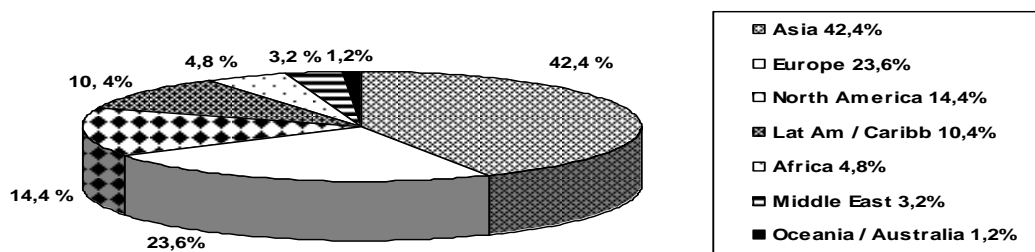


Figure 1: World Internet Users Distribution by World Regions

Source: *Internet World Stats* - <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

In Latvia, 62% of residents aged 15 to 74, or some 1.1 million people in all, use the Internet (source: <http://news.frut.lv/lv/ppl/society/94638>). Data in this area point to the development of information technologies as a part of everyday life, but also as a component of the business environment. The Internet has become a necessary resource in entrepreneurship, because it ensures communications and information in a textual form while also ensuring access to information resources (Orchard & Fullwood, 2009). Information exchange is also one of the most important factors in personnel selection, and this function has now moved over to the Internet today. Traditional recruitment sources have been replaced, and the new concept of E-recruitment or Internet recruitment has appeared instead (Weddle, 2003). This means that Web technologies are used in selecting candidates for job vacancies. Internet recruitment has replaced earlier sources of information such as newspapers and magazines (Scott, 2008). The development of the Internet has also made personnel selection processes for flexible, diverse, inexpensive and accessible (they are now available on a 24/7 basis).

Personnel recruitment processes include several phases in which candidates and employers take relevant decisions. The organisation decides as to whether the candidate is right for the job, while the applicant decides on whether the job and the organisation are in line with his or her expectations (DeCenzo & Robbins, 2006). The expansion in opportunities that are afforded by the Internet make it possible to use Internet recruitment not just to search out candidates, but also to improve and to supplement each phase in personnel selection. The technological foundation for Internet-based personnel selection rests in Web solutions which ensure the distribution and use of documents on the Internet (Kerrin & Kettley, 2003). The Internet can be used to identify, select and evaluate candidates, but it can also serve the support function of ensuring the entire system of the personnel recruitment process.

There are three different methods in classifying the opportunities that are created by the Internet in personnel recruitment. These are the identification and contacting of candidates, the selection of candidates, and then the evaluation or online testing of candidates so that the recruitment process can be conducted and managed.

Identification and contacting of candidates: The use of the Internet in order to identify and contact candidates is seen as a basic function in terms of use of the Web for recruitment purposes. There are six ways of finding candidates on the Internet (Kerrin & Kettley, 2003):

- 1) Publishing help wanted ads on the Internet – on the homepages of personnel recruitment companies and/or other Web sites such as portals, social networks, etc. (Hutson, 2008);
- 2) Publishing help wanted ads on the company's own homepage (Field, 2008);
- 3) Using employer branding to attract candidates;
- 4) Identifying and seeking out candidates via the databases of Internet-based personnel recruitment companies;
- 5) Publishing help wanted ads within the company's own system – the Intranet or the company's own homepage.

The authors of this paper have, on the basis of their professional experience, identified a sixth method for recruiting employees – one that relates to an internal source of information:

- 6) Use of the database of employees on the basis of the rule that the Internet is used as a resource to maintain the database, i.e., by storing up information about employees on the basis of a personnel management system.

The selection, evaluation and testing of candidates online: The most important Internet-based tool in the selection of candidates is E-mail, because that ensures the receipt, delivery, editing and grouping of information (Certo & Certo, 2006). Special application forms are usually used when recruiting candidates, and when they are collected, they can be used to evaluate the various candidates (Kerrin & Kettley, 2003). There can also be various online tests that make it possible to evaluate the extent to which a candidate fits in with specific job requirements. Another tool that is often used in evaluating candidates is the online interview which involves programmes such as Skype. This tool is used for the first interview, and it does not involve any face-to-face contacts between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Conducting and managing the selection process: When it comes to the selection of candidates as such, the Internet offers a number of tools to make the process easier and quicker. There are special programmes and systems (DeCenzo & Robbins, 2005) such as a personnel management information system which stores up information about candidates, transmits documents, sets up schedules and plans for interviews, advertises new vacancies, and provides analysis and reports. A fundamentally important aspect in managing Internet-based recruitment processes is maintenance of contacts with existing and potential candidates, as well as the establishment of a reciprocal link (Weddle, 2003). Both of these factors help to uphold the effect of presence, ensuring a personal approach and establishing the company's image as an employer.

When the Internet is chosen as a resource in personnel selection processes, it is important to understand the main advantages and shortcomings so that the process can be successful and that the goals can be achieved. The views of various authors and theoreticians (Weddle, 2003; Kerrin & Kettley, 2003; Verhoeven & Williams, 2008) can be used to identify several specific advantages to Internet-based personnel recruitment, as well as the most important shortcomings in the process. The most important advantages include speed, the ability to access an extensive audience, the ability to save time, the 24/7 availability of the system, convenience of use, low costs, the use of a database of CVs, the fact that results can be measured, and the fact that statistics are available. Key shortcomings include many unacceptable applications, the lack of a personal approach in the process, technological problems, the automated nature of the process, the possible lack of security in online testing, out-of-date CV databases, etc. This is what led to the hypothesis: When personnel selection is conducted in the Internet environment, shortcomings include the impersonal nature of the process, the large number of applications that are at an unacceptable level of quality, as well as discrimination against those who have no access to the Internet or do not use it. Advantages include speed, which allows clients to save on time and financial resources, as well as the establishment of a broad target audience in the process.

Methods

Empirical research was conducted to identify the advantages and shortcomings of the CV-Online Latvia career vortal insofar as personnel selection is concerned. A survey was selected as the research method.

Participants in the research were selected on the basis of two criteria – employers and employees. The internal system of CV-Online was used. An electronic message was sent to all of the selected respondents, allowing each selected respondent to take part in the process. Both surveys were also posted on the www.visidati.lv portal, with the questions being entered electronically.

Because this was a subject that had not been studied to any great degree, and also because it was necessary to gain a more in-depth understanding of the subject at hand, structured interviews were also organised in addition to the surveys.

Participants

Both employers and employees filled out survey forms. Of the **163** employers who took part, 71% were women and 29% were men. The employers represented various levels of management, including project managers and specialists from various sectors. Of the **7,426** employees who took part, 63% were women, and 37% were men. All of them were adults working in a wide range of occupations, including senior management, medium-level management, low-level management, project managers, specialists, client services specialists, qualified workers, as well as blue-collar people.

The instruments

Three research instruments were used to conduct the research on the basis of the selected methods:

1) **A questionnaire for CV-Online Latvia clients (employers)**. The survey included closed and partly closed structured questions (31), with proposed answers in some cases, and the request that the respondent offer personal answers in others;

2) **A questionnaire for CV-Online Latvia clients (employees)**. They survey included closed and partly closed structured questions (19), with proposed answers in some cases, and the request that the respondent offer alternative answers in others.

3) **Structured interviews with CV-Online Latvia staff**. There were five structured questions which did not change during the course of the interviews. The content and sequence of questions were strictly monitored so as to make sure that answers given without any loss of context or the essence of the questions.

The results

Personnel selection processes can be seen as dynamic today because of the rapid development of the Internet. Recruitment processes have become more complicated, and the Internet is a resource which helps to address this complexity. Experts believe that the Internet has now become an inviolable component in personnel selection processes – one without which recruitment procedures could no longer be imagined.

The research data displayed information not only on employers, but also about employees. The research data show that employers and employees alike use the Internet regularly and have been doing so for a long time – seven years on average, with everyone using the Internet every day. This indicates stability and regularity in using the Internet, also showing that the Internet has become an everyday necessity in the business environment.

Figure 2 displays, in personnel recruitment procedures, the Internet is most often used as a resource which confirms its popularity among employers; because they use the Internet to use personnel recruitment services, to survey the public media, to receive CVs from job applicants, etc. Three resources are used most often in the search for personnel – ads in the central press and other public media, the use of Internet-based recruitment services, and the situation in which applicants submit their CVs themselves. There are other resources for personnel recruitment that are not used today because they offer poor results. These include rental of personnel, posting of adverts on bulletin boards and the like, and the involvement of individual enterprises in the process. These are no longer important resources, and they are basically not used for recruitment purposes anymore.

The Internet resources which employers most often use are basic ones – publishing ads and seeking candidates in CV databases. The same is true among job seekers – they look at ads and post their CVs on the database.

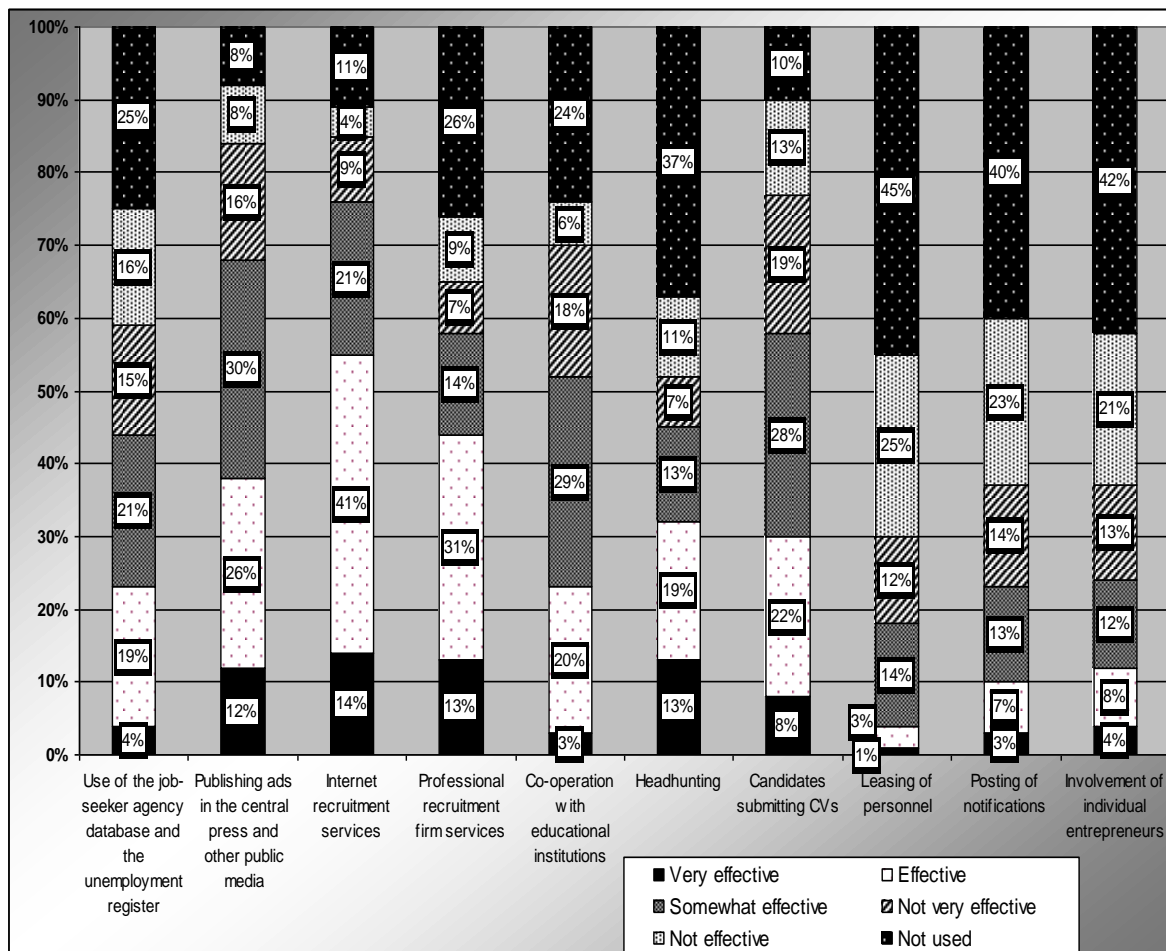


Figure 2: Assessment of external search resources in recruitment processes

Overall, it has to be said that personnel selection on the Internet is a better process than other forms of recruitment, and with better results. Internet sites are used most often in the selection of employees in those cases when a worker is needed quickly and when it is not possible to fill the position in-house. Internet sites in that case are used more as a supplementary resource to seek out and bring in employees; they are not the only resource under such circumstances.

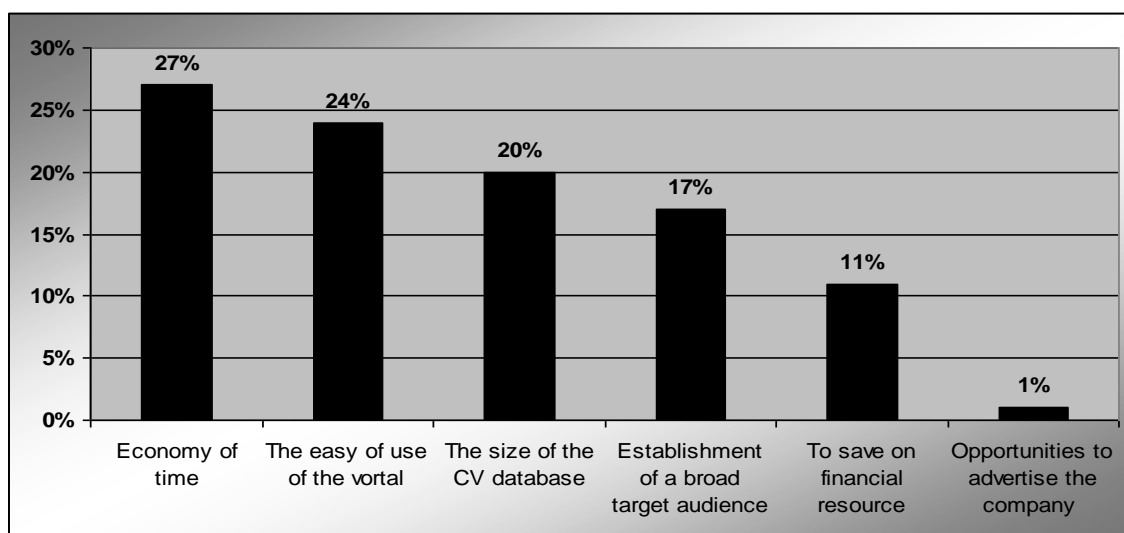


Figure 3: Advantages of using the CV-Online Latvia career portal in recruitment processes

Figure 3 shows the greatest benefit for employers when it comes to the CV-Online Latvia resource is an economy of time. Other important advantages include the ease of use of the vortal and the size of the CV database. Additionally, there is the fact that there is a high level of responsiveness to posted ads, which means that the employer will save financial resources in the process. Opportunities to advertise the company in the context of CV-Online are insignificant. Experts, too, say that the main advantages of CV-Online Latvia include the target audience, the availability of the database of CVs, and the wide range of relevant services.

For job seekers, the greatest aspect of the CV-Online Latvia system is a better way of looking for and finding work. Other benefits include savings of time, invitations to an interview, and the ability to find a second job. The main advantages for would-be employees include the ease of use and speed of the portal, as well as the fact that new job offers can be received by E-mail. Other advantages include accessibility and the wide range of advertisements. Less important, according to survey participants, are the services which help to improve the process of looking for work – a review of statistics and the availability of new information about the process of doing so.

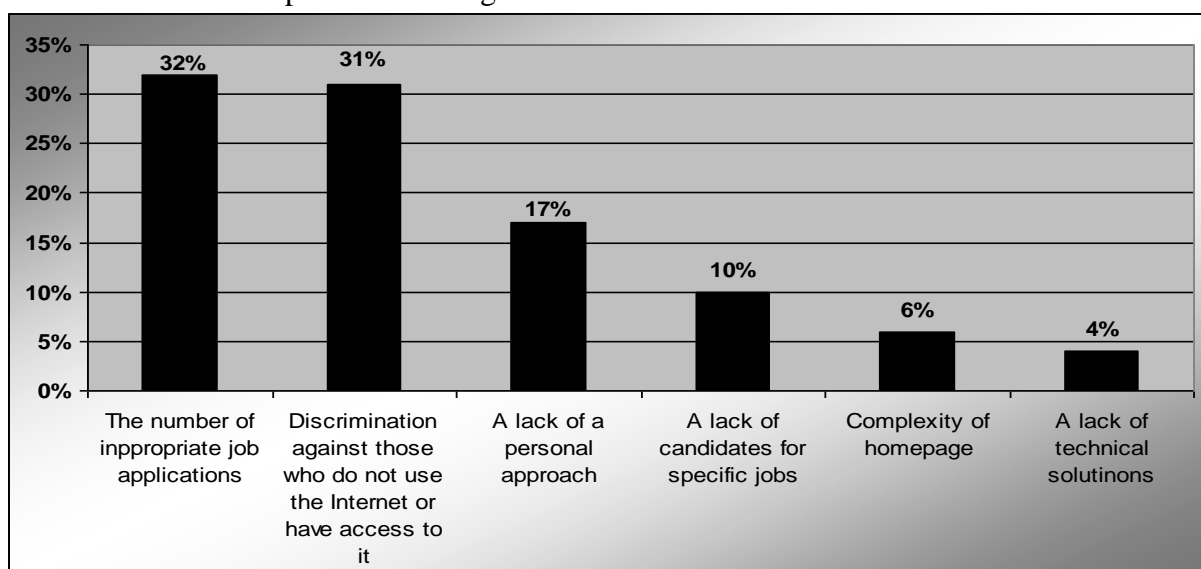


Figure 4: Shortcomings of using the CV-Online Latvia career vortal in recruitment processes

Figure 4 displays, for employers, the main shortcomings in the CV-Online Latvia system include the large number of unacceptable applications, discrimination against those who have no access to the Internet or do not use it, as well as the lack of a personal approach and candidates for specific jobs. A low rate of response to a posted job vacancy announcement cannot be seen as a terrible shortcoming, because it can be said that CV-Online Latvia ensures an adequate audience. The homepage is not seen as too complicated, and the technical solutions which underpin it as seen as sufficient. Unlike the employers who are clients of the CV-Online system, however, experts pointed to several other shortcomings – an incomplete set of categories related to work experience and education, as well as the fact that not all potential job seekers can be contacted.

Employees (nearly one-half of respondents) did not point to any major shortcomings in the services which CV-Online offers. There were a few problems that were cited to an almost equal measure in each case – the complexity of the CV form, the primary focus on Riga and its metropolitan area, the inability to post a portfolio of work, the lack of a personal approach, no reciprocal link, and out-of-date information in some of the sections of the portal.

Experts who were interviewed pointed to improvements that must be made in the process of Internet-based personnel recruitment in the context of the CV-Online Latvia system. They argued that new technologies need to be implemented so as to improve

convenience for users, adding that the way in which ads can be posted must be improved, a database of work experience and education should be set up, and various new communications tools could be found to promote the process of socialisation on the portal.

Conclusions

Our hypothesis proved to be true: Shortcomings in the use of the Internet for personnel selection include a lack of a personal approach, the number of inappropriate job applications, as well as discrimination against those who do not use the Internet or have access to it. Advantages include speed, a saving of time and money, and the availability of a large audience.

Because the CV-Online Latvia vortal is the leading vortal in this sector, the results obtained by the researchers can be applied to Internet personnel recruitment in a general sense. For CV-Online, the most important advantages are the convenience of the service, the size of the database, the large number of applications, the ability to save money, and the range of diverse services. The most important shortcomings are the large number of unacceptable applications, the lack of candidates for special positions, the incomplete nature of categories in the area of work experience and education, and the fact that the entire audience of potential job seekers cannot be reached.

For job seekers, the main advantages of the CV-Online Latvia portal include ease of use, speed, availability, the large range of advertisements, as well as the ability to receive job offers by E-mail. The most important shortcomings are the complexity of the CV form, the focus mostly on Riga and its metropolitan area, the inability to post a work portfolio, the lack of a personal touch, no reciprocal link, and out-of-date information in some of the sections of the portal.

The results of the study also indicated the high level of unemployment in Latvia, because the employment status of respondents was comparatively low against the overall situation in the labour market. Only one-half of all respondents had a job, and more than one-third did not (3,293 respondents, or 40%), did not. This indicated the large number of job seekers that there were. The research data also showed that it is not just unemployed people, but also employed people who survey job advertisements. Most of the surveyed employees were actively or passively looking for work and new job offers.

Trends and future prospects for Internet-based personnel selection have to do with the development of technologies and how that will affect recruitment processes in terms of speeding them up. Internet-based recruitment will certainly not lose its importance as an initial resource for sifting through job applications. Also of great importance in future personnel recruitment could be social networks and multimedia systems. Career portals will establish closer links with their users. Automation of services is also something that can be expected in future.

The number of respondents was enough to ensure the representative nature of the data. They can be applied to all employees in looking at the main trends in selecting resources to find a job.

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