

Public Libraries Briefcase

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Public Libraries Briefcase is a quarterly column written by members of the BRASS Business Reference in Public Libraries Committee.

Public Library Personal Investing Resources

Written by
Barbara J. Birkas
Assistant Manager, Government & Business Department
Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, Cincinnati, Ohio

There is a wealth of information available at the public library for personal investors. Information comes in a variety of formats, including reference books, circulating books, periodicals, newsletters, loose-leaf services, CD-Roms, electronic databases, and Internet sites.

Basic Sources

Value Line Investment Survey is an expensive service but well worth it. It is probably the best stock evaluation source out there, particularly from a beginner's standpoint of investing. It reports on about 2000 stocks in 68 industries. There is always a chart showing past and present performance over at least 10 years, with recommendations on timeliness and safety, recent commentary on current operations, and future prospects for each stock. Each page contains name of analyst and date of evaluation. A *Small and Mid-Cap Edition* adds about another 2200 small and mid-cap stocks to the analysis.

Mergent's Handbook of Common Stocks is a good source with one-page reports on top companies.

Standard & Poor's Stock Reports now bound into 2 volumes with all three stock exchanges together in alphabetical order. Updated approximately every 2 months. Contains company business profiles, operational reviews, stock performance, business summaries, income and balance sheet data, and charting going back 5 years.

Standard & Poor's Corporation Records and *Mergent's International Manual* both offer history of stock, consolidated income and balance sheets, long-term debt, and dividend history.

Dividend/DRIPs

Directory of Companies Offering Dividend Reinvestment Plans includes DRIPs, as well as companies in which one can buy stock directly from the company. Annual.

Mergent Handbook of Dividend Achievers offers one-page summary coverage of stocks which have raised their cash dividends for 10 consecutive years, or more. Annual.

Historic Stock Prices

Standard & Poor's Daily Stock Price Record has day-by-day stock prices for AMEX and NYSE since 1962 and for NASDAQ stocks and mutual funds since 1968. There is usually a six-month delay for receipt of these sources, however prices newer or earlier than 1962 may be found in the daily *Wall Street Journal* issues. Note that these prices represent actual trading prices on these days and are not adjusted for splits.

Mutual Funds

Investment Companies Yearbook (Thomson Financial) offers good summaries of fund performance. It is an annual but updated monthly with the "*Mutual Funds Update*."

Morningstar Mutual Funds is a loose-leaf source for mutual fund data, modeled after the Value Line Survey. It is the source of the noted "star" ratings system for mutual funds. Morningstar also publishes two monthly newsletters called the *Morningstar Fund Investor* and *Morningstar Stock Investor*.

Value Line Mutual Fund Survey also offers a mutual fund rating service, very similar to its stock service.

Newsletters & Magazines

Our library subscribes to hundreds of trade journals covering dozens of industries. These are excellent sources of industry news, trends, data, and company profiles. Stories of "hot stocks" in the popular and business press often run here first as detailed trade magazine articles. Several indexes are available to these important sources, and many journals are now available full-text online. We currently subscribe to about 70 investment newsletters (Not all may still be available in your library, or at all in 2015).

Top 10 Newsletters/Periodicals to Consult:

Barron's (weekly) Excellent market wrap-up and statistical coverage

Daily Graphs (weekly) Best for technical analysis coverage of NYSE, AMEX, and NASDAQ stocks

Dick Davis Digest (24 X per year) Provides excerpts of other leading investment newsletters, and makes recommendations for stock, bond, and mutual fund investments, provided from leading Wall Street analysts. It also contains market trends and general news about specific industries and companies.

Dines Letter (monthly) contains advice based on fundamentals like technical analysis and mass psychology to issue predictions about economic trends, short-term trading and the stock market as a whole.

Elliott Wave Financial Forecast (monthly) Based on the Elliott Wave Principal and compares market movement against this theory. It uses fixed time cycles, market momentum, sentiment, and supply and demand to apply to stocks, bonds, gold and the economy.

Hulbert Financial Digest (monthly) Charts the performance of picks by other newsletters. Analysis is made by using a timing scorecard and listing frequently recommended funds for sale/purchase.

Kiplinger's Personal Finance (monthly) An easy read for general personal investing topics, like stock news, fraud alerts, retirement information, real-life money experiences.

Profitable Investing (monthly) Richard E. Band promises good advice to individuals seeking low-risk growth. Band has won awards for his use of conservative portfolio style and safety-first "value" approach to wealth-building.

Standard & Poor's Outlook (monthly) is the oldest S&P publication. It recommends stocks and gives general economic trends.

Wall Street Transcript (weekly) Super-expensive weekly roundup of Wall Street news. Noted for detailed company profiles and analyst/CEO roundtables on different industries and companies.

Best Electronic Resources

Business and Company Resource Center —provides financial information on publicly-traded U.S. companies. Full text business articles also available

Business Newsbank —news articles covering companies, industries, executives, and products including current information on those hard-to-find small companies, from over 500 U.S. local, regional, national newspapers, newswires, and business journals.

EBSCOhost/Business Source Premier —indexes nearly 1000 articles full text with financial, accounting, banking, economics and management back to 1984.

Electric Library —searches magazines, books, newspapers, maps, TV and radio transcripts on just about any small business topic.

Reference USA —offers directory-type information on over 10 million U.S. companies searchable by company name, SIC code, employee size, sales volume, geographic criteria, etc.

Many times it is helpful to just use a large search engine like [google.com](http://www.google.com) to find a company's web page.

Top 10 Investment Web Sites

Bloomberg Online

<http://www.bloomberg.com/>

Has top daily headline stories from papers around the world. Mutual funds, stocks, etc. can be accessed free of charge.

Daily Stocks

<http://www.dailystocks.com/>

Contains over 200 financial links to market commentary, stock screens, insider reports, financial news headlines, earnings, daily market indicators, upgrades/downgrades, and technical reports.

Historical Stock Quotes

<http://www.bigcharts.com/historical/>

Provides current and historical stock (and some mutual fund) quotations back to January 2, 1985. Includes the high, low, and closing prices.

InvestorGuide

<http://www.investorguide.com/>

Excellent, comprehensive source of information for the investor that is divided into three areas: Investing, Personal Finance, and Learning.

MarketWatch

<http://www.marketwatch.com/>

This one-stop shopping financial site has all you need to pick, trade, or buy stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, with the latest financial news.

MoneyCentral

<http://moneycentral.msn.com/home.asp>

Sponsored by Microsoft, this site offers comprehensive personal finance information including: real-time quotes, top mutual funds, retirement planning, saving for college, and buying or selling a home.

Motley Fool: Finance and Folly

<http://www.fool.com>

Aimed at small investors, this site helps you pick and value stocks. Has broker comparisons, industry talk, stock tips, and message boards.

Silicon Investor

<http://www.siliconinvestor.com/>

Tracks over 1,000 technology stocks. Graphs stock performance from 10 days up to 100 months by individual stocks or in groups. Offers a discussion forum of the tech industry, and spotlights "Big Movers" of the day.

Yahoo! Finance

<http://finance.yahoo.com> Get current quotes, company profiles, and news about a company from Reuters, Business Wire, and PRNewswire.