

## Supplementary Appendix to “Matching with phantoms”, by Arnaud Chéron and Bruno Decreuse

### Anecdotal evidence on phantoms on the web

We provide a number of quotes from various websites. The original grammar and spelling mistakes remain.

1.

“Some of the jobs posted on job boards aren't real or the postings are outdated, reports Stacey Bradford of the Wall Street Journal.”

[http://www.quintcareers.com/major\\_job\\_boards.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/major_job_boards.html)

2.

“There’s nothing more disheartening for an applicant than to continually apply while nothing ever happens because the job listings are old,” said Pringle, who looks at recruiting with a marketer’s critical eye and worries about the customer experience they deliver. “It damages the brand of the job boards because they become known as ineffectual. They lose their traffic, and then they lose their advertising revenue. They don’t do themselves any favors by getting the jobs count high. It’s not how many—it’s how good.”

[http://www.cmo.com/articles/2013/5/13/fired\\_job\\_boards\\_get.html](http://www.cmo.com/articles/2013/5/13/fired_job_boards_get.html)

3.

Have you ever stopped to think about the problems this causes for job seekers, and not to mention your brand? Expired job ads should not be displayed because...

- It wastes the job seekers time
- It gives the job seeker a false sense of hope
- Could be used against the advertiser/job board for 'misleading advertising'
- Provides evidence of clients old job ads

Commentary (Carey) : “Its pretty simple. Jobseekers HATE ads that aren't for real jobs.”

(Bob) : “There is no ethical excuse for advertising a vacancy that has already been filled. I think it's actually illegal in the UK to do so. However hard job boards try, some recruiters persist in this kind of practice.”

<http://www.recruitmentdirectory.com.au/Blog/cut-the-fat-expired-job-ads-should-not-be-displayed-a295.html>

4.

Most people think that recruiters collect applications online up until the application deadline, and then begin to evaluate who the best candidate is. Not true. Recruiters are trying to fill a job as soon as possible. That means that they consider applications on a rolling basis – as soon

as they find the right person, the job will be filled. In other words, if you applied after the person who got the job, it doesn't matter that you applied before the posted deadline!

Application deadlines tend to exist because job postings purchased on a third-party job board like Monster have an expiration date that corresponds to the fee of the posting. The application deadline comes from Monster, not the recruiting company. Ask a recruiter to approximate an application deadline for a job posting, and he'll have no idea what to pick. He needs the posting open if the job's still open, and down if the job's filled. When and if the job will be filled through the posting is anybody's guess.

The most annoying thing about application deadlines is that recruiters don't maintain their currency. In your job board adventures, it's likely that you've unwittingly applied to many jobs that were filled a long time ago. This is particularly true with postings a company puts on its own website. Once a recruiter fills a job, he often moves on to the next one without thinking about cleaning up the advertising for the last posting.

<http://www.powerties.net/index.php/2010/05/31/job-posting-deadlines-mean-little/>

5.

Commentary (jkeayc): How do people actually ever get a job from the internet? It seems like a huge waste of my time everytime I fill out an on-line application or search for hours for jobs that are either long gone or are not even real in the first place. If there are all these jobs being posted all the time, then how do I get one? I feel like I have a better chance of winning the lottery than getting an interview using one of these job search websites.

(Alicia) : Hello! I agree with jkeayc. It is truly frustrating when you are looking for jobs online and nothing is panning out. We are all looking for a break that actually allows us to use our skills in this world. It's irritating that every job wants you apply online now. I'm pissed that I don't really get responses from them.

(welcometothemachine) : Its a brave new world for both for employers and prospects. Equal opportunity forces employers to be dishonest and post jobs for which they already have who they want, so many many listings aren't even truly available. The internet application gives them the easy out they need. Automate this process and save money. All the applicants filter into the little pigeonholes in their neat little databases never to see the light of day again

<http://www.indeed.com/forum/gen/How-to-Use-Indeed/Frustrated-Internet-Job-hunting/t427654>

6.

You have zero priority when you apply online. Unless you've met a recruiter and they make you apply online as a formality, you're going to be waiting...and waiting...and waiting.

**What's worse: the position you're drooling over may have already been filled!** A job site certainly doesn't pull down an opening the moment it's filled; it's not in their best interest to do so, because more openings and postings means a more valuable site, which means more site visitors. And that's largely what they want.

Then there's you. **You fuel the job sites, yet usually get little more than a follow-up email and a small sliver of satisfaction and false hope.** You might benefit in the case you do get

called—and if you do, then by all means congrats—but you surely suffer via lost time and lost motivation.

<http://www.brazencareerist.com/blog/2013/01/15/online-job-boards-what-nobody-dares-to-tell-you/>

7.

**Sometimes recruiters don't know these jobs don't exist.** They may not have been told the job has been filled or has changed. So the posting stays up, jobseekers apply, and then the recruiter has to back-track and pull the posting. Recruiting doesn't start with the recruiter (unless the department that is hiring is HR). Recruiting needs, process and timetable are determined by the hiring department, and sometimes the ultimate hiring department and HR do not communicate as well as they should.

**Sometimes recruiters post jobs for general types of candidates that they need.** For example, when I recruited for a major media company, they often hired for similar jobs – edit assistant, sales coordinator, etc. Jobs like these would open frequently but not on a regular basis, and when they did, we needed to fill them fast. So we would post the jobs on a regular basis to develop pipelines of candidates that we could draw from when a job would officially open.

**Sometimes the job parameters change.** When firms go so far as to screen resumes and interview people, they do so with a specific job in mind. But sometimes the firm decides to hire a finance person instead of operations. Sometimes the budget changes (or disappears) so the search has to change (or disappear). Sometimes the position gets filled internally. There are many reasons why a search may start but stop.

Commentary (steph) : Another scenario is related to the Green card process. If an employer in the US wants to sponsor an employee for a Green card, they have to prove that, within a reasonable period of time, there is not a US citizen who is willing/able to do that work. They are required to publicly post the position, collect and review resumes and interview candidates that cannot be screened out from an initial screen of their resume and experience. Of course the candidate isn't told the reason the job is being posted. Typically a reason will be found to screen out the new applicants, since the intent is to continue the employment of the Green card applicant.

Obviously this isn't a comfortable process for any recruiter (at least any with scruples) however it's a requirement of the Federal Government and not something we recruiters can change.

<http://theglasshammer.com/2009/04/08/ask-a-recruiter-phantom-job-postings/>

8.

Many open jobs are never advertised at all, or are posted only after a leading candidate—an internal applicant or someone else with an inside track—has been identified. Sometimes, as in Mr. xxx's case, a hiring manager creates a new position ahead of schedule to accommodate a favored prospect.

Duncan Mathison, an outplacement executive and co-author of the 2009 book "Unlock the Hidden Job Market," concedes that anything hidden is difficult to measure but, by parsing labor statistics and recruiting surveys, he calculates that around 50% of positions are currently filled on an informal basis.

Such postings are meant to make hiring fair and transparent, and may help to protect employers from discrimination lawsuits or audits by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The size of the so-called hidden job market fluctuates with the broader economy, according to Mr. Mathison. When the talent market is tight, companies must advertise to fill key positions, making more open jobs public. In a soft economy, however, companies do more "opportunity hiring," creating jobs specifically to lure or keep promising individuals, he says.

"Managers are still looking for people and keeping track of the best talent," even when hiring is frozen; when jobs do open, companies already have a handy pool of candidates, Mr. Mathison says.

Fair or not, the practice irritates many job seekers, who feel shut out of companies and often don't know they are applying for phantom positions.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323706704578229661268628432>

9.

In such a situation, people responding to the formal public job listing actually have no chance at all of ever landing the position. Not only are they wasting their time in applying, but they also do not know that they are. In some cases, however, applicants for such phantom jobs actually be putting themselves under consideration for future openings, if their credentials are impressive enough. This is most likely in situations where the job posting is being worked upon by a recruiting firm (also known as a job placement or headhunting firm) and the applicant has made contact with a member of that firm's staff.

**Delayed Communication Flows:** Even if the job is indeed filled through an open and competitive process, sometimes a recruiter or job board may not be informed of this in a timely fashion, and thus the posting may persist after the job has ceased to be open. Likewise, a job opening may continue to be advertised erroneously even after it has been eliminated, such as due to a hastily imposed budget exercise.

**Competing Postings:** In some cases, the hiring company may have hiring needs in various areas, but only the budget to add a subset of these people. Once the aggregate hiring limit has been reached, the remaining job postings effectively become null and void. Applicants for the latter then will find that they have been seeking jobs that have vanished.

**Risks to the Company:** Becoming known as a company that regularly makes phantom job postings is likely to have a highly negative impact on outside reputation and internal morale. The most highly qualified external candidates, those with the widest employment options, are bound to shun a company with a reputation for dealing in bad faith with applicants, by advertising openings that do not really exist. Similarly, employees will become demoralized if they do not believe that they have a fair chance at advancing internally, and if promotions appear to be tainted by cronyism and internal politics

<http://financecareers.about.com/od/jobfinding/g/Phantom-Job-Postings.htm>

10.

Three reasons why some employers write these unrealistic job descriptions :

**3. The ad is actually a phantom posting.** Federal labor rules don't require employers to post openings they have, but many companies do. Unfortunately, this means that sometimes — especially when there's a qualified candidate on staff, waiting in the wings — managers intentionally write job descriptions in a way that discourages outsiders from applying so the insider will be a shoo-in. Not nice, but it happens.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2014/09/22/why-so-many-job-postings-are-so-ridiculous/>

11.

Then when you applied, you got no response? Was it frustrating to see the same job, that you are supremely qualified for, posted in various online outlets for months and months?

3. The company thought they found the right candidate but it did not work out and the search is now reopened.

**4. The job will be filled internally but company has to source external candidates.**

5. The job has officially been put on hold but resumes are being accepted until the job opens up again.

6. The company will not be reviewing resumes until a certain deadline has passed and is trying to gather as many resumes as possible.

7. There is no job currently. The company is looking to have potential candidates available if a similar job is needed at some point.

8. Recruiters are looking to fill multiple job opportunities at the same time so it is not the same job being posted but similar jobs that need to be filled.

**9. The job posting was not officially closed even though the job has been filled.**

10. Recruiters post phantom jobs in order to conduct salary surveys.

**11. The advertising space for the listing was purchased for a designated amount of time and it will run until that time period has expired.**

12. The person hired was moved into another position and the job is now open.

**13. Job websites aggregate postings from one another. The company is not actually re-posting the position but one website is taking an old listing from another.**

Commentary (frank) : As far as agencies posting “phantom” jobs, it's an unfortunate truth that to many agencies their applicants are “out of sight, out of mind.” The freshest resume (and hottest candidate) in their mind is the one they just received. They want a fresh stream coming in daily.

<https://jobmob.co.il/blog/why-job-openings-reposted/>

12.

How to Ask if a Job Is Filled by Writing a Letter

by Ruth Mayhew, Demand Media

For an old job posting, confirm whether the job is still open.

Writing to ask whether a job has been filled can save you the time of applying for the role or put you in line for the next vacant position. If you've already applied or if you have started the

interview process, you have a vested interest in knowing where you stand in the selection process. Send a letter via email or postal mail to inquire about open positions. It could be in your best interest to use email for a quick response to your question.

### Checking the Status of the Position

#### Step 1

Check to see whether the job posting has been removed from the organization's website, has been allowed to expire, or has been listed as being "Filled."

#### Step 2

Contact the recruiter or the Human Resources Department for further information about the position. Inquire by mentioning the exact position title, requisition number, department and posting date, if possible.

#### Step 3

Call the HR Department if you're writing to a large organization in which recruiters may be assigned to specific business units for handling certain job vacancies. Ask for the name of the recruiter handling that specific vacancy. Verify the spelling of that person's name and office address.

### Writing the Letter

#### Step 1

State your interest in the job within the first paragraph of your letter along with the date on which you applied. For example, state: "I am writing to ask the status of the Administrative Assistant vacancy that was posted on your company's website on Aug. 1, 2012. On Aug. 20, I submitted my online application for this position and was certain that my qualifications exceeded the requirements for this job. Would you please let me know if this position has been filled? And, if not, when do you anticipate calling applicants to schedule interviews?"

#### Step 2

Write a letter to nudge the recruiter or hiring manager about the selection process if you already have interviewed for the position. If you completed first- and second-round interviews, indicate the dates on which you had your interviews. Include the interviewer's name and any information she gave you about when a hiring decision would be made. For example, write: "Thank you for your time in our interview on Aug. 15, 2012, for the Administrative Assistant position with ABC Company. I'm still very interested in the job and am writing to learn when a hiring decision will be made. During my interview, Jane Doe, the hiring manager, indicated that the selection process would be complete within a week after my interview. Please let me know if I can provide you with additional information to improve my chances of being selected for this position."

#### Step 3

Confirm that a job vacancy still exists if you see an expired job posting. Write a letter to the company that indicates when and where you saw the job posting. Tell the letter recipient that you're interested in the job but that you recently noticed the date of the original job posting. Continue writing the rest of your letter as you would a standard cover letter and attach your resume. State that you're attaching your resume in case the position is still open. Suggest that you be considered for other job openings if the position you asked about is filled.

The following posts are in French.

<http://work.chron.com/ask-job-filled-writing-letter-8756.html>

13.

Commentaire (Samsung) : Bonjour, il arrive très souvent que l'entreprise qui a passé une annonce par l'intermédiaire de Pôle Emploi, ne la fasse pas retirer immédiatement et de ce fait, elle est toujours visible sur le site, et légalement, rien n'interdit à un employeur de continuer son recrutement tout en ayant quelqu'un en ESSAI sur le poste..... Donc il vous faut patienter.... A la fin de la période d'essai si vous convenez, l'annonce disparaîtra ou vous ...

<http://www.juritravail.com/Forum/contrat-de-travail/conseil-juridique/peut-on-publier-une-offre-d39emploi-pour-un-poste-deja-pourvu/id/206791>

14.

Commentaire (j3r3m88) : bonjour, je suis à la recherche d'une offre d'apprentissage en logistique...de ce fait, j'ai postulé à une offre sur le site du pôle emploi qui datait du 1 septembre 2010. Je me suis dit que si l'offre y'était encore 2 mois plus tard, c'est que personne n'avait encore été engagé... je leur ai envoyé mon cv et ma lettre de motivation...

Aujourd'hui nous sommes le 11 novembre et voilà déjà 2 semaines que je leur ai envoyé tout cela, je n'ai eu aucune réponse...Mais pourtant l'offre a été réactualisée hier! donc voilà, j'aimerais savoir qui actualise l'offre, le pôle emploi ou l'employeur?? lorsque quelqu'un a été engagé, l'offre reste-t-elle encore sur le site un moment ou pas?

(slix) : c'est pas pour te demotiv' mais la plupart du temps sur le site de pole emploi les annonces sont périmé. la mise à jour se fait automatiquement ce qui fait qu'une offre a pu déjà être pourvu et le type qui l'a mis a oublié de la retirer.

(soleane) : non, ce sont les conseiller qui font la mise à jour avec l'employeur. sauf que les employeur ne disent pas tjr qu'ils ont trouvé quelqu'un en espérant trouver un meilleur candidat avant la fin de la période d'essai de la personne prise au départ, mon ancien boss faisait comme ça.

[http://forum.doctissimo.fr/psychologie/chomage-inactivite/actualisation-pole-emploi-sujet\\_153064\\_1.htm](http://forum.doctissimo.fr/psychologie/chomage-inactivite/actualisation-pole-emploi-sujet_153064_1.htm)

15.

Commentaire (tara001) : Pole emploi représente à peine 20% du marché et j'invite les secrétaires du Ministre du travail Mr François Rebsamen de parcourir le site de pole emploi, la plupart des annonces datent du mois d'avril, ce site n'est jamais à jour.

<http://www.bfmtv.com/societe/le-bon-coin-remplace-pole-emploi-777669.html>

16.

Il arrive parfois que certaines offres publiées sur le site de l'Apec (30 jours de parution) ne soient plus d'actualité avant cette période, car l'entreprise diffuseur n'a pas mise à jour ses offres diffusées sur Apec.fr dans le cas où elle a trouvé un candidat avant ces 30 jours de parution, elle annule son recrutement (budget/stratégie...) avant le terme de cette période. Il n'y'a aucun intérêt à diffuser des offres périmées car cela génère uniquement de l'insatisfaction.

<http://forum.cadres.apec.fr/t854-offre-perimees.html>

17.

Je tiens à exprimer mon profond désapointement quand à la qualité du service web rendu par Pole emploi. A la recherche d'un emploi depuis presque 2 ans, j'écume évidemment l'ensemble des sites emploi (Apec, Cadremploi, Monster, pole-emploi...). Afin d'être le plus réactif possible, j'utilise les services d'alerte mail de l'ensemble de ces sites. Si sur l'ensemble des sites nous parvenons à envoyer une candidature, il n'est pas rare du tout que sur le site de pole-emploi la redirection nous amène sur la fameuse page : cette offre n'est plus disponible ! A peine envoyée elle n'est déjà plus disponible ? C'est du n'importe quoi. Lorsque nous tombons sur une annonce toujours publiée, le descriptif du poste n'est tout simplement pas renseigné. On sait juste que la société recherche un chef de produit et quelle est basée à Paris. De plus, je me connecte chaque jour à mon compte, mais malgré cela, je reçois toujours des avertissements m'indiquant qu'il faut de je me connecte à mon compte sous peine d'être radié. Visiblement, le mariage ANPE/ASSEDIC n'est pas encore bien consommé. Depuis le temps, faudrait que ça bouge.

<http://www.lesraleurs.com/plaintes/detail/40-des-annonces-souvent-obsoletes>

18.

(lara) Il s'agissait d'Ade\*co, et cette boîte déjà ne répond même pas d'un banal accusé de réception, à nos candidatures... Une de mes amies a elle honoré le RV et s'est vu proposer une formation sur les CV (déjà fait, puis bon, diplômée en RH...) et les rares offres étaient obsolètes.

(slyarteacher) Ils sont pareils dans toutes les régions ceux la. Adecco, j'en veux plus! Bon les autres boîtes sont pas forcément meilleures, j'en ai trouvé que 2 qui savent ce que veut dire le mot "humain". Idem pour les offres obsolètes... c'est juste pour attirer les candidats pour gonfler leur CVthèque! j'aime beaucoup également leur manière d'envoyer 3 candidats dont 2 ne sont là que pour faire gonfler celui qu'ils veulent à tout prix placer...



<http://www.forum-concours.cap-public.fr/viewtopic.php?t=44428&start=220>

19.

68 % sur les quelques 28 600 entreprises qui se sont prêtées au jeu. Sauf que dans les faits les chiffres sont peu encourageants. Taux d'utilisation du 3995 : 13 %, taux d'utilisation du service de mise en ligne d'offres d'emploi : 40 % (remarquez, il y a tellement d'offres fausses ou obsolètes qu'en réalité si on comptabilisait les véritables offres le pourcentage serait nettement inférieur).

[http://www.senioragir.fr/news\\_79-66-pour-cent-des-demandeurs-d-emploi-sont-satisfaits-des-services-de-Pole-Emploi.html](http://www.senioragir.fr/news_79-66-pour-cent-des-demandeurs-d-emploi-sont-satisfaits-des-services-de-Pole-Emploi.html)

20.

J'ai bien quelques feuillets d'offres d'emploi mais il va bien falloir que j'actualise tout ça, histoire d'avoir une chance de tomber sur une offre qui n'est pas obsolète depuis une semaine...

<http://slogak67.over-blog.com/article-vive-le-pole-emploi-39469670.html>