

**Practicum**  
**at Black & Veatch**  
**June 2005**

I completed a three-week practicum with Black & Veatch, an international engineering firm with more than 6,000 employees, in their corporate offices in Overland Park, Kansas in June 2005. The practicum involved redesigning a section of their intranet into a portal format. I created three value-added deliverables during the practicum. However, due to confidentiality concerns and the fact that those deliverables are proprietary information, the outline of what I did and not the details are shared in this report.

My task was to create a System Requirements Specification (SRS) to design a portal for information resources. To begin, I designed a triangulated user needs assessment in which I:

- Looked at data of web visits/views for the past six months for all current intranet pages involved;
- Created and implemented an electronic survey available to employees; and
- Conducted several in-depth interviews.

Although it wasn't a stated requirement, I then created a report on my methodology, results, and analysis with some recommendations. That report then became my foundation to produce a second deliverable, the actual SRS, which will be used to create the portals.

In looking at the intranet, I updated and researched hyperlinks of web resources that no longer worked. From that, I created a URL Resource database in MS Access for the librarians to use, which includes categories, where the URLs currently reside, and dates last checked. It contains a number of reports for the librarians to run, and should be very helpful to provide content when the portal has been created. When I left, I had found and input more than 400 actual website hyperlinks, some of which had multiple categories. In the future, metadata will be able to be added via additional tables to the database, which should increase the usability of the hyperlinks for the employees.

This was a great experience. I enjoyed going in and learning about a company's culture, and in turning the knowledge gained in classrooms into real life experiences. Working with both the librarians in the Black & Veatch corporate library and with employees from IT was an enriching experience, and helped me gain new insights and information.

Kevin Nelson, manager of the Black & Veatch Central Library, is available as a reference.