

# Company Research at the Hill

Company research can serve many purposes for a business researcher. Company profiles can shed light on competitors and potential collaborators, and act as proxies for your own company.

When beginning company research, the first step is identifying whether the company in question is public, private or a subsidiary of another company. Nonprofit organizations will have different reporting obligations than for-profit companies, and therefore will be researched in separate databases.

Public company information can be obtained from the Security and Exchange Commission website (sec.gov) using the website's EDGAR search tool. Filings include annual reports, or 10-K forms, quarterly reports, or 10-Q forms and other filings that announce important news items associated with the company. Publicly traded companies are required to file this information annually with the federal government, making historic research on public entities simpler than researching private ones.

Private companies do not have the same reporting requirements as public ones. Therefore, finding consistent and factual company data can be significantly more difficult, and occasionally, impossible. Subsidiary companies are considered part of the parent company, and do not have individual reporting requirements. Companies may, however, cite individual subsidiary examples in their annual reports or 10-K filings. Access to subsidiary-specific information will vary depending on the parent company's ethos on reporting internal information.

Researching international companies brings its own set of challenges. Reporting requirements at the government level vary by country and are typically filed only in the official languages of the country in question.

Nonprofit organizations do not file 10-Ks like publicly traded companies, but instead file PF-990 forms. These forms shed similar light on the operations and financial condition of the organization in question. Specialized databases are available to locate 990 forms. GuideStar and Foundation Directory both allow for searching by cause type and geographic location when investigating nonprofits.

At the James J. Hill Center, you can access our resources to find information on all three types of companies. Business databases at the Saint Paul Public Library and the Hennepin County Public Library can also provide access to data on companies of all types.

The following databases can be used to do company research at the Hill Center. Access them via the Databases or Login pages.

- AtoZ Databases
- PrivCo
- Uniworld
- GuideStar
- Foundation Directory