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**Investment World**

**Watchdog on the Web**

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**Aarati Krishnan**

PLANNING to invest in shares, bonds or fixed deposits? Here is a Web site which could help you to vet the credentials of the company which is looking to line its coffers. *Watchoutinvestors.com* allows you to sniff out regulatory action against a company, person or financial intermediary from their past so that you can avoid those with dubious credentials or an unsavoury record of handling public money. Services offered by the Web site are free, but you have to obtain a unique username and password before you can use any of the hyperlinks that lead you deeper into the site.

**Features**

- Investment World
- eWorld
- Catalyst
- Mentor
- Life
- Canvas
- Praxis
- Urban Pulse
- Brand Quest

The key attraction of this Web site is that it pools together information from various regulators such as the stock exchanges, the Securities and Exchange Board of India, the Reserve Bank of India and the depositories. This helps you avoid the arduous process of navigating through their individual Web sites, to locate such information. All major regulators are covered by this site. The database carries information about 28,800 companies and 7,000 persons. This is to be expanded over time.

**Stocks**

- Quotes
- SE Diary
- Scoreboard
- Open-End Mutual Fund

The site features several useful modules which handhold you through the search process.

For instance, the module about "who regulates what" is useful to those of us who do not know where exactly to look for information about a company or a person. The module on "regulatory actions covered" classifies companies based on the specific type of action taken by SEBI, the Department of Company Affairs, the RBI or the exchanges.

**Port Info**

- Ships in Ports

Before you decide to invest in a stock, you can run through the list of "vanishing companies" or pulled up for improper accounting practices, or a host of other misdemeanours by SEBI.

**Archives**

- Yesterday
- Datewise
- Resources

You can look at the list of co-operative banks pulled up by the RBI for "unsatisfactory" financial position. There is also a

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whole list of persons hauled up by the regulators for misdemeanours ranging from price manipulation to insider trading.

The search option, the most valuable facility on this site, helps you go through the entire database for information about a company or a person. As of now, all information on this Web site is limited to records created on or after January 1, 2000, but there are plans to backdate the facility as far back as possible.

An actual search showed up some limitations to the "keyword search" facility. But the module which allows you to home in on a person or a company mentioned on the site through the alphabetic listings is easily navigable and user-friendly.

For good measure, the Web site incorporates an "alert" facility which allows you to store your portfolio. Should any of the companies on your watchlist come in for regulatory attention, the site will alert you through e-mail.

The Web site, created by Prime Investors Protection Association and League, is sponsored and aided by the Investor Protection and Education Fund, which is managed by the Department of Company Affairs.

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