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How to Search for Proxy Filings in the SEC's EDGAR Database

by VANESSA SCHOENTHALER on DECEMBER 14, 2010

EDGAR, the Securities and Exchange Commission's Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis and Retrieval system, is used for the automated collection and indexing of filings that are required to be made with the Commission. The EDGAR database provides a portal to those filings, allowing access to certain information on a real-time basis (*e.g.*, current and periodic reports on Forms 8-K, 10-Q and 10-K) and other information on a delayed basis (*e.g.*, comment and response letters, which are generally available 45 days after the Commission has completed its review process).

There are a number of subscription services that offer EDGAR search capabilities, all of which provide features not otherwise available through the EDGAR database. However, if you're not running highly customized queries or doing sophisticated comparative analyses the EDGAR database probably has everything you need.*

Let's take a look at how it works ...

Right now the first proxy statements that contain proposals addressing shareholder advisory votes on executive compensation ("[Say on Pay](#)") and the frequency of future advisory votes on executive compensation ("[Say When on Pay](#)") are being filed with the Commission. Let's say you'd like to review one of those proxy statements, but you don't know which companies are filing them.

Where do you begin? Well, there are a couple of different ways you can go about it:

Starting from the Commission's homepage (sec.gov), under the **Filings & Forms** heading, select the **Search for Company Filings** link:



This will bring you to a list of [EDGAR's main search options](#):

- Company or fund name, ticker symbol, CIK (Central Index Key), file number, state, country, or SIC (Standard Industrial Classification)
- Most recent filings
- Full text (past four years)
- Boolean and advanced searching, including addresses
- Key mutual fund disclosures
- Mutual fund voting records
- Mutual fund name, ticker, or SEC key (since Feb. 2006)
- Variable insurance products (since Feb. 2006)

Custom searches:

- Confidential treatment orders
- Effectiveness notices
- SEC Central Index Key (CIK)
- Daily filings

If you knew the name of the company you were looking for the first option (to search by Company name, ticker, etc.) would be the obvious choice, but since we've assumed that you don't, let's look at some of your alternative options.

You could select the second link, [Most recent filings](#), and enter the form you're looking for in the **Form Type** field. The form type for a definitive proxy statement is DEF 14A, if you wanted to, you could also look at preliminary proxy statements on form type PRE 14A. If you don't know the form type that you're looking for you can click on the **Form Type** link to download a copy of the Commission's [Index of Forms](#).

Latest Filings Received and Processed at the SEC

This listing contains the most recent filings for the current official filing date (including filings made after the 5:30 pm deadline on the previous filing day). Filings may be made Monday through Friday (except for [U.S. Federal Holidays](#)).

Key to Descriptions

- (Filer)** Filing was made by and describes the company named.
- (Subject)** Filing describes the company named but was made by another entity.
- (Filed by)** Filing was made by the company named but describes a subject company.
- (Reporting)** Filing was made by an individual reporting holdings in a company.
- [Paper]** [Paper filings](#) are available by film number.
- [Cover]** Filing contains an SEC-released cover letter or correspondence.
- (Each "Reporting" and "Filed by" filing has a matching "Subject" listing.)

Items 1 - 26 [RSS Feed](#)

To limit filing results, enter company name, CIK, or form type.

Company

CIK

Form Type DEF 14A

Ownership? ☒ Include ☐ Exclude ☐ Only

40 Entries

Form	Formats	Description	Accepted	Filing Date	File/Film No
		China MediaExpress Holdings, Inc. (0001399067) (Filer)			
DEF 14A	html text	Other definitive proxy statements Accession Number: 0001144204-10-066186 Act: 34 Size: 1 MB	2010-12-13 17:23:05	2010-12-13	001-33746 101248782
		AMERICAN TELSTAR INC (0000799414) (Filer)			
DEF 14A	html text	Other definitive proxy statements Accession Number: 0001165527-10-000990 Act: 34 Size: 132 KB	2010-12-13 16:23:09	2010-12-13	000-52387 101248207

While this search method would provide a list of the most recently filed definitive proxy statements, it's less than ideal for our hypothetical because there's no way to know whether any of the proxies include proposals addressing shareholder advisory votes unless you review each one.

Going back to [EDGAR's main search options](#) and skipping down to the **Custom searches** heading you could select the [Daily filings](#) link and run a search similar to the one described above, except this form allows you to limit your search to any day within the previous five business days. Of course, you also have the same problem as above; you'd have to go through each proxy statement until you found one that includes a proposal addressing shareholder advisory votes.

Search for Current Events

Which day would you like to analyze?

Two business days prior (t-2)

Three business days prior (t-3)

Four business days prior (t-4)

Five business days prior (t-5)

Which form series would you like to see?

10-K - Annual

10-Q - Quarterly

14 - Proxies, etc.

485 - Fund Prospectuses

Enter a form ID to override the list above:

To run the request, press this button:

This brings us to **Full-Text Search**, the most efficient way to conduct our proxy search. Again going back to [EDGAR's main search options](#), if you select the third link from the top, **Full text**

(past four years), you'll be brought to a simple text search box that allows you to search the full text of all EDGAR filings, including exhibits, for the past four years. If you then select the link for the **Advanced Search Page** you can perform the same search using additional features, such as form type and date range.

Full-Text Search

This page allows you to search the full text of EDGAR filings from the last four years. The full text of a filing includes all data in the filing as well as all attachments to the filing. To find the information you need and make your search easy and enjoyable, please visit our [FAQ](#) page. We are still developing this feature, and we want to enhance it based on user feedback. Please email your comments and suggestions for improvement to textsearch@sec.gov.

Search For Text:

Search

Reset

[Advanced Search Page](#)



Using the **Advanced Search Page**, if you were to search for the phrase “advisory vote” in all definitive proxy statements, on form DEF 14A, filed between October 1, 2010 and today (December 14, 2010), you would find 16 results:

Full-Text Search

This page allows you to search the full text of EDGAR filings from the last four years. The full text of a filing includes all data in the filing as well as all attachments to the filing. To find the information you need and make your search easy and enjoyable, please visit our [FAQ](#) page. We are still developing this feature, and we plan to enhance it based on user feedback. Please email your comments and suggestions for improvement to textsearch@sec.gov.

Note: Occasionally, some recent filings are not available through the EDGAR Full-Text Search.

Search For Text: [Basic Search Page](#)

In Form Type: **Results Per Page:**

Sort By: **Use Stemming:** ☒

For ☐ Company Name:

Or ☐ Central Index Key (CIK):

Or ☐ Standard Industrial Classification:

Between These Dates:

Start Date: End Date:

1 - 16 of 16 results

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Date Filed Title

12/13/2010 [DEF 14A for COSTCO WHOLESALE CORP NEW](#)

COMPANY NAME(s) - [COSTCO WHOLESALE CORP NEW (CIK - 909832 / SIC - 5331)]

To hold an **advisory vote** on executive compensation as disclosed in these materials; 4. To hold an **advisory vote** on whether an **advisory vote** on executive compensation should be held every one, two or three years; and 5. The Board of Directors unanimously recommends a vote: 1.

12/13/2010 [DEF 14A for NEW JERSEY RESOURCES CORP](#)

COMPANY NAME(s) - [NEW JERSEY RESOURCES CORP (CIK - 356309 / SIC - 4924)]

Please return your proxy card so your vote can be counted. Who is asking for my vote and why am I receiving this document? Each share of Common Stock is entitled to one vote. 3.

12/13/2010 [DEF 14A for VISA INC](#)

COMPANY NAME(s) - [VISA INC (CIK - 1403161 / SIC - 7389)]

To hold an **advisory vote** on executive compensation; 6. To hold an **advisory vote** on the frequency of holding an **advisory vote** on executive compensation; 7. Please vote as soon as possible to ensure that your vote is recorded promptly even if you plan to attend the Annual Meeting.

If you select the first link for Costco Wholesale Corporation's [definitive proxy statement](#) and scroll down to the Notice of Annual Meeting of Shareholder and you'll find that Costco's proxy statement contains proposals addressing both shareholder advisory votes on executive compensation and the frequency of future advisory votes on executive compensation.



999 Lake Drive
Issaquah, Washington 98027

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS

TO OUR SHAREHOLDERS:

The Annual Meeting of the Shareholders of Costco Wholesale Corporation (the "Company") will be held at the Meydenbauer Center, Center Hall B, 11100 N.E. 6th Street, Bellevue, Washington 98004, on Thursday, January 27, 2011, at 4:00 p.m., for the following purposes:

1. To elect the four Class III directors nominated by the Board of Directors to hold office until the 2014 Annual Meeting of Shareholders and until their successors are elected and qualified;
2. To ratify the selection of KPMG LLP as the Company's independent auditors for fiscal year 2011;
3. To hold an advisory vote on executive compensation as disclosed in these materials;
4. To hold an advisory vote on whether an advisory vote on executive compensation should be held every one, two or three years; and
5. To transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting or any adjournments thereof.

It's that simple. Unless you're looking for a specific filing by a specific company, the advanced **Full-Text Search** option is going to be the most useful way for you to search the EDGAR database.

And, if you get stumped along the way, the [Filings & Forms](#) section of Commission's website contains a number of useful [tutorials](#) and other [resources](#).

*-There are limitations which may affect both the EDGAR database and subscription services, for example:

- If you're looking for filings made before 1996, you may not find them. Companies were first required to submit filings through EDGAR between 1993 and May 6, 1996, before that all filings were submitted to the Commission in paper form.
- There are specific forms that have only recently been filed through EDGAR (*e.g.*, Forms 3, 4 and 5 were filed through EDGAR on a voluntary basis prior to June 30, 2003 and Form D was strictly a paper filing prior to March 16, 2009).
- Annual reports to shareholders (the glossy versions) are generally not required to be filed through EDGAR, though companies may do so voluntarily.

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