

How to Craft the Perfect Portfolio for You

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Abstract

In this presentation six students will explain the importance of having a digital portfolio as a college student and discuss the different aspects of a portfolio. Having a portfolio is crucial for every discipline. The main steps to creating the best portfolio are choosing a theme, picking a platform and designing the website, creating an About Me page, and carefully detailing why each sample has been selected. This presentation will also highlight the different artifacts one can include within a portfolio. Examples of portfolios showcased in this presentation include theatre, science writing, journalism, and creative writing portfolios.

As times and technologies change, the strategies for getting hired have changed as well. Having an online portfolio that showcases some of an individual's best work is becoming increasingly more important in the job market. An online portfolio is an extension of the resume, adding examples of the skills listed briefly in the resume. It should continually be updated and maintained as an individual's work history grows and develops. For college students, an online portfolio is especially critical because many students lack work experience in their chosen field of profession therefore, a portfolio will help showcase abilities the student has acquired in other ways.

A resume cannot possibly describe the entire list of qualities each individual possesses. Any person with a future-oriented mindset should have a portfolio to create

opportunities for a successful life. A college student's online portfolio should be filled with their best work from their college career. Portfolios include examples, called samples or artifacts of any medium - essays, projects, photographs, artwork, videos, anything that demonstrates a viable skill. No matter the field of profession, following these simple steps can lead to the best possible digital portfolio.

Choosing a Theme

The first step in crafting a portfolio is selecting an appropriate theme. The portfolio's theme should represent a thread found in all of the writer's samples. The theme could be as simplistic as the genre of the samples, such as sports journalism or psychology papers, or it could be a deeper meaning found in each artifact. If ideas are

elusive, there are plenty of portfolio examples online to look through and find inspiration. Additionally, an individual could include multiple themes in their portfolio. Breaking up topics among tabs is simple with an online portfolio.

Picking a Platform and Designing the Website

There are so many platforms to choose from online, however, Wix, Wordpress, and Weebly are the most popular sites for user-friendly portfolios. Each website has its pros and cons, and there are plenty of articles online detailing them to help consumers decide which platform to use. The portfolio creator should play around and get to know all possible sites to determine the place most compatible with their goals. Also, it's key to know that no money needs to be spent; there are plenty of free sites out there. Once the platform is chosen, design is the next step. The website's design should have personality, more than a blank white background, but nothing too flashy. A general rule is to select one or two main colors or backgrounds that will be consistent throughout the website. The font needs to be consistent across the board as well. All fonts should be easy to read, as anybody can view the portfolio, including potential employers with a reading disability.

About Me

The About Me section is more than an ordinary biography. This section should have its own tab on the portfolio and tell the story of the individual's professional career. It should creatively convey who they are, what they're doing, how they got there, and what is next. The About Me page is a space where values and personality can be shown. The introduction of this section must grab the reader's attention. What about this person pops off the screen? The About Me is really about the employer. Whatever is

written in this section of the portfolio should immediately attract employers to them.

Contextual Framework

After the website design is completed, and the About Me section is written to perfection, then the samples need to be selected. These examples of previous work should only be the best of the best and have relevance to the job being sought. Once plenty of thought has been given, and the samples are selected, they must be introduced on the website. This part is called the contextual framework. Each sample should have a short paragraph briefly defining what it is and what skills are being showcased. This section is especially important because the contextual framework can include keywords that employers search for, such as hard/soft skills or particular job requirements.

There are many different types of artifacts that can be included in an online portfolio. The most common type is a paper, article, or essay. A Journalism major might include "NFL Free Agent Frenzy," an article from their college newspaper. Psychology students could add their thesis "Mental Health in the Age of Social Media." The portfolio for a Literature minor might have a literary criticism essay "Jane Eyre vs. Feminist Criticism." Videos are another type of artifact. A theater major or dance student has the option of uploading their solo performance in a musical or recital, while a finance major could include a video presentation they gave at an internship.

Summary of Qualifications

Aside from the About Me section and the samples with contextual frameworks, a resume is another possible piece of the portfolio. It is entirely up to the individual if they want to include their resume, however, if they don't a summary of qualifications should definitely be included. The summary of qualifications should always be paired

with a resume and lists the individual's hard and soft skills, along with detailed examples to back up what skills they claim to possess. This gives resumes a higher chance of passing through an Applicant Tracking System, software that remotely scans resumes for keywords, while showing credentials at a glance by highlighting important qualifications an employer is seeking.

In conclusion, an online portfolio is a useful tool that can greatly benefit college students in their search for future employment. The portfolio demonstrates a combination of personality, through the design and About Me, and skill, through the samples and summary of qualifications. It might just mean the difference between getting tossed aside and scoring that dream interview.

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