

## Build Your Brand: Crafting a Digital Portfolio

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### Abstract

*Digital portfolios are a great way to demonstrate experiences and skills gained over your academic career while showcasing your personal flair and building your brand. Learning how to create a portfolio is a great way to highlight your skills and while also standing out in the job market. Using a variety of majors and experience in different fields, our presentation explains the benefits a digital portfolio can provide. During our presentation, we will showcase a diverse set of examples such as portfolios for graphic design, journalism, English, public relations, business, science writing, writing studies, and psychology.*

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### Benefits of a Portfolio

Have you ever thought about how your resume does not give enough information about the kind of person you are or about the kind of work that you do? Your potential employers feel the same way. According to a survey conducted by CareerBuilder, 60 percent of employers use social media networks to research job candidates.

With your own digital portfolio, you can somewhat control your presence on the internet and more. Workfolio, a company that develops applications for professional visibility, states that 56% of hiring managers are impressed by a personal website more than any other branding tool. Adding a digital portfolio to your resume won't only impress potential employers and exhibit your work in a more detailed way, but it might also land you some jobs you didn't even apply to! Jacquelyn Smith of Forbes uncovered that

“8-% of job openings are never advertised; the average number of people who apply for any given job is 118; only 20% of applicants get an interview...” With a digital portfolio, the employers may find you through their own research.

While digital portfolios are still uncommon, they offer several benefits over just the traditional resume. Portfolios allow employers to see your work and educational experience in action and can gauge your ability more accurately. A digital portfolio also acts as an online business card and can be used for networking. While a lot of this is meant for others, a portfolio can also help keep your prior works organized and easily accessible. Although, the best benefit of a digital portfolio is its ability to make you stand out among your peers, allowing you to showcase your own personal flair for any job application.

### **Catering to Target Audience and Building Your Own Brand**

The first step in catering to your audience is understanding the first and most basic step of rhetoric, which is the rhetorical triangle. The rhetorical triangle is a reference to Aristotle's rhetorical appeals. The appeals are Logos, Pathos, and Ethos. In their original form, these terms meant logic, emotion, and ethics, respectively. We can modernize these terms to be useful to our goal. The first point of the triangle is Logos and while its meaning is literally "logic" we can interpret this as showing the logical reasons as to why you should be hired. The second point of the triangle is Pathos which we can define as the audience viewing your work. Lastly, Ethos can be considered credibility as we are trying to show off our knowledge and experience in a certain field. You need to be able to back these up with evidence from your portfolio. If there is a specific skill needed for your position, make sure that you have something in your portfolio that proves you are telling the truth.

However, there are several strategic ways to cater a resume or a portfolio to attract the eyes of an employer. This includes applying the idea of buzzwords to draw the attention of a job recruiter. Buzzwords are technical terms that reflect a job's mission, goal, and culture. These organizations are not only trying to find the most qualified people, but also the people that are going to be the best fit. One way a person can tailor their portfolio to fit the criteria is by looking at the job listing itself. You can find these buzzwords by searching through the job description and seeing what is expected in that role. From there, you can craft sections to divide your portfolio into.

Additionally, your digital portfolio will be much more cohesive if there is a clear contextual framework at the beginning of every artifact. Contextual framework can be as simple as having a small paragraph at the

beginning of your piece to give it context and perspective. A contextual framework is not only important for potential employers to see what they're reading, but it's also significant in that they will be able to see how well you can reflect on past work. It shows that you can see where you have improved in your writing. Employers will be able to recognize that you are consistently growing and improving rather than staying stagnant. As an additional positive aspect of contextual framework, it brings all of your pieces together and it makes your digital portfolio seem more unified.

### **Portfolio Platforms and Design**

A portfolio's design can make or break a viewer's impression of the creator. Making sure your portfolio looks professional, all the while, reflecting your personality is a delicate balancing act. Simplicity, usability, readability, and cohesiveness all contribute to the whole of the portfolio. Design coincides with usability so if the portfolio is hard to navigate and is cluttered with too many paths and links users will be immediately dissuaded from delving deeper to learn more about you.

Portfolios can be made using a variety of websites such as Weebly, WordPress, and Wix. Each platform has its own positives and negatives; the decision on which to use is based upon the needs of the user so make sure to try them all out to get a good grasp on your needs. These tools offer users different templates to choose from to get any beginner started. Some things to keep in mind while creating a portfolio are having the visual effects balanced. Font usage, texture, shapes, and color schemes are all important components to think about while crafting a site to appear more attractive for its audience. While it is important to make effective design decisions, the decisions made should also reflect the creator in a unique way that should leave a lasting impression on users

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