DIGITAL PORTFOLIOS IN THE MODERN WORKFORCE

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Abstract

Regarding job applications, resumes and cover letters are two of the most distinct documents employers require. However, digital portfolios are becoming more common as technology and jobs become more intertwined. Mainly showcased through websites, digital portfolios exhibit applicants' feats, accomplishments, and skills acquired throughout college. Digital portfolios can tell a potential employer the applicant's preferred learning method and expand on their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, digital portfolios are an exceptional tool to include when applying for jobs or graduate school. To create a digital portfolio, the applicant should collect multiple pieces of work, or artifacts, that showcase their skills and knowledge on a particular subject. By constructing a digital portfolio, the applicant has a better chance of getting hired than someone who applied with just a resume and cover letter.

Introduction

After graduating college, most students are expected to start looking for jobs in their respective fields. They must incorporate their strengths, weaknesses, and experience. While resumes are often optimal, digital portfolios are becoming more popular today. Not only are digital portfolios a source to track one's progress over time, but they also allow students to identify and incorporate their preferred learning styles. Furthermore, digital portfolios are a great way to network and build a professional following. While business cards are a primary method to "sell" yourself to possible employers, digital portfolios provide a more in-depth summary of your work and qualifications. As the professional environment adapts to the technological world, digital portfolios are the best means to brand yourself through creativity, consistency, and career aspirations.

Body

One of the main concepts of a digital portfolio is being creative. From graphic design to establishing practical usability, digital portfolios are designed to serve as sales pitches to the employer. In particular, one of the main expectations for a solid digital portfolio is design. It will gain positive attention if designed to the point where balance is visually appealing. Vitaly

Friedman explains creating a digital portfolio that meets the target audience and usability. For instance, users tend to be satisfied with a website with good visual quality and credibility. If a webpage "provides users with high-quality content, they are willing to compromise the content with advertisements and the design of the site" (Friedman, 2021, para. 7). If the audience is pleased with the site's design as they scan, they are more likely to return to the website.

Furthermore, a digital portfolio must have practical usability. According to Krug's first law of usability, not only should the site be self-explanatory, but it also needs to be intuitive. Friedman adds that users should be able to consciously understand the portfolio's purpose with clear and concise pros and cons. Otherwise, a lack of design would confuse the audience, leading them to lose attention and move on. Friedman notes that "although the design itself is simple and intuitive, to understand what the page is about the user needs to search for the answer" (Friedman, 2021, para. 17). A crystal-clear focus will be established if the design is direct and visually appealing. As a result, the user's attention would be homed in and oriented to the point where they establish more trust in the portfolio than when they first visited it.

Another critical point in creating an effective digital portfolio is writing. Professional writers are often direct and technical but struggle to adapt to the general audience. The "keep it simple" perspective is often utilized when writing a digital portfolio. Since the audience wants to learn more about the topic than the design, the site should be user-friendly and straightforward. Other areas the user looks for are organization, communication, and conventions. If the web page's organization is neat, the user will easily navigate the site. Communication is equally pivotal in digital portfolios. Like organization, the presentation should match the user's navigation capabilities through "balance legibility, readability, typography, symbolism, multiple views, and color or texture to communicate successfully" (Friedman, 2021, para. 37). As long as the site is not visually blasting information and distracting, the user can digest the data while being attentive.

Conventions are one of the most valuable techniques in web design, especially for digital portfolios. While making it personable and diverse, it is crucial to understand what the audience is looking for, especially why the individual is the best fit for a position. To establish a robust digital portfolio, grammar, spelling, and punctuation must reflect the person's qualifications and expertise in their field and the applied position. The applicant would have a better chance of getting hired if it is technical and professional.

In addition to conventions and organization, digital portfolios should incorporate technological trends to enhance connectivity. Like social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram), digital portfolios should establish some resemblance of connectivity. Individuals should make their portfolios interactive while promoting their accomplishments and qualifications to sell themselves to the job market and employers. Therefore, these capabilities connect models commonly found on Instagram by introducing "new forms of work and value-generating opportunities that intersect with larger industry trends in influencer marketing programs" (Scolere, 2019, p. 1901). As the scope of professional platforms shifts to incorporate the latest technological innovations and trends, digital platforms are a recommended means to stand out.

As mentioned earlier, digital portfolios are a unique way for someone to

display their talents, works, and accomplishments. In particular, samples are an excellent means to do so. Since they are mainly published or completed throughout college (undergraduate, graduate, or doctorate), samples reflect one's strengths, weaknesses, and related capabilities. An example would be from my digital portfolio, in which a sample highlights my writing skills in the emergency management profession. This reflects the significance of emergency management in today's society, especially in preparing for any disaster (e.g., cyberattacks, hurricanes, and flooding). Some skills I acquired from this class include identifying and expanding key terms and ideas, formatting using APA, and helping the general public understand the importance of disaster preparation to minimize property loss and casualties. In addition, this sample connects to the portfolio by defining my aspirations for emergency management and expanding my writing and critical thinking skills. These skills are essential in today's workforce because they allow me to make logically-based decisions without bias or factors that might negatively affect crucial outcomes. Finally, the piece connects to my website's central theme by illustrating the writing skills I developed, improved, and maintained throughout my undergrad.

Conclusion

As the professional world becomes more technological, resumes and cover letters are still preferred for job applications. However, digital portfolios are increasingly popular due to their cost-effectiveness and flexibility. Yet, they require considerable time to appropriately design to reflect an individual's career goals and aspirations. Fortunately, with the increasing number of tools and resources available to successfully build a digital portfolio, it can be done efficiently, especially for visualization, usability, and consistency. From design templates to improved navigation and organization techniques, digital portfolios can enhance the individual's chances of getting hired for their respective job. While there can be occasional hiccups on the technological aspect, digital portfolios can quickly reflect and articulate one's experiences, education, and skills that may be appropriate for their profession throughout the application process and beyond.

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