

# Portfolios

## Portfolio Benefits

As you prepare for a job interview, compiling a portfolio refreshes your memory about various experiences and activities. This review is excellent preparation for supporting your answers to employer's questions. It also forces you to think about which accomplishments will be important to the interviewer. Finally the simple act of preparing a portfolio gives you a better idea of how well you qualify for the position.

Having a portfolio in the interview can also:

- Communicate a high level of preparation and strong interest in the position and organization;
- Demonstrate experience in critical knowledge areas, as well as enthusiasm, creativity, confidence, personality and work ethic;
- Allow you some control in the interview, which is especially desirable if you know that the employer is looking for candidates with a certain level of "take charge" ability;
- Add a critical dimension to your resume and interview process, making it easier for the interviewer to remember you from a large pool of candidates.

## Contents

Before you can assemble your portfolio, you need to collect the items (evidence) that you will include. To create a professional portfolio (which you will share with employers), you will need to identify and choose appropriate items that are most relevant to the position.

As you start identifying items to include, it is best to also write a description for each one. This may include the skill it represents, what goal was accomplished, as well as where, when, and why. By cataloging each sample this way, you will not have to be concerned with remembering the details when you choose to use one in your portfolio. Listed below are some things you might want to consider for your portfolio:

- Certificates of honors or awards
- Newspaper articles: volunteer work, project organization, community involvement, athletics
- Writing examples: papers, articles, stories, poetry, music
- Teaching or coaching experience, lessons/work-out plans, tutoring plans
- Brochures/PR items
- Procedure or form development
- Pictures of bulletin boards, artwork, volunteer work/activities
- Audio or video tape of performances
- Computing skills: programs, websites
- Research skills: description of research project, research papers (copy), lab reports
- Licenses or certificates such as: lifeguard, CPR, teaching, insurance, real estate, CPA
- Copy of degree, diploma, academic record, transcript
- Publications: stories, poetry, research
- Miscellaneous:
  - Reference letters
  - Thank-you notes
  - Recommendations
  - Letters of acknowledgement
  - Resume (traditional and scanable)

## Electronic Portfolio

In addition to your traditional portfolio, you may want to create an electronic portfolio. You can make the electronic portfolio available to employers as a supplement to your résumé. It can be on the World Wide Web or on a CD-ROM, floppy disk, or zip disk. You can set it up as a PowerPoint presentation or include a PowerPoint slideshow as part of your electronic portfolio. One great web site for developing an electronic portfolio is [www.efoliominnesota.com](http://www.efoliominnesota.com).

### **What is the advantage of an Electronic Portfolio?**

Electronic portfolios are easy for employers to access and use, especially if they're on the web. By including a "mailto" link in your portfolio, employers can contact you easily simply by clicking on the link and typing in a message for you. Another benefit of having an electronic portfolio is that it shows employers that you are familiar with various types of computer technology and programs.

Before creating your electronic portfolio, create your traditional version. Include electronic versions of items from your traditional portfolio. For example, include the word processing files for your writing samples and your résumé, scans of appropriate photos and certificates, and Adobe Acrobat (pdf) files of graphics such as brochures that you have designed. In University Computing Services graphics labs you can scan photos, digitize images, and prepare other items for inclusion.

In addition to the kinds of materials in your traditional portfolio, you might include an expanded version of your résumé, audio and video clips, an e-mail link, one to your major department's pages, a link to the curriculum for your major, and other appropriate links. Avoid personal information and inappropriate links--anywhere on your web site. Remember that anyone with much web experience can explore more of your web pages quite easily beyond your portfolio if it's online. You might want to put your online portfolio on a different server to prevent this kind of browsing by employers.

### **What can be included in Electronic Portfolios and how should it be structured?**

With these new multimedia forms of communication, electronic portfolios now have the potential of showcasing wider dimensions of learning than just paper-and-pencil reports or exercises. Multimedia has interactive capability and provides a richness of information that text alone cannot provide. With the use of multimedia authoring tools, a person can easily add pictures, voice, music, video and interactivity, adding a personal touch that text alone cannot provide. An electronic multimedia portfolio can include:

- Photographs of community service projects or overseas project partners
- Voice recording of reading or singing material
- Scanned in images of artwork, or solutions to math problems
- QuickTime VR movies of sculptures, objects, or locations that show who they are and how they work
- Audio or video recordings of choir, band or orchestra projects
- Multimedia projects or web pages exploring curriculum topics, current events or social questions