Portfolios

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of artifacts that demonstrate relevant work experience, skills and accomplishments. Portfolios demonstrate effort, progress, achievement and self-reflection. They are often used as a resource for job interviews, promotional reviews, and as for entrance or exit interviews for graduate school. Portfolios are commonly requested in certain career fields, such as art, design and education; however, all professionals can benefit from having a well-designed portfolio. The industry or career you are considering will determine the type of portfolio you will need.

What is an electronic portfolio?

An electronic portfolio, also called an e-portfolio or an online portfolio, is a digital version of a traditional paper-based portfolio. With e-portfolios, multimedia can be incorporated into the portfolio. This type of portfolio is also easily reproduced should you wish to send it to prospective employers. Electronic portfolios not only showcase your growth and achievements, they can be sorted and curated frequently to best represent your most recent experiences. E-portfolios generally include some or all of the following steps, and the order may vary:

1. **Plan**
2. **Select**
3. **Evaluate**
4. **Present and/or Publish**
5. **Reflect**

E-portfolio Process

Diagram:

- Plan
- Select
- Evaluate
- Present and/or Publish
- Reflect
**Why do I need one?**

An e-portfolio is a way to have an online presence that shows your work. It is a great technique to demonstrate your growth and proficiency in certain skills that may set you apart from other job applicants. As mentioned above, in some industries, portfolios or e-portfolios are a professional standard. Even if they’re not required for your particular industry, they can be an excellent way to demonstrate your skills and value to potential employers.

**How do I create an electronic portfolio? How do I share it?**

There are several platforms available for creating your e-portfolio. [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com), [Weebly](https://www.weebly.com) and [Wix](https://www.wix.com) are popular sites to create professional online portfolios. [Behance](https://www.behance.net) and [Carbonmade](https://www.carbonmade.com) are commonly used for creative careers, such as visual arts and advertising. Most of these sites include templates to help you get started.

Whatever site you select to share your work, make sure you choose a platform that showcases your growth and achievements in a visual and engaging manner. There are many ways to share your professional portfolio. Some of the most common include adding your portfolio link to your email signature, business cards, LinkedIn profile and/or résumé heading.

**What should I include?**

The first thing you need to do before beginning your online portfolio is to consider your audience. What do they want to see? You’ll want to have work samples featured that demonstrate the skills that the employer is seeking. This is an area where you will need to spend some time thinking about what to include and why.

Portfolios should contain your best work, not every piece of work you’ve ever done. Be strategic. You want to include items that demonstrate skills that you reflect upon and that will be meaningful to the person looking at your portfolio. If you want to use work samples from a former position, make sure you first get permission from your former employer.
But I already have an academic portfolio. Can I use that?

Most academic portfolios, such as portfolios designed for a specific class or subject matter, are meant to serve a different purpose than an online portfolio. Academic portfolios are designed to assess a student’s learning process over time. These types of portfolios generally include reflection on numerous experiences, writing assignments and professor feedback.

The professional e-portfolio is created to showcase your best work, as well as focus on skills you’ve acquired that you can demonstrate to a prospective employer. This type of portfolio is used to show how you can meet the needs of a specific employer or industry. That being said, there may be an opportunity to use some of your academic pieces to display how your developmental experiences transformed into professional skills. This may serve as a bridge to connect your college career to a professional career. Again, be mindful about what you include. Make sure it’s targeted and highlights the skills and experiences that will be most beneficial to you, as well as what an employer will want to see.

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