



# Career Portfolios: Getting Started

*Validating the claims you make in your résumé and cover letter.*

## Career portfolios: Proof of your potential.

Traditionally associated with artists and other creatives types in the job market, portfolios are joining the digital age. Bulky cases and three-ring binders are being reinvented to fit today's sleek, versatile medium: the Internet. Job seekers from designers to teachers and dental hygienists can easily create an effective online collection of files and documents that showcase their strengths, market their individuality, and improve their chances of being hired.

## Why create an online career portfolio?

Unlike cover letters that briefly explain your job eligibility, or résumés, which simply list your qualifications and experience, career portfolios provide an in-depth picture of who you are and what you've accomplished. Digital documents, multimedia examples of your work, personal statements, achievements, and references tangibly support what you claim in your cover letter and résumé.

Online career portfolios are a powerful tool to market you. They exhibit your capabilities by neatly bundling digital work samples, audio and video clips, recommendations, awards, personal experience and more, into one easily accessible, easily updatable package.

Plus, online portfolios can save time. Present your materials to employers well in advance of an in-person interview, possibly even before other candidates do; you may be hired sooner.

## It's your life: What to include.

Consider what is relevant to you and your job search. Here, activities, evaluations, citations, events, and commentaries not included in your résumé have a forum.

Organize and build your online career portfolio around your major and interests. Keep in mind that a music portfolio will include different samples from ones for aviation mechanics or nursing. Also, career portfolios need to be updated and/or re-organized as needed, depending on your target job, to reflect your growth and capabilities.

Begin with but don't limit yourself to the following:

- educational transcripts, diplomas, certificates
- honors, citations, letters of recommendation
- scholarships, and awards
- photos and videos; music and audio samples
- internships and co-op experiences
- workshops and seminars you've attended
- sports and co-curricular leadership positions
- travel, languages, relevant hobbies
- volunteer and community service
- performances and presentations
- published or printed works

Note: An online career portfolio is open to public scrutiny; use common sense and discretion when uploading. Don't include anything you wouldn't want a potential employer to view. Be aware of copyright, sensitive business, and privacy issues. For example: You may not own rights to some of the material you created during an internship, believe it or not.

## Paper to PDFs, paint to pixels.

Be efficient, save time: Scan and digitize all files and documents into locked PDFs as soon as you can. Keep file sizes small. Only upload items — Word docs, .jpg, .mpg, etc. — that you feel represent your best work. Organize files in a logical sequence. Provide clear, concise descriptions and statements. Present yourself professionally and address the recruiter's needs; it will make it easier for them to take you seriously and assess your fit into the company.

## Build it and keep it for life, FREE.

The beauty of your CollegeCentral.com career portfolio is that it can be continually updated after graduation as you evolve and grow in your career. So whether you're a student seeking a first-time job, or an alumna/us changing employment, your online career portfolio remains an informative biographical record and an effective marketing tool.



## **i** n a nutshell:

Like all tools, online career portfolios are a means to an end, so use them!

- **Be relevant, clear, organized, and professional**
- **Formats: DOC, XLS, PDF, GIF, JPEG, MPG, MOV, SWF**
- **Check that there are no copyright infringements to what you upload as samples**
- **Don't post anything you may regret later**
- **Update where / when needed**
- **Portfolios include Career, Art and Design, Dance, Music, and Theater**
- **Full online HELP instructions are available after registering at CollegeCentral.com**

Your career portfolio is a portrait of you. Make sure the image is clear.