



# Career Portfolios: Getting Started

Validate the claims you make in your résumé and cover letter.

## Career portfolios: Proof of your potential.

Traditionally associated with artists and other creative types in the job market, portfolios have joined the digital age. Bulky cases and three-ring binders have been reinvented to fit today's most versatile self-promotion tool: the Internet. Job seekers from designers and musicians to teachers and dental hygienists can easily create effective online collections of artifacts and documents that showcase their skills, define 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, a career portfolio provides an in-depth picture of who you are and what you've accomplished. Digital documents, multi-media examples of your work, personal stories, testimonials, and other evidence tangibly support what you claim in your cover letter and résumé.

An online career portfolio is a powerful self-marketing tool. It enables you to make a convincing case that you possess the knowledge and skills considered most important for the job you are pursuing.

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.

Include items that grab attention and connect you with the position you seek. The contents of your portfolio must do more than *tell* your story; they must also *show* that your claims about yourself are rooted in fact.

Remember: "Seeing is believing."

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

- 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 hard copy artifacts and save as locked digital documents. Keep file sizes small. Only upload items you feel represent your best work. Organize files in a logical sequence. Organize portfolio contents to correspond with the order of items listed in your résumé. Provide clear, concise descriptions where applicable. Employers and recruiters will appreciate a well organized career portfolio that conveys your qualifications clearly and effectively.

## 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 General Career, Art & 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 that image is clear.