Digital Business Portfolios:
Categories, Content, and Production

Eleanor J. Flanigan, Montclair State University, USA

Susan Amirian, East Stroudsburg University, USA

ABSTRACT

Developing an innovative and original professional digital business portfolio and keeping it updated is one of the most effective tools that can be used either by the business professional or by the student emerging into the business world. It constitutes a lasting comprehensive experience for both groups. Continual reflection upon their work arms students and business people alike with more confidence in their own competence and worth as they embark on their professional careers or justify their desires for advancement. This article will confine itself to the types of portfolios used most frequently in the business world or in preparation for entering a career, showing that content in each can be cumulative or separate. It will describe ideas for the types of artifacts to compile along with how to format them effectively and digitize them creatively. It will give answers to why to create a portfolio, who should have one, what should be in it, and how portfolios are created.

Keywords: academic portfolios; assessment reviews; artifacts; career portfolios; digital asset management; digitizing artifacts; interview portfolios; learning portfolios; PDF; resumes; self-reflection; templates; Web-based portfolios

INTRODUCTION

Many people are oblivious to the structured paths that lead them from one level of knowledge or one career path to another. Unless they are unusually reflective and deliberately trace their intellectual growth, most people move along and go with the flow of daily living and daily work needs. Whereas professionals keep pace with new requirements placed upon them, students move ahead according to a required college curriculum, taking the pre-scribed courses as directed. Both groups, however, accumulate valuable experiences along their paths.

Students find that as graduation approaches, preparing comprehensive resumes requires them to sum up their achievements and experiences. This is usually an onerous task. Rather than waiting until the end of the program, it may increase the students' abilities to comprehend the path of learning if they have to collect and preserve their work in a creative accumu-

lative project, reflecting and assessing during the process.

Business people are certainly aware of keeping their resumes up to date, although they may not do this until some employment crisis forces them to reflect and to report on their accomplishments. Annual job assessment reviews often prompt scrambling through papers or memories of the prior year to compile a report for the desired salary raise or promotion.

Developing a creative portfolio also can help to guide writing a creative resume. Overall, declarations in resumes are strengthened by providing concrete examples of competencies and skills attained. Statements on the resume can be linked to the portfolio artifacts to show specific examples of projects or supporting documents for claims made by the interviewee. This is "show and tell" brought to life by the creator of a digital portfolio who not only proclaims that he or she knows about technological advances but can put them into practice, using them for creative enhancement of the traditionally static resume.

PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Although comparatively innovative in business settings, structured portfolios are not new to many other disciplines. Their uses vary, depending on their purposes and their intended audiences. Whereas self-reflective portfolios serve as journals or organizers of activities and experiences, academic portfolios show student learning and progress or the development of skills. Professional portfolios are used in career determination or assessment of accomplishments as well as serving as demonstrations to validate claims of professional development.

Some portfolios consist of one's own work, while others, such as teachers' portfolios, incorporate the tasks they developed for their students along with evaluations, exemplary projects, or external and internal assessments.

Another definition of portfolios is common in the financial world. There, a portfolio is a collection of monetary assets reflected in stocks, bonds, real estate, and personal possessions. Reallocating and shifting these assets for optimal return is the task of financial analysis. Borrowing from this description of an asset portfolio, another way of summing up one's assets is by evaluating a collection of one's personal achievements. These assets are perhaps more precious than mere monetary accumulations. It takes a lifetime of work to acquire educational, professional, and personal assets. Enhancing this theme of portfolios as a collection of assets, Poore (2001) considers a person's business career as a portfolio of well-chosen investments.

DIGITAL PORTFOLIOS

Digital business portfolios basically are collections of artifacts used to validate claims made by the creator. These artifacts are in a creative variety of formats: text documents, Web pages, presentations, research papers, assessment instruments, original projects, academic or external teamwork, internships, performance videos, certificates of achievement, spreadsheets, databases, digital images, and multimedia demonstrations. These digital portfolios serve the business student population as well as business professionals, encouraging them to look critically at their work and to analyze it objectively. Using concrete examples of their achievements and growth, portfolio developers create tech-

Related Content

An Analysis of Irish Primary School Children's Internet Usage and the Associated Safety Implications
Derek O'Reilly and Caroline O'Neill (2008). *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (pp. 40-48).*
www.igi-global.com/article/analysis-irish-primary-school-children/2351?camid=4v1a

Modeling Social Influences in a Knowledge Management Network
Giacomo Franco, Paolo Maresca and Giancarlo Nota (2010). *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies (pp. 1-16).*
www.igi-global.com/article/modeling-social-influences-knowledge-management/40325?camid=4v1a

Lecture Capture: Technologies and Practices
S. Alan McCord and William H. Drummond (2010). *Distance Learning Technology, Current Instruction, and the Future of Education: Applications of Today, Practices of Tomorrow (pp. 113-131).*
www.igi-global.com/chapter/lecture-capture-technologies-practices/39453?camid=4v1a

Teaching Java: Managing Instructional Tactics to Optimize Student Learning
Henry H. Emurian (2007). *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (pp. 34-49).*
www.igi-global.com/article/teaching-java-managing-instructional-tactics/2328?camid=4v1a