Electronic Portfolios (ePortfolios) Explained

What is an ePortfolio and Why is it Important?

An ePortfolio is a personalized, web-based collection of works and achievements that showcase and demonstrate key skills and accomplishments. It can be a powerful tool to market yourself to a prospective employer and emphasize your abilities and what you can offer to a specific field. Rather than simply listing pertinent projects or experience on a resume or writing about them in a cover letter, an ePortfolio allows you to display examples of your work to illustrate your knowledge and demonstrate both industry-related and transferrable skills.

Developing an ePortfolio also gives you the opportunity to reflect upon your work and accomplishments over time, assess your key strengths, and discuss specific projects in further detail during an interview. Telling an employer what you can do is one thing, but showing them examples of what you've actually accomplished can make you stand out from the competition.

How Do You Get Experience to Put Into An ePortfolio?

Two common questions students usually ask when they begin planning their ePortfolio are: '*What information should I put into my portfolio'* and 'h*ow do I get these experiences*?' The answers to both are relatively easy. You want to create your portfolio to showcase your *most relevant* experiences around the type of work you are interested in doing in the future. Anything you do (e.g., classes, internships, research, part-time jobs, study abroad trips, skills learned, certificates obtained, volunteering, and/or membership in clubs) can be highlighted in your ePortfolio. If you need assistance finding additional opportunities to make yourself even more competitive in your field; make an appointment to see your faculty advisor or with the Career & Professional Development Center to speak with one of our career advisors!

Because each industry may have its own specific requirements; the type of portfolio you choose, as well as its structure, may vary from industry to industry. Here is a sampling of possible headings and experiences that you could add to your ePortfolio based on your major:

Major	Possible Headings	Examples of Experience
Graphic Design	Design, Photography, Illustration, Technical Skills, Campaigns, Web Design, Branding, Software Skills	Freelance work, marketing campaigns for your club, internships
English	Reflective Writing Samples, Research Writing Samples, Public Relations Samples, Academic Essay, Published Works	Significant assignments/essays, articles published for Penmen Press, training manual revision for workstudy job, writing from personal blog, press release from internship
Economics/ Finance	Business Documents, Business Writing, Research, Analysis, Technology Skills, Performance Reviews, Experience	Internships, volunteer work, Club Treasurer, project-based classes, Sales Pitch Competition, employer site visit, FBLA membership
Organizational Leadership	Leadership, Organizational Documents, Business Writing, Business Documents, Project Analysis	Training manual creation for organization, conferences attended, project presentations, workstudy job in SNHU HR office, SHRM member, internships
Psychology	Research, Presentations, Publications, Certifications, Field Experience, Relevant Coursework, Teaching and/or Counseling Experience	Research project, internship, conferences attended/presented at, site visits, volunteer, peer advisor
Elementary Education	Lesson Plans, Teaching Experience, Volunteer Work, Certifications, Awards, References, Writing Sample	Student practicum/teaching experience, tutoring, class essay

Regardless of major, some parts of the portfolio tend to be universal. An *About Me* page, a copy of your *Resume*, any *Awards*, your *Work Experience* (geared to one's interest area), and an *Elevator Pitch/Mission Statement* can almost always be included. Based on your industry, you may also find some ePortfolio sites utilized more often than others, so research what works best for you and your budget. Some of the most popular (free) sites include: *Wix*, *Weebly*, *Site123*, *WordPress*, and Google Sites.

How Do You Use Your ePortfolio During an Interview?

Your ePortfolio should include the best examples of your work and demonstrate your skills and abilities related to a specific position. In addition, you will want to include a brief reflection statement (about 150 words) which provides the background of the project, how you prepared, what you learned, and the skills you gained. Be prepared to discuss your work in further detail during an interview and answer specific questions about your work. Your portfolio also should be updated regularly and tailored to the employer and role you are seeking. By doing this, you demonstrate your knowledge of the position and that you have done your research to prepare for the interview.

Having your ePortfolio available to show to an employer to view during an interview not only provides a visual representation of your skills and abilities, but also gives you an opportunity to have a conversation with an employer about your experiences. Do not wait for an employer to ask to see your portfolio. Be prepared to show examples of your work whenever something is relevant to what you are discussing. You can use your ePortfolio to address specific questions, including behavioral-based questions when your interviewer might ask you to "provide an example of…" or "tell me about a time when…" to illustrate a key skill and emphasize your experience.

Resources

ePortfolio Tips (article): How to Create Your Professional Online Portfolio
ePortfolio Overview (Video): E-Portfolio Introduction
Reflective Statements (Video): Reflective Statements Explained
ePortfolio Examples: Online Portfolio & Personal Websites for Students and Young Professionals
Career & Professional Development Center: CareerEdge