

Digital Portfolios Tips

Presenting a collection of creative work through a digital portfolio may be a logical choice for many design and art students seeking internships or full-time employment following graduation. Digital image files of studio work are readily available since many studio projects are produced digitally and other 2D and 3D projects can either be scanned or digitally photographed. These digital files can easily be modified for portfolio presentation using formats, such as, PowerPoint slide shows, work on laptops taken to an interview, Websites, CDs, JPG or PDF attachments and DVD or Video demo reels for animation, video or multimedia projects.

Advantages of digital portfolios are numerous. They are easy to update, inexpensive to produce and convenient to use, especially in long distance job searches. A digital presentation is essential in presenting Web design, multimedia, and animation projects.

Some designers may use one or more digital formats in presenting work throughout various phases of a job search.

Scott Hezner, architect and president of the Hezner Corporation in Libertyville, IL likes the technology. "Digital portfolios are becoming the rule vs. the exception to the rule. Due to the electronic methods of communication between candidates and prospective employers, digital portfolios are the only practical way a candidate can graphically represent themselves in real time."

On line portfolios are emerging as design industry favorites because they are so convenient to access and the web eliminates the possibility of virus contaminated files or CD's.

Before embarking on a digital direction for your portfolio consider the following:

- Who is your targeted audience? Unfortunately, digital portfolios are not yet universally appreciated. Research targeted employers in your field and inquire about their portfolio expectations. Be prepared to deliver accordingly;
- Guidelines for developing both digital and traditional portfolios Include quality images of your best work; some process work is appreciated;
- Make sure your digital presentation is well designed and organized; double check to be sure all links are active and working properly.
- Avoid photos of yourself just as you would in a traditional portfolio.
- Always follow instructions when applying for advertised positions. For example, if asked to submit 5 project samples in PDF format via e-mail do not send your URL address expecting them to access your website.

College of Design Career Days, March 1-3, 2006 provide a great opportunity to ask design professionals to critique your portfolio and gain their opinion on digital portfolios.

Highly recommended resources for learning more about digital portfolio design include *Designing a Digital Portfolio* by Cynthia L. Baron and *The Portfolio*, a handbook co-authored by College of Design architecture faculty member, Igor Marjanovic.

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