INTRODUCTION

One of the most effective tools used by business students eager to introduce themselves into the professional work world is an ePortfolio (electronic portfolio), used to supplement the rather sparse chronological or thematic listing typically found on a resume. The career portfolio is a showcase of work focused on documenting the diverse items displayed to enhance opportunities for employment. This type of portfolio is totally dedicated to highlighting achievements, relevant work samples, and one’s accomplishments. This article will focus on the career portfolio, the one most appropriate for the business professional and for those just beginning their careers. It will describe ideas for both the process of developing an ePortfolio along with dealing with the topics relevant to the final product. It will address questions such as “Why create a career portfolio?” “What should be in it?” “Using some available new technologies such as Web 2.0, how are portfolios created, stored, and disseminated?”

ePortfolios and Technology: Customized for Careers

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ABSTRACT

An effective tool for business students eager to introduce themselves into the professional work world is an ePortfolio (electronic portfolio), used to supplement the rather sparse chronological or thematic listing typically found on a resume. The career portfolio is a showcase of work focused on documenting the diverse items displayed to enhance opportunities for employment. This type of portfolio is totally dedicated to highlighting achievements, relevant work samples, and one’s accomplishments. This article will focus on the career portfolio, the one most appropriate for the business professional and for those just beginning their careers. It will describe ideas for both the process of developing an ePortfolio along with dealing with the topics relevant to the final product. It will address questions such as “Why create a career portfolio?” “What should be in it?” “Using some available new technologies such as Web 2.0, how are portfolios created, stored, and disseminated?”

INTRODUCTION

The career portfolio is a logical outgrowth of the academic uses of portfolios in the past several years. In his analysis of the trends in this area, Batson (2011) cited the two-fold purposes most commonly used by educators. By some, portfolios have been seen as management tools to support teaching and learning or assessment, more serving the purposes of the institution. Others, however, see their value as a student-centered tool to “develop students’ critical thinking skills, to create a student-owned space” (p. 2). Although he deplores the incompatibility of these two paths, Batson now detects a trend toward broadening and integrating these purposes. Career portfolios are more focused on students’ final or most accomplished work, displaying the most sophisticated work done to support their entry into the work world.
One of the newer career tools in the technological era of job hunting is the web-based ePortfolio. One of the co-founders of the technology solution firm, Digication, cites the importance of presenting one’s self on the web as a professional. “An ePortfolio may supersede the less flattering ones that may have been posted by students during their college years” (Driscoll, 2007). Since hiring managers frequently do online background checks on job candidates, the current Web 2.0 tools and social networking sites can either make or break a job applicant.

Numerous firms are available to perform diverse personal checking ranging from credit ratings and driving records to identity verification and criminal activities. Among all these potentially negative records will also appear the positive career portfolio, presenting the applicant as the professional, upstanding citizen, and ideal candidate that most students are.

Developing an innovative and original electronic business portfolio is equally important for those already employed as well as for the student as a potential employee. 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 focus on the career portfolio, which is the one most appropriate for the business community as well as for entering a career. It will describe ideas for both the process of developing an ePortfolio along with dealing with the topics relevant to the final product. These topics include temporary and permanent storage and proper dissemination. It will address question such as “Why create a career portfolio?”, “What should be in it?”, “Using some available new technologies such as Web 2.0, how are portfolios created, stored, and disseminated?”

Unless people are unusually reflective and deliberately trace their intellectual and their professional growth, most move along and go with the flow of daily living and daily work needs. Many are not consciously aware of the paths that lead them from one level of knowledge or from one career to another. Whereas professionals keep pace with new requirements placed upon them, most students move ahead according to the required collegiate curriculums. Students take the prescribed courses as directed without much reflection on their cumulative knowledge or recognition of the connection between these courses. However, both groups accumulate valuable experiences along their paths sometimes forgetting how they actually got to some pinnacle of experience. Important anecdotes or incidents are tucked away in memory but are not documented otherwise.

Professional and 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 report on their accomplishments. Annual job assessment reviews often prompt scrambling through the papers or memories of the prior year to compile a report for the desired salary raise or promotion.

Somewhat similar to this situation, students find that as graduation approaches and career opportunities present themselves, 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’ ability to comprehend the path of learning and recognize their emerging competencies if they had to collect and preserve their work in a creative accumulative project, reflecting and assessing during the process.

The creation of ePortfolios during college years has an effect upon students’ career choices and even upon changing their career objectives. A comparative study with engineering and cooperative education students done at the University of Windsor, Canada investigated the effectiveness of new pedagogical strategies and assessment tools, including the creation of an ePortfolio. Along with the usual artifacts generally contained in a portfolio, such as final work term reports, resumes, cover letters, and faculty evaluation of the work term reports, students
The Preliminary Investigation of the Factors that Influence the E-Learning Adoption in Higher Education Institutes: Jordan Case Study

The Impact of an Online Homework Management System on Student Performance and Course Satisfaction in Introductory Financial Accounting