

U of M Electronic Portfolio: A Tool for Internship and Job Searching or for Marketing Yourself

What is U of M Electronic Portfolio?

The University of Minnesota's Electronic Portfolio is an online interactive information management tool designed to give students, faculty, and staff easy, full, and direct influence over the creation, distribution, and use of their educational records and documents. Currently available to all U of M students, faculty, and staff, Portfolio provides a dynamic, efficient mechanism for integrating official as well as self-reported academic, career, and personal information. Click here for instructions on building your portfolio <http://portfolio.umn.edu>.

Portfolio can be accessed from any Internet browser at <http://portfolio.umn.edu>. You can log into your personal Portfolio account by entering your U of M Internet ID (email username) and password.

Why should I use a portfolio?

The information can be used to showcase your skills, education and accomplishments to potential employers, graduate schools, or for class presentations. A well-constructed portfolio draws attention to and showcases your skills and accomplishments work experience, internship or coop or a study abroad experience. Users can include resumes and samples of class work, labs, projects or research and publications. A portfolio can also be used throughout your career for annual performance reviews, or to showcase your accomplishments.

How do I build a portfolio?

Portfolio has three functions: **Enter, Share, and View**.

Enter is your personal file in which you record and update information and to which you also can attach additional multimedia materials. **Enter** allows you to enter your information by category. There are seven categories, each of which contains a number of subcategories (see lists on pages 3 for examples of subcategories).

The main categories are:

- Contact information (Personal Information)
- Education
- Career
- Skills
- Professional practices
- Recognition/Honors and awards

Information is entered by subcategory. You may access subcategories in any order. Each time you finish entering information in a subcategory, click the "Save" button to save the additions or changes you have made to your Portfolio.

Share allows you to create and preview customized folders that offer different views of the information, reflections, and additional materials you have stored in Enter. It also lets you specify who can view these folders. If you want to view a folder you have created, you must give yourself access in Share.

To use Share, create a new folder or select an existing one. Select from the menu of subcategories in which you have entered information and reflections or attached additional materials. Determine the information to be included in the customized folder. When prompted, type in the user names of individuals to whom you want to give permission to access the folder.

View facilitates your access to information that others at the U of M have shared with you and allows you to add comments to additional materials that they have allowed you to see. **View** lists folders to which others at the U of M have given you access. Click on individual folders to open them. Clicking on subcategories within each folder will display entered information and reflections, open additional materials attached to subcategories (using existing software on your hard drive), or download the additional materials to your desktop.

A Portfolio folder, the Academic Record, containing only the U of M system information is made available to assigned academic advisors. It is the student's prerogative to share additional information with faculty or others.

Building a strong portfolio

During the course of your studies you have numerous opportunities to document your learning through your Portfolio. A strong Portfolio is one in which you have assembled a variety of documents, system information, letters of recommendation, transcripts, mission/goals statements, and project samples, all of which demonstrate what you have learned. Identify the skills you have developed, and then gather artifacts providing strong evidence of your competencies. For example, if you want to demonstrate your ability to write, include your grades from writing classes, samples of your writing, multiple drafts of an essay, an audio recording of your written work, instructor feedback, and your own reflections about your writing.

Like an artist's Portfolio, your Electronic Portfolio is your chance to demonstrate, using your best examples, what you have learned. Like an artist's Portfolio, your Learning Portfolio can contain samples of your work in different media. It is possible to have photographs, video clips, and audio, as well as text documents for your resume and other written documents.

As you assemble your Portfolio during your college career think of your education as an investment. Education provides one of the best returns possible of all financial investments. Your portfolio, then, is a document describing the very real assets (your knowledge and skills) you are accruing through your education.

Both as a means of guiding your learning process and marketing yourself for employment, it is important to start your Portfolio now, and to build on it throughout your college learning experience.

Keep your information safe; know your audience

When you share information from your portfolio with other people, it is important to recognize the type of information that the other person needs to know. Your portfolio could contain a large amount of confidential information that is not necessary or legal for most people to view. For example, if an instructor asks you to share certain assignments with them, it is **not** in your best interest to share your student id number, social security number, or your grades from last semester when sharing the assignment. For University of Minnesota privacy policies go to:
<http://onestop.umn.edu/registrar/info/otrp01.html>.

If you are posting a portfolio on a public site or posting a resume in a database then your security should be taken into consideration. Never include personal or contact information on your resume. It is not recommended to give names of supervisors, employers, or provide their contact information. Instead, state that references will be provided upon request. Interested employers or recruiters can request the information after they contact you directly. Using a separate email account for this purpose will help to protect you and your information. Accounts such as Yahoo or Hotmail can be set up free of charge and will help to ensure your privacy.

Examples of documentation to include in a portfolio

Personal Information

Identification Data
Name of Record
Contact Information
E-Mail Address
Web page
Personal Interests
Personality Inventories
Myers-Briggs
GRE scores

Education

Education History
Academic Plan
Academic Record
College and Major
Thesis
Graduation
Co-Curricular Activities
Professional Development
Learning Inventories
Assessment Scores
Kolb Learning Style Inventory

Career

Work History
Career Plan
Professional Interests
Professional Skills
References

Skills

Computer Skills
Language Proficiency
Leadership Skills
Quantitative Reasoning Skills
Transferable Skills
Additional Skills
Class projects

Professional Practices

Committees
Presentations
Professional Memberships
Professional Activities
Publications
Research
Service
Teaching
Travel

Recognition

Academic Honors
Awards
Certificates
Grants
Scholarships

How and when to present a portfolio to an employer

During interviews

Whether you are seeking a permanent position or in internship it is beneficial to include a line in your cover letter or on your resume that states "Professional portfolio available upon request." This can set the stage for you to present and showcase your portfolio at any stage. During the interview, employers may ask for examples of class projects, research, writing examples, or other samples of your work. This is a prime opportunity for you to present your portfolio to showcase your work. Even if you are not asked for examples, you can offer to leave your portfolio once the interview is over. However, make sure that you don't leave behind the original documents but flawless as possible copies for examples. This can be an opportunity to follow-up with an employer to ask, "Were there any samples that matched the projects you are currently working on that you would like more information on?" This will give you another opportunity to showcase your work and show that you are the right person for the job. Maintaining your portfolio with up to date information and examples throughout your college career can help you to land the job but it can also help you in preparing for evaluations and promotions.

Evaluations and promotions

Maintain documentation and examples of your work such as identifying key performance criteria that displays what you have contributed to the project to make your case. Collect information and

examples that show how you have met or exceeded expectations or goals. You can showcase how you resolved a problem or increase production or completed a project ahead of time while staying under budget. Regardless of the accomplishment, make it a point to keep documentation and copies of examples for your personal portfolio to assist you in your career.

Final note

Unlike resumes, a portfolio is unique to each individual; it is neither good nor bad but an ongoing process ever improving. As you begin to develop your portfolio, you may want to review some examples that are available in the IT Career Services library. They are: *The Career Portfolio Workbook* by Frank Satterthwaite and Gary D'orsi and *Portfolio Power* by Martin Kimeldorf. Both of these resources provide excellent examples and more information on how to develop your portfolio. If you require further assistance, staff members are also available to help you to get started.