

Electronic Résumés

Increasingly, employers request electronic résumés. They can be posted on a Web site or submitted through e-mail to be included in an organization's database of job candidates. Remain current with the forms and protocols that employers prefer by reviewing popular job-search sites, such as Career Builder at <www.careerbuilder.com> and Monster.com at <www.monster.com>. As you apply for jobs electronically, be prepared to fill out online versions of your résumé many times by cutting and pasting details into forms and fields on various Web sites.

Scannable and Plain-Text Résumés

Some companies often electronically scan paper résumés into a database, which allows them a time-saving way to screen a large pool of applicants for job openings. If you are requested to do so, submit your résumé in more than one format. In addition to the traditional paper résumé, prepare and submit a no-frills, or plain-text, version for ease of scanning.

A scannable résumé is normally mailed to an employer in paper form, scanned, and downloaded into a company's searchable database. Avoid decorative, uncommon, or otherwise fancy typefaces; use simple font styles (a sans serif font such as Arial) and sizes for text and headings between 10 and 14 points. Use white space generously because scanners use it to recognize where one topic has ended and another has begun. Although a paper résumé is best kept to one page, you need not limit an electronic résumé to a single page. However, keep the résumé as simple, clear, and concise as possible. Use white or off-white paper and do not fold it for mailing because a scanner can misread a folded line.

Some employers request ASCII³ or plain-text résumés via e-mail, which they can add directly to their résumé database without scanning. ASCII résumés also allow employers to read the file regardless of the type of software they are using. You can copy and paste such a résumé directly into the body of the e-mail message.

DESIGNING YOUR DOCUMENT

Formatting the Résumé

Make your first impression count. To do so, use the following guidelines for designing an easy-to-read résumé — online and in print — that will highlight your qualifications and get you noticed.

At-a-Glance Look

- Ensure that each section is balanced proportionally on the page with the other sections.
- In addition to 1-inch margins, use ample white space consistently to prevent a cluttered look:
 - Separate each section with sufficient white space so that it stands out from the elements above and below it.
 - Single-space within sections.
 - Double-space or, if space permits, triple-space between sections.
 - Indent the second line within a section when it continues the previous line.

Font Size and Design

- Use no more than two font styles.
- Select fonts to identify different levels of information.
- Use sans serif fonts for headings and serif fonts for text.
- Use **boldface**, *italics*, underlining, and ALL CAPITALS sparingly for emphasis; do not overdesign.
- Use font sizes to differentiate headings from text: 10 to 13 points for text and 14 to 20 points for headings.
- Use bullets to signal a new topic within each section and to emphasize individual items, such as each job responsibility, accomplishment, college course, or internship position.
- Be consistent and uniform throughout:
 - Use fonts and design features consistently — bullets, indentions, text boxes, capital and lowercase letters, and other elements.
 - Show headings, date formats, punctuation, and spacing consistently, as well.
- Consider alternative methods of creating the résumé:
 - Use a résumé template in your word-processing package.
 - Have a professional graphic designer create your résumé.

E-mail-Attached Résumés

An employer may request or you may prefer to submit a résumé as an e-mail attachment to be printed out by the employer. Attach the résumé as a PDF file. This file format will preserve the fonts, images, graphics, and layout of your résumé. Your e-mail message can serve as your application letter.



DIGITAL TIPS: Creating a Résumé Using a Template

Many word-processing programs offer templates for a variety of résumé styles.

- Select from a variety of templates to organize and present the content:
 - Entry level—Elegant
 - Chronological—Contemporary
 - Functional—Professional
- Adapt the template to your needs or preferences by applying an array of design features:
 - Add lines (rules) across the page.
 - Change fonts.
 - Standardize headings.
- Spell-check before printing. Proofread carefully.
- Be flexible and change the template based on your needs and the discussion in this book.

Web Résumés

Another option is to post your résumé on your own Web site. Doing so makes it available to potential employers at their convenience—then you need only send potential employers your Web address. A Web résumé can also be updated as often as necessary without the need to mail updates to everyone. Perhaps the chief advantage of a Web résumé is that it allows you to create an electronic portfolio linked to samples of your work—reports, articles, graphics projects, presentations, and the like. An interactive résumé with links to the portfolio will work only if you create an HTML (hypertext markup language) version of your work. If you wish to post a résumé and portfolio without hyperlinks, you could use a plain-text version or PDF image file instead. If you plan to post your résumé on your own Web site, keep the following points in mind:

- Follow the general advice for writing for the Web, outlined in Chapter 15, Writing for the Web.
- View your résumé on several browsers to see how it looks.
- Just below your name, you may wish to provide a series of internal links to such important categories as “Experience” and “Education.”
- Consider building a multipage site for displaying a work portfolio, publications, reference letters, and the like.
- To protect your privacy, include an e-mail link (“mailto”) at the top of the résumé rather than your home address and phone number.

Keep in mind that using a personal Web site for job searches is less effective than using commercial services that attract recruiters with their large databases of candidates.