



# Employers' Support of the Use of E-portfolios by Information Systems Job Applicants

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## Definition

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“An e-portfolio is an extended, dynamic CV, establishing links to an online database, which contains personal and professional achievements, team results, references and all relevant evidence of competence obtained in the course of work and learning. It provides an opportunity to reflect on one’s own professional practice and to share the lessons learned with others.” (Barrett, 2005)



## Purpose of Study

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- Determine the degree to which employers support the use of e-portfolios by job applicants.



# Research Questions

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1. Do employers support applicants' use of e-portfolios?
2. What e-portfolio features do employers prefer?
3. What e-portfolio delivery systems do employers prefer?
4. What are the industry classifications of the companies that prefer that applicants use e-portfolios when applying for a job?



# Methodology

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- Survey form developed
  - Pilot study to determine reliability and validity.
    - Face validity used to make changes to instrument
    - Cronbach's Alpha used to ascertain reliability → .865 achieved (any value above .70 indicates acceptable reliability)
- Population: 110 business, government, and educational institution college recruiters



## Methodology (2)

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- Survey form administered online to population
- Thirty-five (35) usable surveys were received for a return rate of 31.8%



# Findings

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1. Does your company encourage the use of e-portfolios when applicants seek employment for positions?

**Table 1a**  
**Question 1**  
**Employer Encouragement of the Applicants' Use of E-Portfolios**  
**by Job Applicants**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	16	45.7%
No	19	54.3%



## Findings (2)

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2. Approximately what percentage of applicants for positions currently submit e-portfolios?

**Table 2**  
**Question 2**  
**Percentage of Applicants Who Submit e-Portfolios**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0% - 25%	23	66%
26% - 50%	4	11%
51% - 75%	7	20%
76% - 100%	1	3%

# Findings (3)

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3. If you answered “No” to #1, why doesn’t your company encourage the use of e-portfolios when applicants seek employment for positions?

**Table 3**  
**Question 3**  
**Reasons Why Company Doesn’t Encourage**  
**Use of e-Portfolios by Job Applicants**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Need paper records for files	6	23.1%
Specific application process	4	15.4%

# Findings (4)

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4. If an applicant submits an e-portfolio, would you prefer that he/she also submit a paper resume and other supporting materials?

**Table 4a**  
**Question 4**  
**Employers Who Prefer Applicants to Submit Paper Resume**  
**In Addition to an e-Portfolio**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	18	51.4%
No	12	34.3%
Optional	5	14.3%

# Findings (5)

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5. Would your company hire an applicant who submits an e-portfolio over a student who does not submit one?

**Table 5a**  
**Question 5**

**Employers' Practice of Hiring Applicants Who Submit e-Portfolios  
Over Those Applicants Who Don't Submit e-Portfolios**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	1	2.9%
No	26	74.3%
Maybe	8	22.9%

# Findings (6)

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6. What e-portfolio features does your company prefer?

**Table 6**  
**Question 6**  
**Preferred Portfolio Features by Employers**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Resume	33	94.3%
Description of Employment Experiences	21	60.0%
Description of Internship Experiences	19	54.3%
References	18	51.4%
Employment Goals	12	34.3%
Description/Examples of Extracurricular Activities	11	31.4%



# Findings (7)

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**Table 6 (Continued)**  
**Question 6**  
**Preferred Portfolio Features by**  
**Employers**

Recommendations	10	28.6%
Written Communication Samples	6	17.1%
Examples of Technology Competencies	6	17.1%
Examples of Class Assignments and Projects	3	8.6%
Applicant's Photograph	1	2.9%

# Findings (8)

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7. What e-portfolio delivery system does your company prefer?

**Table 7**  
**Question 7**  
**Preferred e-Portfolio Delivery System by Employers**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Internet Link	16	45.7%
No Preference	14	40.0%
Both Internet Link and CD-ROM	2	5.7%
No Answer	2	5.7%
Haven't done them yet	1	2.9%

# Findings (9)

8. Which of the following Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) best describes your company?

**Table 8**  
**Question 8**  
**Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) of Respondents' Companies**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	e-Portfolio Support			
			Yes	%	No	%
Finance and Insurance	8	23.5%	5	15.2%	3	9.1%
Health Care and Social Assistance	5	14.7%	2	6.1%	3	9.1%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	5	14.7%	0	0	5	15.2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4	11.8%	2	6.1%	2	6.1%
Government	3	11.8%	1	3.0%	2	6.1%
Manufacturing	2	5.8%	1	3.0%	1	3.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	2	5.8%	1	3.0%	1	3.0%



# Conclusions

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1. A majority of the employers in this study do not encourage the use of e-portfolios when applicants seek employment for positions.
2. A minority of applicants currently who seek employment submit e-portfolios.
3. The most frequently given reason by employers for not accepting e-portfolios by job applicants are the need for paper records for files and the fact they have specific application processes that don't include e-portfolios.



## Conclusions (2)

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4. Most employers who accept e-portfolios as a part of the application process prefer that these applicants also submit paper resumes.
5. Most employers do not hire applicants who use e-portfolios over those who do not use them.
6. Most employers would not hire applicants who use e-portfolios over other applicants who did not submit e-portfolios simply because of the e-portfolio use.



## Conclusions (3)

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7. Most employers who encourage the use of e-portfolios by job applicants prefer that the e-portfolios include resumes, description of employment experiences, description of internship experiences, and references.
8. The most frequently preferred e-portfolio delivery system by employers is an Internet link.



## Conclusions (4)

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9. A minority of employers indicate that they have hired business graduates who have used e-portfolios in the application process.
10. Employers in the Finance and Insurance industries most often support the use of e-portfolios by job applicants.



# Recommendations

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1. Employers should be encouraged to consider the advantages of e-portfolios and review current procedures to determine if the reasons for not accepting e-portfolios are valid
2. Schools should encourage students to create both e-portfolios and paper job applications.



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