

Key elements of a successful digital career portfolio for building a strong personal image in the competitive labor market

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Abstract <p>The labor market is a competitive field for job applicants, and it is a time-consuming process for recruiters to find the most suitable candidates for a job. Strong personal branding with a portfolio as a vital element is a way to differentiate in the labor market and create advantage for a job applicant. In the world with the constant development of technology, it is more relevant to focus on a digital career portfolio.</p> <p>The main objective was to examine a successful digital career portfolio as a positive addition to a resume and its influence on the decisions of the recruiters. Two sub-objectives for the study were exploring theoretical information with regard to a career portfolio and examining the current and possible future platforms and applications for creating a digital portfolio. The research questions focused on determining the key elements and characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio.</p> <p>The qualitative research approach was selected for the implementation of the study because it allowed to assemble information for a detailed understanding of the phenomenon. Semi-structured interviews were used as a method for obtaining the primary data. Purposeful sampling was used for selecting the interviewees who were responsible for recruiting employees for various fields. The interviews were organized through Skype in March 2018. All the interviews were recorded, and prior to the data analysis, they were transcribed and coded.</p> <p>The results demonstrated the significance of a digital career portfolio in the process of selecting potential employees and its influence on the recruiters' decisions. The results also highlighted the key elements and characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio. Those elements were high-quality photographs, collection of successful work tasks from diverse fields, unified design, organized navigation, recommendations and feedback. Communication with the users, modern techniques, organized structure, briefness and relevance to the position, visibility and completeness of information as well as user-friendly and personalized design were defined as the key characteristics of a career portfolio.</p>		
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Competition in the labor market is keen nowadays. The multitude of applicants creates a difficult task for the recruiters who spend considerable amounts of time in selecting the right candidates for the interview. Everyday, companies that have open positions receive various and almost identical resumes and cover letters. This view is supported by Williams (2016a, 1), who writes that organizations are under pressure to hire the best employees possible, and this requires the job applicants to demonstrate their expertise.

During the process of selection, human resource managers and recruiters review the provided information rapidly in order to choose the suitable applications for further consideration. A study about recruiters' behavior with the help of eye tracking technology was conducted by TheLadders, a company providing online job search services. The evidence presented in this study suggests that recruiters spent about six seconds on their initial "fit/not fit" decision (Keeping an Eye on Recruiter Behaviour 2012, 3).

It has commonly been assumed that personal branding is one of the major factors for career development. Quast (2013) highlights that the goal of personal branding is differentiation in the labor market for attaining the objectives, such as gaining a dream job.

It is important to mention that a career portfolio is a key element of personal branding. According to Satterthwaite and D'Orsi (2003a, 3-4), a career portfolio is a collection of documents and other easily portable artifacts that people can use to validate the claims that they make about themselves. It is worth pointing out that a career portfolio created in the digital format is more relevant in the modern world with rapid changes in technologies. In relation to a digital career portfolio, artifacts exist in a creative diversity of formats, such as text documents, Web pages, presentations, research papers, internships, videos and certificates of achievements (Jafari & Kaufman 2006, 110).

It is commonly assumed that career portfolios are required for professions in the field of creative arts. Although less commonly utilized in fields outside of the arts, professional portfolios can benefit job seekers in any profession. (Tyler & Wilson 2016, 126.)

1.2 Research motivation, objectives and question

The research problem was exploitation of the key elements of a successful digital career portfolio for building a strong personal image of a job seeker for being competitive in a job market. The main objective of the research was studying the influence of using a successful digital career portfolio as an additional advantage for influencing the decisions of the recruiters. Based on the main objective of the research, the author determined sub-objectives:

- studying theoretical information concerning a digital career portfolio;
- examining the current and possible future platforms and applications for creating a digital career portfolio;

According to a study commissioned by a personal website technology platform, 56 % of the 300 hiring managers participating in the survey answered that a personal website was the most impressive tool that candidates can have to support their job search. Moreover, only 5 percent of the 1200 people surveyed answered they had a personal website. (Workfolio and Right Management Announce Partnership 2014.)

Considering the information above, the key research question of the study was as follows:

- What are the key elements and characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio as an additional advantage for a resume?

The motivation to study the key elements of a digital career portfolio as an additional advantage for a resume reflects the author's personal interests to build a strong personal brand in order to be competitive in the labor market. The author suggests that personal branding plays significant role in a competitive labor market. As mentioned

in Chapter 1.2, a digital career portfolio is one of the components of personal branding.

This paper examined the significance of a digital career portfolio. The topic was considered relevant because the results may be used in the Development as an Expert course at JAMK University of Applied Sciences, in which portfolio is one of the course topics. This paper attempts to show that a digital career portfolio is a vital element that may be an additional advantage and help the students to be hired during studying or after graduation.

1.3 Research structure

The overall structure of the study takes the form of five chapters, including the introduction chapter, a theoretical review, research implementation, results as well as discussion and conclusion. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, motivation for the research, relevance of the topic and further applicability as well as the research objectives, and the research problem.

The literature review chapter begins by defining the theoretical dimensions of the research. In addition, it looks at the digital career portfolio in general and the current and possible future applications and platforms.

The research implementation chapter discusses the research strategy used for this study, including the data collection, sampling, implementation of the interviews, ethics and data analysis. The results chapter presents the findings of the research.

The final chapter draws upon the complete thesis. Based on the theoretical information and the study that was implemented the chapter draws the conclusions of the study.

2. Key elements and characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on a career portfolio. It begins by discussing the career portfolio in terms of its applicability to the labor market. In addition, it explains the types of a portfolio, examines the benefits and obstacles of compiling a career portfolio, studies the key elements of a successful portfolio, describes the most popular digital portfolio platforms and anticipates the future of a digital career portfolio.

2.1 Career portfolio

According to Cambridge Dictionary, portfolio is a collection of drawings, documents and other material that represent a person's, especially an artist's, work. It can, therefore, be assumed that a portfolio is evidence of the extent and quality of the skills and work experience that a person has (Mayer 2008, 195). A portfolio can contain a big variety of projects, documents, certain examples of work, links to social media accounts, photos and much more.

It is worth pointing out that there is a difference between a curriculum vitae and a career portfolio. Curriculum vitae is a summary of the educational and professional history of a person (Corfield 2009, 7). The length of a curriculum vitae is limited to two pages while a portfolio may include 15 or more pages and it concentrates on representing work and achievements.

According to Williams (2009a, 1), over the next few years, the need for career portfolios will likely increase. They may be required to indicate value to the current employer or to search for a new job. In the present study, career portfolio was studied as one of the key elements of personal branding.

In Straub's view (1996, 3), a resume opens the door, and a portfolio demonstrates the product. It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by this idea. A resume is an essential requirement for the job applicant in order to be considered a potential candidate. Ordinarily, a resume includes personal information, education,

work experience, knowledge and skills, which allow a human resource manager to compare the information with the actual requirements of an open position.

Portfolios are much more comprehensive than a combination of the traditional resume and cover letter (Loretto 2017). One of the most important aspect is that a resume is not able to demonstrate the quality of projects that an applicant has accomplished. Moreover, a resume cannot visualize any outstanding creations, such as photos, websites, posters and other achievements in contrast to a career portfolio. A career portfolio is considered evidence of accomplished projects and work because it provides actual illustrations of what has been done by the job applicant (Field 2010, 136).

A portfolio is a highly effective marketing tool that gives a complete picture of a job candidate (Rocker 2013). Overall, this idea highlights that a portfolio gives people a possibility to advertise themselves to a potential employer. It can, therefore, be assumed that a career portfolio is a key factor to being successful during a job interview. A job applicant is able to characterize work experience and describe accomplishments, but with the help of a portfolio, selected projects can be showed as evidence.

A job interview can be structured and based on questions asked by the interviewer. However, the ability to prove one's words may improve the job interview and attract the attention of a human resource manager to a certain candidate.

Professionals in various fields have been using career portfolios for years, for instance, artists, designers, architects and website developers (Williams 2016b, 1). A professional portfolio for these professionals is a requirement. Moreover, it is worth pointing out that in the modern world with rapid development in all spheres, many changes are happening in the area of human resources, and a portfolio is becoming a part of the recruiting process for many positions including project managers, engineers, teachers, marketing specialists, public relations specialists and many more.

A career portfolio may be considered a proof of the development of a person because it demonstrates different aspects of personality and gives a possibility to look at working life from the point of view of a job applicant. This view is supported by

Pearce (2003, 4) who states that a portfolio provides evidence of personal growth and continuing professional development, life-long learning and competences.

A well-structured career portfolio is one of the highly effective tools in winning job opportunities (Kistler 2017). Despite a possible success based on using a career portfolio, it can suffer from serious drawbacks because a portfolio is regularly made quite rapidly before a job interview. This can influence negatively on the final decision and be a key factor to failure.

A portfolio has to be organized thoughtfully in order to create the right impression and emphasize the person's achievements successfully. The collection of material for a portfolio should be implemented during the whole process of working or studying in order to demonstrate all achievements and successful projects.

2.2 Approach to classification of a portfolio

According to a classification created by Williams (2009b, 3), there are two types of portfolio: a working portfolio that contains a collection of all the portfolio items, and a presentation, showcase or professional portfolio that contains selected artifacts customized for a certain job. A working portfolio is a personal portfolio which can be viewed by its owner or selected users. Moreover, a working portfolio includes all the required artifacts, and it demonstrates work in progress. A presentation, showcase or professional portfolio is described as a public portfolio, which can be viewed by a potential employer. Selected artifacts are included in the presentation portfolio.

Figure 1 represents an overview of the differences of two types of a portfolio according to the classification of Williams.

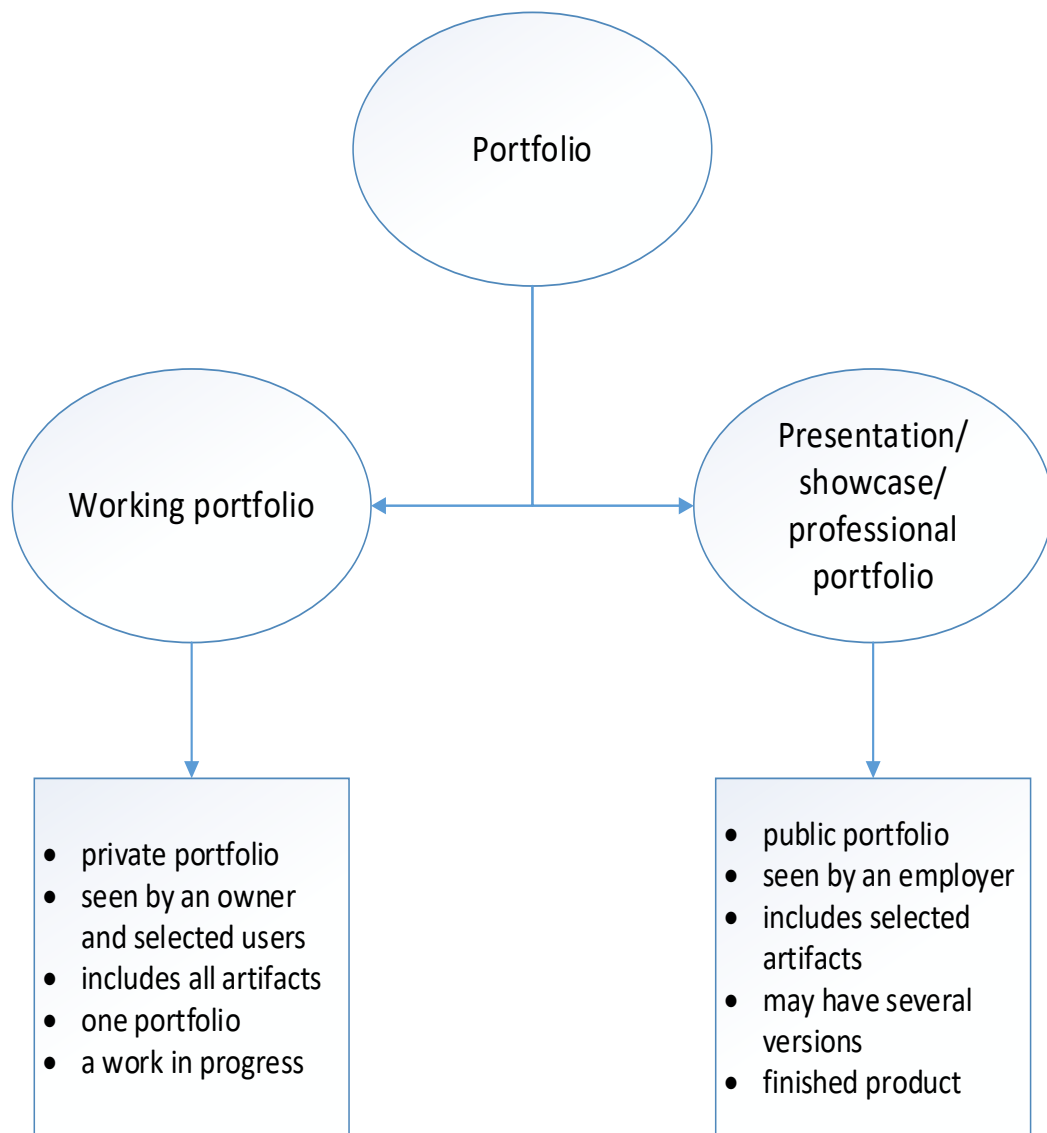


Figure 1 Types of portfolios (Williams 2009)

According to another classification, there are two types of portfolios: master and targeted. It may be easier and take less time to create a targeted portfolio, but a master portfolio will allow to create targeted portfolios rapidly. (A Guide to Building a Career Portfolio 2003a, 6.)

1. Master portfolio

A master portfolio is a collection of everything that has been learned by a person, and it includes a description of skills and knowledge (Satterthwaite & D'Orsi 2003b, 16). A master portfolio may be considered an effective tool for observing life

achievements, helping with a resume and preparing for the interview. It can also help to select certain information for the creation of a targeted portfolio. In order to build a master portfolio, the skills and knowledge of a person have to be identified first with their development during studies, work or other activities.

The evidence has to be collected for proving skills and knowledge. Items of evidence, such as, for example, certificates, testimonials and degree certificates are the key elements in building a successful master portfolio. This view is supported by A Guide to Building a Career Portfolio which highlights (2003b, 9) that it is vital to collect evidence of skills and experience from all activities, education, training, employment, projects, community service, hobbies and accomplishments. The evidence has to create the right image in terms of achievements or development of skills. It can, therefore, be assumed that it is vital to demonstrate only those facts that can be checked if necessary. Another important practical activity is the arrangement of all evidence by themes, such as university, work, knowledge and leadership for creating a convenient way to demonstrate skills and work achievements to possible future employers.

2. Targeted portfolio

It has commonly been assumed that the format of a targeted portfolio is similar to a master portfolio, but it is created for a certain function, such as presentation of skills and knowledge for career advancement, as an additional way to demonstrate talent during a job interview or as a way to show the skills. In order to create a targeted portfolio, a collection of certain information has to be performed as a starting point.

It is vital to describe skills, education, experience, knowledge and other qualities that are required for a certain job. A master portfolio has to be reviewed according to the list where skills, work experience and other relevant facts are described. (A Guide to Building a Career Portfolio 2003c, 7.) The next step is the selection of examples that give the possibility to prove experience or qualification and collecting the examples in one document.

2.3 Benefits of compiling a career portfolio

In this section, the discussion pointed to the benefits of developing a professional portfolio. The most obvious reason for a professional portfolio is to help a person to land in the career of choice because a portfolio demonstrates the evidence of skills, work experience, education and accentuates willingness of a job applicant to perceive the work seriously (Jones 2017a).

Moreover, the traditional use of a career portfolio is a point of reference in an interview setting: it is not reliable to refer to the memory answering to the questions of the human resource manager instead of pointing to the details in a professional portfolio (Pilley 2011). There is a possibility that a human resource manager perceives a job applicant as a reliable potential employee after a career portfolio has been presented. According to Jones (2017b), various companies examine progress of the employees systematically, and a professional portfolio may be considered as an advancement mechanism because it demonstrates tangible confirmation of solid work of an employee.

It is worth pointing out that a career portfolio is a convenient way to store all professional documents and information organized in a single place (Janvey 2014). This suggests that the process of analysing a professional portfolio may simplify the work of a human resource manager in terms of searching for the required information. Furthermore, it is a convenient way for a job applicant to find certain materials rapidly during the job interview.

Moreover, during the process of compiling a career portfolio systematic reflection has been learned which is a key factor for increasing flexibility and developing relations between employees at work (Smith and Tillema 2006, 82). Considering the information above it may be assumed that a professional portfolio may improve the atmosphere at the work places and become an effective method to solve conflicts between employees.

2.4 Obstacles of compiling a career portfolio

In this section the discussion is concerned obstacles of compiling a career portfolio. According to Smith and Tillema (2006b, 83), the main pitfalls and obstacles with compiling a career portfolio are following: creating a professional portfolio is a time-consuming process; development reflected in a career portfolio is focused primarily on the individual achievements more than on professional performance; and controversial validity of the evidences creates unreliable relations between a potential employee and an employer.

A digital portfolio can also be difficult to use during a job interview if there is no access to a computer (Hamlin 2017). This obstacle can be solved if a job candidate brings a device to demonstrate a portfolio to possible future employers. On logical grounds, there is no compelling reason to argue that compiling a career portfolio is a complex process that requires considerable efforts.

2.5 Digital portfolio

Speaking of a modern and convenient way to demonstrate a portfolio a digital format may be named as the most relevant. Buzzetto-More (2010, 92) states that the popularity of an electronic portfolio has increased incomparably over the last several years.

A digital portfolio is known as an electronic portfolio or an e-portfolio. According to Ittelson and Lorenzo (2005), an electronic portfolio is a digitized set of the artefacts consisting of the presentations, the resources and the achievements that represent a person, a group or an organization. This collection can consist of text-based, graphic or multimedia elements archived on a Web site or on other electronic media, such as CD-ROM or DVD (McGregor & Cartwright 2011, 203). To this definition, such electronic media as a USB flash drive and an external hard drive can be added as popular devices to keep electronic documents.

There are various advantages of an electronic portfolio. According to Reimann, Bull, Kickmeier-Rust, Vatrappu and Wasson (2016, 209), the use of web-based interface

transformed the standard process of a portfolio's creation to more flexible and dynamic mechanism. If a portfolio is stored on a website, it can be viewed from various places of the world with access to the Internet. This view is supported by Whenham (2015) who argues that a digital portfolio can be accessed from various places and it allows leaving feedback.

According to Tucker, Stronge and Gareis (2013), a digital portfolio can include not only text format, but also visual and audio documents that can be additional benefits to a career portfolio or the main part of it. Moreover, flexibility of a digital portfolio allows a potential employee to demonstrate personality by choosing design, layout and photographs (Five Benefits of Creating an Online Portfolio 2010). Moreover, a digital portfolio allows selecting information for specific purposes rapidly and sharing the link to it to a potential employer (Dion 2008).

In Bernazzani's view (2017), various professionals, such as photographers, designers, illustrators and content marketers can utilize digital portfolios in order to demonstrate their skills in a more user-friendly way than a resume or a hard copy portfolio. It is worth pointing out that there is the multitude of professional portfolios on the Internet, e.g., www.garicruze.com which is a portfolio of a copywriter, www.melanieid.com - a digital portfolio of a developer and www.thebeastisback.com - a professional portfolio of an illustrator and a designer. Examples of these websites are illustrated in Figure 2, 3 and 4 accordingly.

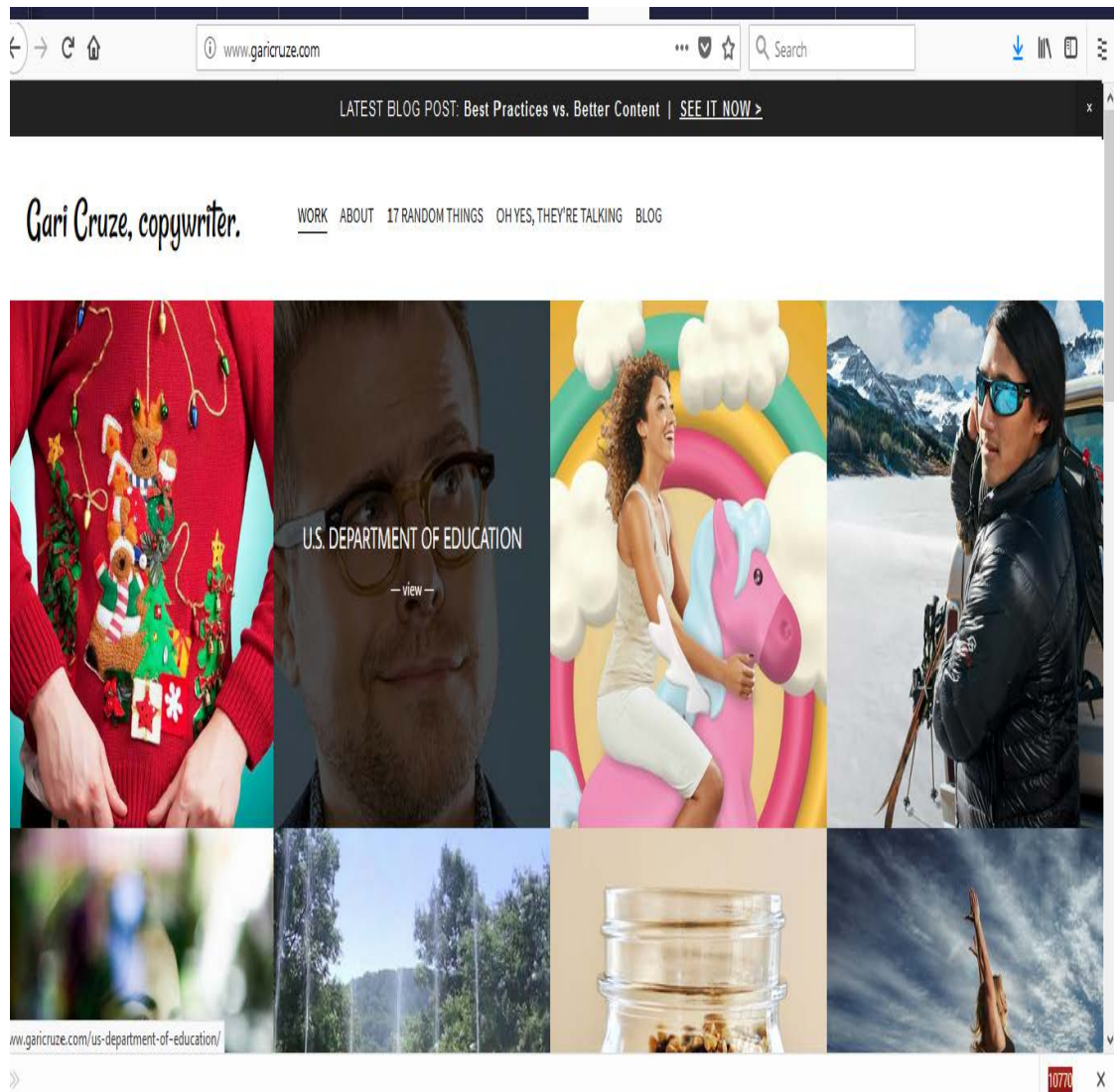


Figure 2 A Digital portfolio of Gari Cruze, screen capture from www.garicruze.com

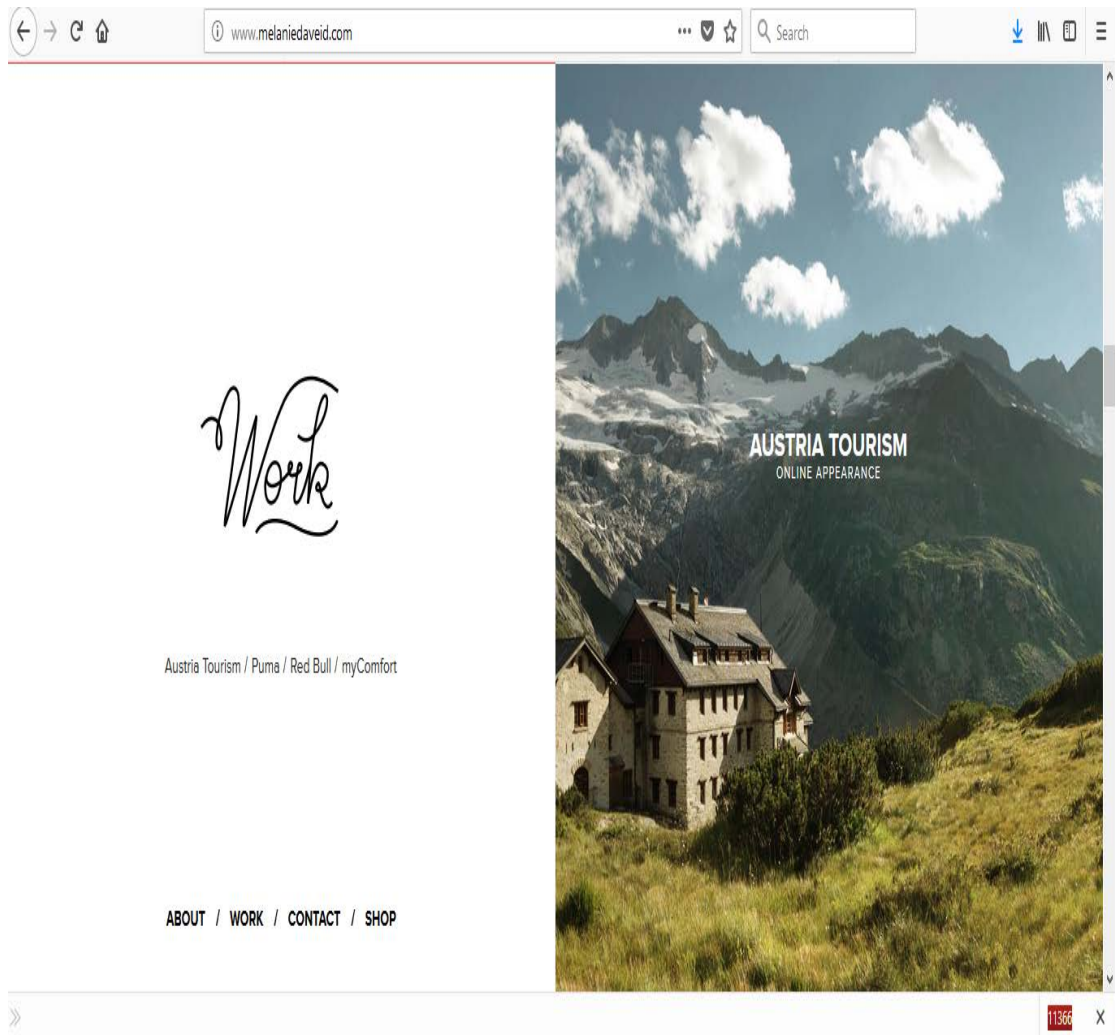


Figure 3 A Digital portfolio of Melanie Daveid, screen capture from www.melanieidaveid.com

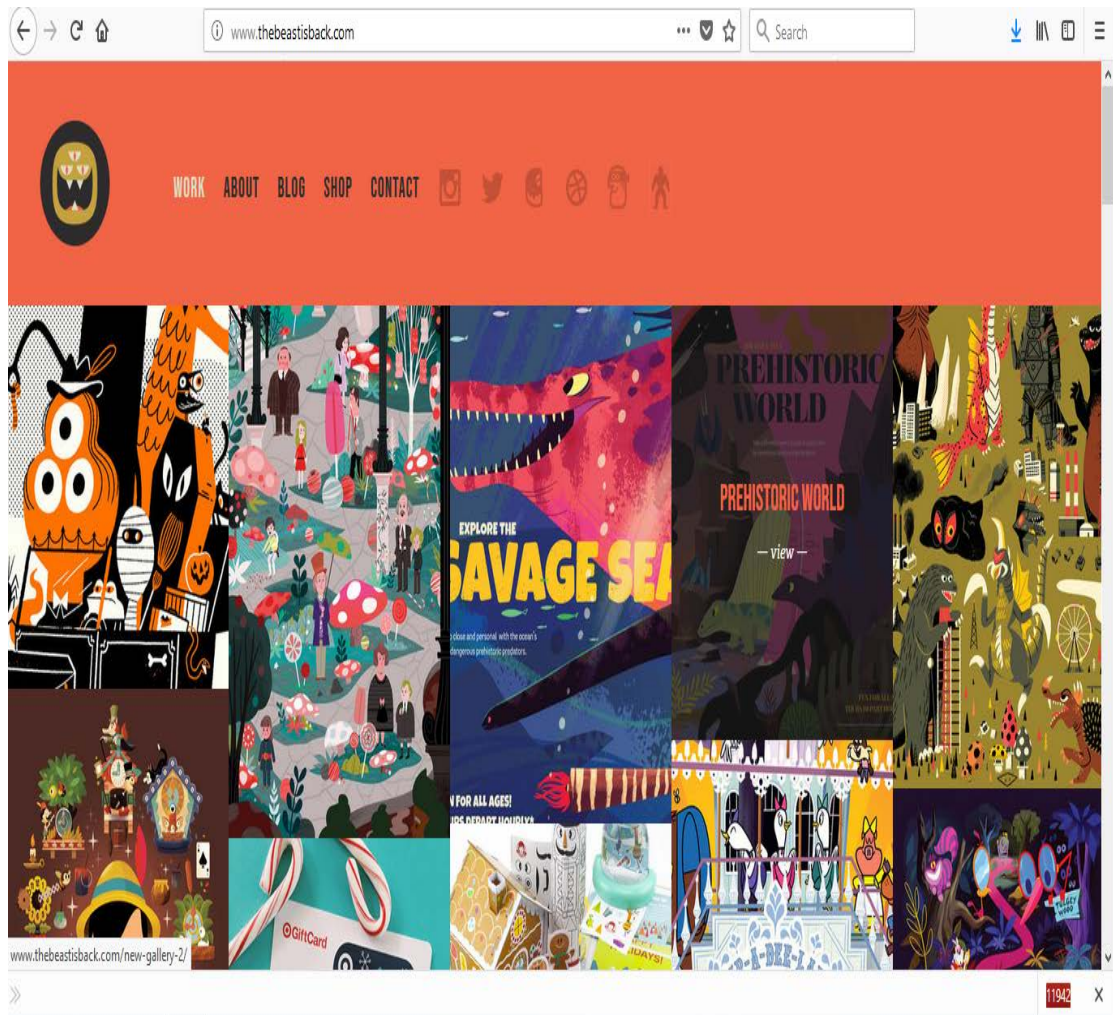


Figure 4 A Digital portfolio of Christopher Lee, screen capture of www.thebeastisback.com

It has to be said that in the modern world job applicants are checked and selected accurately that is why the recruiters search for information about potential employees on the Internet. A digital portfolio may create an additional value for a job seeker in the process of selection of job candidates. Moreover, a digital portfolio can be edited online.

An e-portfolio is environmentally friendly by a reason of a person does not need to use paper for printing a portfolio. In comparison to expenses for the creation of a paper based portfolio, such as printing, photocopying, buying folders and portfolio cases, a digital portfolio may require fewer costs.

2.6 Key elements of a successful digital career portfolio

In order to create an additional value to a resume and attract attention of the recruiter to the certain candidate, a career portfolio is considered to include key elements which are described in this subchapter. A digital career portfolio is a visual representation of the works and projects that is why the photographs are defined as one of the most important elements of a portfolio, and they have to be made by a professional photographer (Eerlings 2014). Considerable attention must be paid when a portfolio of a photographer is being investigated with the main focus on the quality and uniqueness of the photographs. The fundamental advantages of the photographs made by a professional photographer is the ability to inspire and attract attention to the portfolio.

Another key element to include in a digital career portfolio is thoroughly selected collection of the most successful projects which is recommended to consist of 8-18 components (Zafarris 2015a). In this context, it is worth to consider a reason for not to include all works in a portfolio. A significant amount of works may not reflect the major area of competence. Moreover, analyzing all projects and works of a job applicant is a time-consuming activity for a recruiter. An example of a portfolio with organized structure is illustrated in Figure 5.

According to Zafarris (2015b), the multitude of spheres in which the most successful projects are created is considered as one of the key elements to include in a portfolio because it demonstrates the craftsmanship in all of these spheres. Lepore states that the design of a digital career portfolio may be considered as a key element which has to reflect the projects and works. It is considered as vital to use colors, typefaces and design to connect with the target audience. (2016a.)

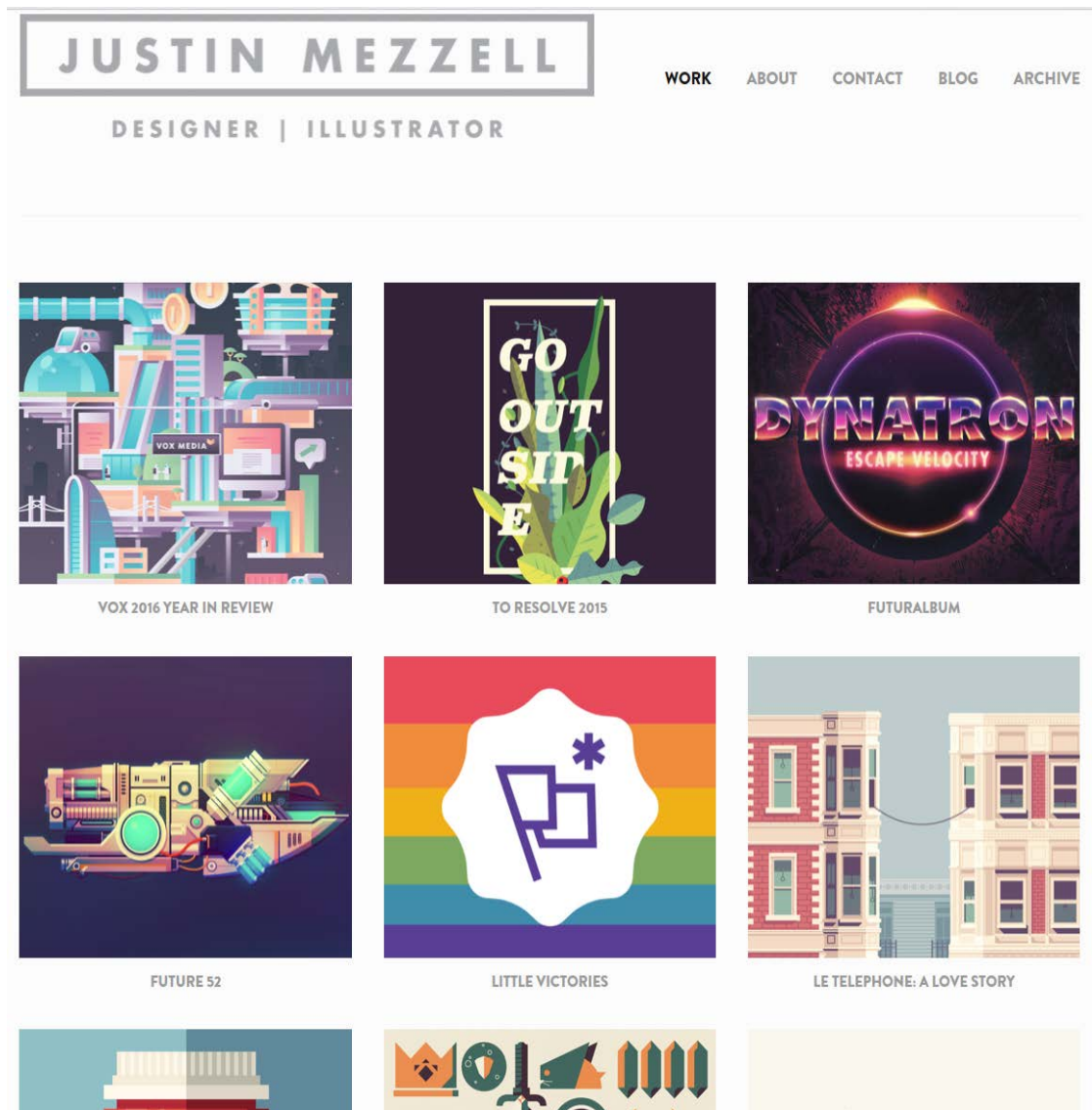


Figure 5 A digital portfolio of Justin Mezzell, screen capture of justinmezzell.com

Another key element of a portfolio is a categorization of all projects and works which have to be organized according to certain themes or spheres (Lepore 2016b). Navigation may be considered as a successful element by a recruiter that simplify the process of search of certain work. It is important to point out that a digital career portfolio may be reviewed from various devices and it has to be adjusted to the different equipment.

In Moline's view (2010), a static navigation bar that includes each section of a portfolio is considered as a useful component of a portfolio and may consist of following

sections: home, personal information, curriculum vitae, portfolio of the works or projects, testimonials, clients and blog. This argument suggests that a static navigation bar is considered as a helpful element in searching for certain section of a digital portfolio from any other area of a portfolio. The navigation has to be simple in order to create a straightforward way for a recruiter to the various sections of a digital portfolio.

The results in this subchapter indicate that one of the key elements of a successful digital career portfolio is high-quality photographs made by a professional photographer because a portfolio is a representation of accomplished works and projects which have to be demonstrated properly. Another key element of a portfolio is a selected set of 8-18 works that allows to save time of a recruiter for reviewing the collection. Another important element is a variety of works and projects' fields which demonstrate the expertise of a job applicant in different areas. More than that, the design of a portfolio indicating projects is defined as one of the vital elements to connect with the audience. A navigation bar is a vital component of a portfolio which allows a recruiter to review the sections of a portfolio without difficulties. It is worth to pointing out that a portfolio consisting of the key elements described in this subchapter may be considered as an effective tool for building a strong personal brand of a job seeker that helps to add a competitive advantage to a certain candidate in a labor market.

2.6 Key characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio

This subchapter is dedicated to the key characteristics that may be defined as important for building a successful digital career portfolio. Clear communication is one of the main characteristics of an effective portfolio. According to Snell (2008), a portfolio has to communicate with the users about the services that are supplied. Lack of communication between a portfolio and the visitors may be one of the reasons why certain portfolio is not chosen for further consideration.

Moreover, portfolios should be kept updated (Steimer 2016). Due to the rapid changes in technology and trends it is advised to include in a digital portfolio the projects that are not older than three years because a work containing an outdated trend may be defined as a weakness of a portfolio. Digital animation or other new technique is likely to be integrated into a digital career portfolio. An example of modern portfolio with animation is illustrated in Figure 6.

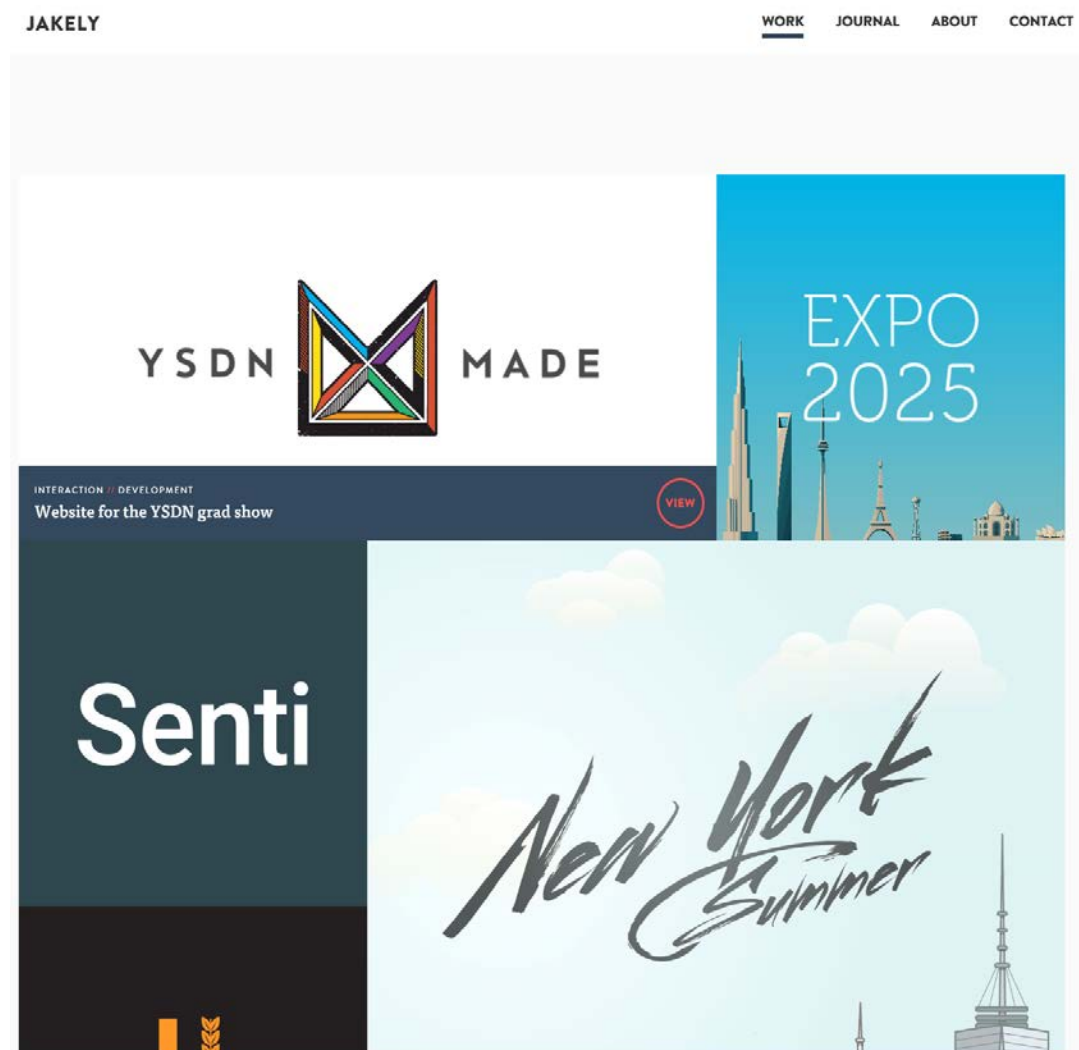


Figure 6 A digital portfolio of Jake Blakeley, screen capture of jake.ly

Clearly organized structure is considered as an important characteristic of a successful digital career portfolio. Keys (2009) states that it is advised to organize all sections

of a portfolio in an effective way, for instance, a cover letter is supposed to state what is enclosed in a portfolio and be informative and brief. A resume has to include accomplishments, contact information, education, work experience and skills.

The data described in this subchapter demonstrates that one of the key characteristics of a successful career portfolio is clear communication about providing services between a portfolio and the users. Moreover, a portfolio is to consist of the updated information about the works and include modern techniques due to the rapid changes in technology. Another key characteristic is the structure of a portfolio that is to be organized in an effective way.

2.7 Digital portfolio platforms

Due to the considerable amount of various digital platforms for creating a career portfolio, two most popular platforms are described in this subchapter, such as LinkedIn and WordPress. Moreover, the advantages of the digital platforms are presented.

LinkedIn

According to Honigman (2014), LinkedIn is assumed as a powerful free platform for the professionals for developing a career and as a timeline of every work or project that has been accomplished professionally. LinkedIn is an effective marketing tool for creating a strong personal brand in a labor market. This view is supported by Chansamooth (2017) who highlights that LinkedIn is the most powerful marketing tool of the 21st century in the fields of media, partnerships and clients, and performs as a professional network that is considered as the world's largest community on the Internet. Network of LinkedIn is growing and it includes around 400 million members (Nash 2016a, 11).

A key advantage of LinkedIn is considered as building the connections between the professionals within a network (Elad 2016). LinkedIn may be assumed by a recruiter as the database of the potential employees and that is why the platform is likely to be selected as a useful tool for the creation of a digital portfolio.

According to Nash (2016b, 13), the 21th century is defined as three-dimensional media that requires usage of photographs, links and videos which are combined in a multimedia presentation of a potential or current employee. It can therefore be assumed that a successful digital career portfolio is likely to be created using modern technologies rather than outdated methods that are relevant earlier.

WordPress

According to Chapman (2009), WordPress is a content management system which is considered as a platform to build different websites, including a digital portfolio with the help of various themes that can be integrated into a portfolio. An example of a WordPress portfolio theme is illustrated in Figure 7.

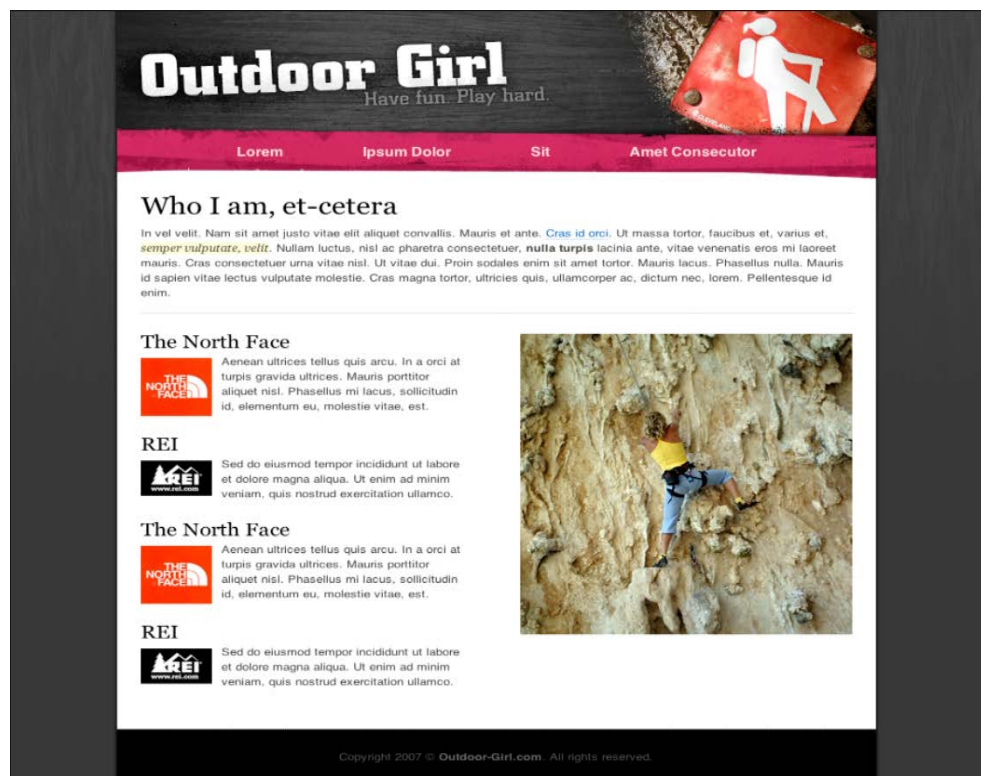


Figure 7 Example of a WordPress portfolio theme, screen capture from webrevolutionary.com/sharpfolio-demo/archives/30

According to 9 Best WordPress Portfolio Plugins for Designers & Photographers (2016), WordPress portfolio themes are supposed to reflect the visual appearance of a website which includes colors, styles, layouts and presentation of content. One of

the main reasons to develop a digital portfolio on WordPress is possibility to create a functional website without writing the code that is useful for people with no expertise in the field of information technologies (Why You Should Consider WordPress for Building Portfolio Websites 2016).

2.8 Future of a digital career portfolio

In this subchapter, the author describes possible new ways for the creation and the storage of a digital portfolio as a career development technique and analyzes the advantages and probable disadvantages of each technique in case it is used for the storage of a digital career portfolio. There are the platforms and the applications on the Internet, for example, Instagram which is becoming more and more popular. The author studied modern platforms and applications from the point of view of creation of digital career portfolio on their bases.

According to Stefani, Mason and Pegler (2007a, 135), it can be anticipated that technologies will move on and hence the functionality of an e-portfolio will probably be transformed in the future. In case of the transformation of a standard digital portfolio to other ways for creating and storing a portfolio on the Internet it is vital to consider all possible options that can simplify the process of job development and increase career opportunities of a potential job seeker.

Blogging

Blogs evolved rapidly into the most popular format of delivering news and online journals, and they are well known as “web portal” of the 21th century (Felix and Stolarz 2013, 25). According to the Oxford dictionary, blog is a regularly updated website or web page, typically one run by an individual or small group that is written in an informal or conversational style.

A blog is not just an emergent phenomenon, growth and development of blogging have started in 2000s with the most popular share of political blogs. This view is supported by Brief History of Blogging (2011), the early 2000s were a period of growth

for the blogs. One of the reasons for their popularity was because the blogs contained more detailed information than official media sources. In the early 2000s the platforms for blogging appeared. According to Zantal-Wiener (2016), TypePad and WordPress launched in 2003 continuing the trend of providing platform options to a growing number of the bloggers.

Moreover, in the period of the growth of blogging advertising platforms which connected the advertisements and the blogs appeared, and it let bloggers earn money from their own blogs. From the middle of the 2000s plenty of people have been writing and reading the blogs. According to Stefani and colleagues (2007b, 135), in 2005 Perseus Development Corp estimated that Google's Blogger had 8 million blogs.

Sukhraj (2017) states that blogging is as fundamental to marketing a business as the yellow pages were, and if a person has not adopted the practice of writing a blog, it may be possible that there is a serious disadvantage in comparison with competitors. It may be assumed that a blog is a powerful source from a commercial point of view. A company which has its blog, updates it regularly and communicates with public adds additional value for its reputation, and build a strong brand image.

According to Mango (2014), blogging allows connecting with the site visitors and demonstrating a sense of the corporate standards, vision and personality of a company. It can therefore be assumed that with the help of blogging it is possible to share any sufficient news, get feedback and answer questions, tell about development and progress while getting more and more well-known as a company or an individual. Blogging creates two-way conversation, and it signals to the visitors that a person is open to comments, feedback and even criticisms (DeMers 2015, 4).

From a point of view of self-development, a personal blog is a great way to record the achievements, learn how to express the ideas and opinions openly and communicate with unfamiliar people. In Pavlina's view (2006), blogging has the ongoing feedback mechanism which can help to develop a more honest self-assessment. More than that, a personal blog is a possibility to keep important moments of life, such as skills, knowledge and stories about various trips.

According to A History of Blogging (2014), it was estimated that more than 400 million people actively read blogs, and the amount will continue to grow. Blogging is getting more and more popular in terms of career opportunities. First, a blog is a place of work for various people who write about different topics, such as travelling, life in foreign countries, different cuisines, sport and fashion. More than that, it can be said that in the future a blog as a digital career portfolio will become a trend in the labor market.

It is worth pointing out that a blog is a convenient way to record the places of studying, share information about work experience and knowledge and skills, add links to projects and works with detailed description. It appears that a potential employer will have a possibility to check all information, learn writing style of a person and the way in which a person communicates with other people.

One of the most important elements for creating a blog is a choice of the platform which reflects the needs of a person (A Comprehensive Guide to Premium and Free Blogging Sites 2017). It could be said that a blog with a user-friendly interface simplifies a process of reading, and it is convenient for a potential employer or a recruiter to find rapidly certain parts of the blog.

Because of constant development of technology and appearing of new trends on the Internet there is a fraction of probability that usage of blogs will decrease in the future, but it is important to track and learn new trends and be able to use new technology in order to achieve success in the labor market.

Videoblogging and podcasting

Price (2018) emphasizes that video blogging is a process in which a video is created and added on the Internet with the goal to get responses from the viewers. Videoblogging can be described as one of the latest trends on the Internet and it is called vlogging.

In general terms, it can be assumed that in a video blog the texts are transformed to the videos that can be uploaded on a blog platform, such as YouTube. According to Gunelius (2017), it is necessary to have a recording device: a web camera or dedicated video camera that is not attached to a computer and a microphone. It is worth

to pointing out that there is an opportunity to have an interaction with followers via comments to the videos.

Davis (2014) states that blogging and videoblogging are effective strategies for generating maximum amounts of visitors for a website. The main advantage of video blogging is the creation of a connection with the audience and opportunity to interact through the videos (Brent 2012).

YouTube can be seen as a daunting and highly competitive space with over 300 hours of video loading every minute (Mitchell 2016). There is high competitiveness between different video blogs on YouTube that is why it is vital to create a video blog which is watched, discussed and shared. The topics of the podcasts have to be chosen scrupulously and be unique in order to attract the listeners.

According to Levinson and Lautenslager (2014a), podcasting is audio files that are essentially downloaded for listening on the move. The term podcasting is generally understood to mean an audio version of videoblogging in which audio records are uploaded on a special platform, e.g. BlogTalkRadio. According to the website www.blogtalkradio.com, BlogTalkRadio is a united platform for podcasting that allows podcasters to upload, conduct, stream and monetize the podcasts.

The podcasts are created according to the certain topics and they are listened by people, mostly, during other activities, such as driving and jogging, when they have enough time to spend for extra activity. Podcasting may be described as a marketing weapon (Levinson & Lautenslager 2014b).

Considering the information above, in terms of a digital career portfolio, the video blogs and podcasts create a new and unique way to introduce the works and the projects of a job applicant with an opportunity to create general video about all main projects, degrees and work experience. It can be used as an additional advantage during the job interview or for a job application.

Instagram

Instagram is one of the most popular social networks, which can be used as a powerful instrument for a designer and a visual artist to demonstrate their talent (Cartin & Spritzer 2016). According to Moreau (2018), Instagram can be defined as a social networking application that makes possible to share the photographs and the videos from a smartphone.

The online application Instagram was launched by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010. The application became popular instantly. Lagorio-Chafkin (2012) highlights that Instagram has been downloaded by four million individuals who use it to add stylistic filters, frames and effects to the photos. Moreover, Instagram allows adding location to a photo or a video uploaded to the application, adding followers to the account, marking friends on the photographs, leaving comments to the photographs, using hashtags that simplify the process of searching for different photographs by topics.

In terms of digital career portfolio, Instagram allows maintaining visibility in a creative way, and it does not require considerable expenses (Greenfield, 2014). Moreover, Instagram has a well-organized and user-friendly interface in which a user is able to upload the photographs of the works and the projects and add the description to them. Instagram can be seemed as a digital photo album with an organized structure which allows a recruiter to find the examples of various projects in a convenient way.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter starts with the clarification of the chosen research method. Moreover, the implementation of the study is described, including the data collection, sampling as well as implementation of the interviews and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research approach

In Creswell's view (2014), research approaches are procedures that include stages from broad assumptions to detailed ways of data collection, analysis and interpretation. There are three main research approaches for conducting research, such as quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. (3.) According to Muijs (2010, 1), quantitative research explains a phenomenon by collecting numerical data which is analyzed by mathematical methods.

Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry aiming at in-depth understanding of social phenomena within a natural context (Klenke 2016, 6). Qualitative research is defined as inductive due to the fact that information is generated from the data collected for the research, and the investigation transfers from the concrete data to a general theory for building a hypothesis (Given 2015).

Comparing qualitative and quantitative research approaches, it was decided that the best approach for this investigation was qualitative research. Qualitative research has a number of attractive features. According to Houser (2014), more detailed understanding of the phenomenon of the research can be gained through qualitative research. Moreover, a qualitative approach is relevant for understanding or clarifying an uncommon situation, which cannot be determined with a quantitative approach. (78.)

According to Boxill, Chambers and Wint (1997, 45), one of the most important advantages of the qualitative approach is the insight on behavior, motivation and attitudes. However, there is certain drawback associated with the use of a qualitative analysis. Myers (2013a, 9) states that it is difficult to generalize to a larger population. However, it is possible to make generalization from qualitative research to theory.

The research question of the thesis was the following:

- What are the key elements and characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio as an additional advantage for a resume?

As it was written earlier in this subchapter, qualitative research is focused on assumptions, and it will help to answer the research question which requires gaining data about the opinions of companies' representatives who are responsible for recruiting employees. In this case, the main concern was the role of a digital career portfolio in the recruitment process.

The quantitative approach was considered irrelevant by the author for this research because numerical data would not be able to demonstrate the importance of a digital career portfolio. Moreover, the opinions of the experts of the research field would not have been possible to disclose. This view is supported by Myers (2013b, 8) who highlights that the main disadvantage of quantitative research is that a large number of the social and cultural aspects of the company are lost or examined in a superficial manner.

In the Theoretical framework Chapter, platforms and applications for building a digital career portfolio and key elements of a successful digital portfolio were studied in accordance with the literature on the topic. Qualitative research was considered to provide insight on the recruiters' preferences for platforms and applications for creating a portfolio. These would more likely be considered an advantage of the applicant and key elements that can influence on the success of a portfolio.

3.2 Implementation

Data collection

There are two types of data: primary and secondary. According to Kuiper (2009), primary data is data that is acquired through observations, questionnaire surveys, experimentation and interviews. Secondary data is information that is collected by others and can be found in books, journals and other published literature. (275.)

Secondary data was assembled by the author from various articles and books on a career portfolio, and the collected material was included in the Theoretical framework Chapter of the thesis. Crossman (2017) describes two types of secondary data: quantitative or numerical data collected from various official sources and qualitative

data gathered from blogs, journals, emails and other sources. In the author's study collection of qualitative secondary data was concerned as more relevant according to the research objective and the research question. Machi and McEvoy (2016) state that a literature review is an organized way to research a certain topic. Regarding the author's thesis, in order to collect secondary data, various aspects of career portfolio were studied, such as the approaches to the classification of a portfolio, the benefits and obstacles of a compiling a portfolio, the key elements and characteristics of a successful career portfolio, the current and future portfolio platforms as well as applications.

In order to answer the research question in its entirety, it was decided that the collection of primary data would be organized in the form of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. According to Doyle (2017), a common technique in a semi-structured interviews is to lead with open-ended questions and spontaneously ask more specific questions based on the answers.

Semi-structured interviews are commonly organized as discussions that may generate ideas and assumptions from interviewees. A set of questions was predetermined by the author according to the data collected for the literature review. More specific questions were decided based on the answers of the interviewees if detailed information needed to be obtained.

The set of questions was sent to the interviewees in advance by email in order to allow them to consider all questions attentively and in detail. Moreover, it was assumed important to give time for preparing for the interviews.

In terms of the time frame chosen for the conducting semi-structured interviews, the period from the 5th till 14th of March 2018 was chosen. The interviews were organized individually via Skype due to different location of the interviewees and the interviewer. Skype is commonly seen as a convenient way to organize meetings, conferences and interviews. Soffar (2015) highlights that Skype allows to talk to anyone connected to Skype for free via a computer anywhere in the world.

Sampling

According to Daniel (2012, 1), sampling is the selection of a subset of a population for including it in a research project. Concerning qualitative sampling, it is commonly considered that this type is based on the selection of small number of people assumed as key elements for the research. This view is supported by Dhivyadeepa (2015, 10) who states that in qualitative sampling it is vital to define a small number of individuals who are able to be the key informants for contributing to the study.

It was decided to apply purposeful sampling for the research. According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010, 134), purposeful sampling may be defined as the most widely used method in qualitative research. Its aim is to choose individuals, places or things that are able to provide specific information for answering the research questions.

The author made two attempts to implement purposeful sampling. First, the author selected spheres in which it was assumed possible to find representatives for interviewing. These spheres of business were marketing, web design, digital marketing, interior design and web site development. Ten companies from each category were chosen through Google and contacted by the author through emails with invitations to the interviews and explanation about the research project. Information about the email addresses was found on the websites of the companies. It was considered vital to contact a human resource manager or CEO of the company directly. The period for expectation of the reply was determined as seven days. As a result, the author did not receive any positive responses from the companies with acceptance to participate in the interviews.

Due to the unexpected results in the first attempt of sampling, it was decided that a personal network of contacts would be used. Seven individuals were chosen according to their occupation from the network of the author's contacts and invited to the interviews through Skype. The individuals' occupations were in the following categories: recruiting, engineering, entertainment and web site development. Five individuals agreed to participate in the interviews via Skype.

Implementation of the interviews

Semi-structured interview was selected as a method for acquiring primary data. According to Raworth, Sweetman, Narayan, Rowlands and Hopkins (2012), semi-structured interviews make focus on a certain set of questions organized in conversational style. Such method of conduction of the interviews is concerned as relevant for researching motivations, opinions and attitudes. (1.)

The interviews were being implemented individually from the 5th till 14th of March 2018 through Skype during time frames that were convenient for each interviewee. Duration of the interview was 30-45 minutes which was agreed with the interviewees in advance.

Skype interview was assumed by the author as a convenient way of acquiring the data due to the difference in the location of the interviewer and the interviewees and opportunity to select more convenient time for conducting the interview. All interviews were organized in a quiet atmosphere without various disturbing factors.

It was decided to record the interviews through the mobile application for voice recording. It is worth to pointing out that recording of the interviews let the interviewer to concentrate on the answers of the interviewees and the conversation rather than on focusing on writing the answers. This view is supported by Stuckey (2018, 7) who highlights that the majority of the researchers applies a device to record the answers of interviewees in order to be focused on the conversation without being focused on writing.

The set of questions predetermined by the author consisted of open-ended questions. The most crucial advantage of open-ended questions is possibility to find more than may be anticipated because unexpected motivations can be shared or various behaviors and concerns may be declared. A sample of the set of questions utilized for the interviews is presented in Appendix 2.

The first interview was conducted with the representative of the engineering company located in Russia with the main office based in Poland. The interview was recorded and conducted according to the set of questions predetermined by the author.

During the interview additional questions based on the answers of the interviewee were asked in order to gather detailed information.

The other four interviews were conducted with the representative of the company specialized in web site development situated in Czech Republic, with the research associate of the recruiting company located in Poland, with the human resource manager of the company specializing in construction located in Russia and with the director of the company specialized in entertainment in Russia. All the interviews were conducted in a conversational style that let the author to gather opinions and assumptions of the interviews on the questions. The profile of the interviewees is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Profile of the interviewees

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Area of business of the company	Location of the company
A	30	Female	Engineering	Russia (the main office: Poland)
B	34	Male	IT	Czech Republic
C	24	Female	Recruiting	Poland
D	27	Female	Construction	Russia
I	51	Male	Entertainment	Russia

Ethics

Ethics was considered as an important element of conducting the interview. According to Vogt, Gardner and Haeffele (2012, 253), the possibility of direct harm during the interview while asking questions is assumed as relatively small. Before the interviews the interviewees were asked about their permissions to participate in the interview and be recorded. Moreover, the interviewees were informed that their contact information and names of the companies were not mentioned in the research of the author.

The interviewees were informed about the topic of the research and the reason why they were asked certain questions during the interview. Brennen (2017, 31) highlights that it is vital that each interviewee is informed about the research study and how answers received during the interview will be used.

Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed by the author prior to the data analysis. According to Hartas (2015, 297), transcription is a fundamental element of the data analysis in which decision concerning the relevance of certain aspects of given data is made.

It is commonly assumed that there are two types of transcription: simple transcription in which nonverbal components are eliminated and detailed transcription which is focused on a multiple set of rules without a main focal point on the content of the interview, and it includes nonverbal elements, such as the speed of speech and intonation (Thorsten, Pehl & Schmieder 2015a, 23). It was decided by the author to apply simple transcription for the research. According to Thorsten and colleagues (2015b, 25), simple transcription allows receiving rapid access to the content of the interview.

Qualitative data analysis is defined as a set of processes that include shift from the data which has been gathered to the interpretation and explanation of the collected answers and opinions. The process of qualitative data analysis consists of two activities: writing the data that has been gathered and coding the data into various themes. (Lewins, Taylor & Gibbs 2010.) The author started with presenting the data that had been collected through the interviews.

Five interviewees participated in the interview. The author summarized the answers and they are presented below along with the questions excluding the data gathered from building a profile of the interviewees.

1. What is the key area of business of your company?

Five interviewees gave different answers to the question. The key area of the company, in which the first interviewee worked, was power engineering. The second interviewee worked in the area of information technologies. Other three interviewees said that the key areas of the companies were human resources, manufacturing and construction and entertainment.

2. How many employees are there in your company? How often do you search for new employees?

The author received various answers from the interviewees and concluded that all interviewees worked in the companies with different amount of employees. The first interviewee worked in the office with 50 employees and they recruited new workers one or two times per six months. The main department of the company was located in another country and it was difficult for the interviewee to answer how many employees work there. The other respondent claimed that around 10 000 employees worked in his or her company and recruiting was a constant process for them. The third interviewee announced that they had five employees, but they recruited the personnel for other companies five days per a week. The other respondent mentioned that they had 30 staff members, and they were recruiting during spring, summer and autumn. The fifth respondent answered that their office had seven permanent employees and they recruited the employees for organizing different events one time per a month.

3. Could you describe recruiting process in your company?

For the question, four from five interviewees introduced the recruiting process that started with adding the open positions to the web site of the company and to the websites of the recruiting agencies. The next step was a process of selection of the

potential interviewees based on the resumes and organizing the interviews with selected candidates. One interviewee from four added that monitoring such web site as LinkedIn to find suitable candidates was an important element of the recruiting process in their company. Another respondent mentioned that recruiting in their company was realized through direct search.

4. What role does a digital career portfolio play in the process of employees' selection in your company?

One respondent declared that a career portfolio with right organized structure was assumed as one of the key factors to select certain candidates because a portfolio demonstrated the evidence of accomplished works. Another interviewee mentioned that in the field of information technology, a digital portfolio was a key factor for their company because it was vital to check digital works of a candidate, to examine the design of a portfolio, quality of photographs and its navigation. One respondent answered that a portfolio could be determined as an advantage during the selection of certain candidates. One more respondent claimed that portfolio played a significant role because the evidence of accomplished projects, presentations and events were the key factors to choose a certain applicant. However, one interviewee mentioned that a digital career portfolio was more applicable for the representatives of creative professions and during the process of selection of the candidates they did not consider a career portfolio as a key element to choose the candidate.

5. What in your opinion are the key elements of a successful digital career portfolio that could attract your attention to the certain job applicant?

For this question, all the interviewees mentioned that variety of accomplished projects and works can be defined as one of the key elements of a successful career portfolio. Moreover, three respondents added unified design of a portfolio. Four respondents mentioned high quality photographs as one of the key elements of a successful portfolio. Clear navigation as a key element was added by one respondent. Besides, one interviewee claimed that awards and diplomas, recommendations from former employers and feedback from the customers can be defined as key elements of a successful portfolio.

6. What characteristics of a digital portfolio are important for you?

One of the respondents mentioned that briefness was vital because searching for potential employees was a time-consuming process. Relevance to the selected vacancy was added as a key characteristic. Another interviewee named visibility, reasonable details, completeness of information needed for preliminary assessment of competence as the most important characteristics of a portfolio. Two more respondents claimed that the design had to be user friendly.

7. What is your opinion concerning the possibility of a successful digital career portfolio be a key factor to select certain candidate?

In the opinion of one respondent, in their company a digital career portfolio was defined as a key factor to select certain candidate for creative professions, such as designers and photographers but not for managers and human resource directors. It was added, that from the personal point of view of the respondent, all candidates were to have a digital career portfolio regardless of the position because it could accelerate the recruiting process. Three more respondents mentioned that a successful portfolio was a key factor to select certain candidate. However, one of the respondents declared that a portfolio could be an additional advantage but not a key factor in the case of many professions because a portfolio was more relevant to creative positions.

8. What is your opinion concerning a digital career portfolio based on Instagram, blogs or videoblogs?

For this question, three respondents mentioned that digital career portfolio could be created on the basis of Instagram, blogs or video blogs, though one of the interviewees noticed that the web site was more convenient to structure information. Other respondent declared that such platforms could be defined as an additional benefit to the web site which was a business card of a person, while profile in Instagram or blog added an element of communication.

9. Could you give examples of the successful digital career portfolios that would attract your attention?

The respondents shared various examples of the successful digital career portfolios that could attract their attention, such as a portfolio of Hermitage Museum in Instagram https://www.instagram.com/hermitage_museum/, a portfolio of Raumplus company <https://www.raumplus.ru/catalog/>, a portfolio of a designer in Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/binesstoffwerkstatt/>, a portfolio of creative studio producing digital identity and design <https://bigfan.agency/projects/>, a portfolio of a designer <http://jessicahische.is/working> and a portfolio of the design company <http://johannestorpe.com/projects/>.

Coding is the second element of the process of qualitative data analysis. According to Taylor and Gibbs (2010), the coding is defined as a process of categorizing the data according to themes, categories or ideas. The data were coded and categorized according to the themes that were defined as the following:

- Significance of a digital career portfolio in recruiting process
- Key elements of a successful digital career portfolio
- Key characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio
- Portfolio based on Instagram and platforms for blogging or videoblogging

3.3 Verification of the results

The research of the author had been started with a Theoretical review of the secondary data gathered from various textbooks, guidelines and articles. Theoretical review allowed the author to collect the data about a digital career portfolio, including the benefits and obstacles of compiling a portfolio, its key elements and characteristics, digital platforms for building a portfolio and forecast possible future of a digital career portfolio. In order to answer the research question entirely it was determined to gather secondary data from various books and blogs, and primary data through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The secondary data was studied and analyzed through the content analysis and interpreted in the Theoretical framework Chapter.

The limitation of the research was the amount of interviewees which not allow generalizing the entire phenomenon in terms of significance of a digital career portfolio in the recruiting process. Despite certain limitations of the research, the results demonstrate the common relation to a portfolio and explain its significance regarding a digital career portfolio.

4. Results

The aim of the interviewer was to determine elements and characteristics of a successful digital portfolio and its significance in the recruiting process. The interviews were transcribed, and the data was coded and divided into four themes that were the significance of a digital career portfolio in a recruiting process, the key elements of a successful digital career portfolio, the key characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio and portfolios based on Instagram and platforms for blogging or videoblogging.

4.1 Significance of a digital career portfolio in the recruiting process

A digital career portfolio is defined as one of the most crucial factors in selecting a certain job candidate in the field of creative professions and for positions in the field of information technology. This is due to the fact that it represents evidence of completed projects and work tasks.

One of the interviewees mentioned that a digital career portfolio was a key element because in the field of information technology it is vital to check the quality of the digital work tasks of a job candidate, and a portfolio is the straightforward way to realize it. One more respondent claimed that a successful digital career portfolio could be a key factor to selecting a certain candidate and that it could be defined as self-advertisement. Concerning professions in fields other than the creative area and international technologies, one interviewee mentioned that a portfolio can be an additional advantage but not a key factor in the case of many professions and positions.

4.2 Key elements of a successful digital career portfolio

It was specified that one of the key elements of a successful digital career portfolio was the variety of accomplished work tasks. All respondents defined various projects as the key element that has to be included in a digital career portfolio.

Moreover, unified design and high quality photographs were deemed to be the key elements of a portfolio. One respondent declared that a successful career portfolio had to contain a variety of accomplished projects and high quality photographs. Another interviewee mentioned that the main criteria for a successful portfolio was its design and the quality of the photographs.

Clear navigation was also defined as a key element. One respondent claimed that clear and good navigation is a significant element of a portfolio. Moreover, recommendations and feedback were described as the key elements of a portfolio. One interviewee claimed that recommendations from former employers and feedback from the customers could be defined as the key elements of a successful portfolio.

4.3 Key characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio

Key characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio were defined as briefness and relevance to the position. One respondent stated that briefness was a key characteristic to the portfolio because searching for potential employees was a time-consuming process and that relevance to the selected vacancy was an advantage in a portfolio.

Moreover, the visibility and completeness of information were considered vital characteristics of a digital portfolio. One interviewee mentioned that visibility, reasonable details and the completeness of information needed for a preliminary assessment of competence were the most important characteristics of a portfolio.

More than that, user-friendly and personalized design is one of the most important characteristics of a portfolio. Two respondents mentioned that user-friendly and personalized design is a key characteristic of a portfolio.

4.4 Portfolio based on Instagram and platforms for blogging or videoblogging

It is vital to point out that a digital portfolio created through Instagram, platforms for blogging or videoblogging is considered effective on the same level as a portfolio organized as a personal website. Three respondents agreed that these platforms were modern ways to create a successful digital career portfolio. However, one respondent mentioned that use of modern platforms for creating a portfolio may be considered as an advantage for professions related to information technology, advertising, design and other such fields, but that it would be an additional benefit to the web site which is a business card of a person.

5. Discussion

This chapter is dedicated to discussion, limitations of the research and possible future studies on the topic. First, the author discusses the findings, compares the primary and secondary data that was collected in the study and presents a conclusion regarding the answer to the research question and achievement of the research objective.

Discussion and conclusion

The main objective of the research project was studying the influence of using a digital career portfolio as an addition to a resume on the decision of in a recruitment process. The results demonstrated that a digital career portfolio was considered one of the most important factors in selecting a job candidate for creative professions in the field of information technology, which explains that the significance of a portfolio is rather high for these professions. However, the results showed that for professions in the other fields a portfolio may be an advantage to a resume.

Based on the main objective of the research, two sub-objectives were defined. The sub-objectives were studying the theoretical information concerning a digital career portfolio and examining the current and possible future platforms and applications

for creating a digital career portfolio. The two sub-objectives were successfully implemented in the Theoretical framework Chapter. The author studied literature concerning a career portfolio, approaches to its classification and the benefits and obstacles of compiling a career portfolio. She also studied a digital career portfolio, the key elements and characteristics of a successful a digital career portfolio as well as the future of a digital career portfolio. The secondary data gathered in the Theoretical review chapter helped to accomplish the sub-objectives of the research. The data demonstrates that a career portfolio is commonly defined as a collection of a great variety of projects, certain examples of work tasks, photographs and links to accounts in social media and other important material. A portfolio can be seen as evidence of the development of a person, demonstrating successful projects and work tasks. A career portfolio is supposed to be organized carefully for emphasizing the achievements of a person.

Moreover, the data collected in the Theoretical review chapter represents two approaches to the classification of a portfolio. The first approach divided portfolio types with the terms working and professional. A working portfolio is an individual and private portfolio that consists of all accomplished and in-progress projects and work tasks. A professional portfolio is public and it includes a selection of accomplished work tasks and projects. The second approach divided portfolio types by using the terms master and targeted portfolios. A master portfolio consists of all the academic achievements and work tasks accomplished by a person including descriptions of skills. A targeted portfolio is used for a specific function, such as career advancement, or as a way of showing talent in a job interview.

More than that, the data assembled in the Theoretical framework described that the process of building a career portfolio had benefits and obstacles. The most vital benefit is that a portfolio is a visual piece of evidence of accomplished work tasks that may be demonstrated during a job interview. Moreover, a portfolio may be used as a way to show personal development to the employer. The most important obstacle of compiling a portfolio is that it requires a considerable amount of time.

A digital portfolio is defined as a digitized set of artifacts and achievements for the representation of accomplished work tasks of a person. The recognition of an electronic portfolio has increased remarkably. A digital portfolio is considered an additional advantage for a job applicant during the process of the selection of a potential employee.

The research question was following:

- What are the key elements and characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio as an additional advantage for a resume?

Based on the primary and secondary data that had been gathered during the research, it was concluded that the key elements of a successful digital career portfolio were high-quality photographs, a collection of successful works from diverse fields, unified design, which reflected the works and projects of a job applicant, organized navigation which allowed finding certain section rapidly. Moreover, the findings from primary data demonstrated that recommendations and feedback were defined as vital elements of a successful portfolio.

In terms of the key characteristics of a successful digital career portfolio the primary and secondary data demonstrated different findings. The results of the interviews showed that one of the key characteristics was clear communication of a portfolio with users related to its projects and works. Moreover, a constantly updating portfolio was considered as a vital characteristic and it was suggested to demonstrate works not older than three years. Modern techniques were advised to be integrated into a digital career portfolio for being successful in the competitive labor market. Another crucial characteristic was clearly organized structure with important fields systematized effectively. The results of the interviews demonstrated the importance of the key characteristics, such as briefness and relevance to the position, visibility and completeness of information and user-friendly and personalized design. The evidence from this study showed that it was crucial to include the key elements and characteristics in a digital career portfolio in order to add additional advantage to a resume and increase possibility to be selected for the certain job position.

Research limitations

Several limitations to the study has to be acknowledged. First, there was a lack of the literature concerning usage of the modern platforms and applications that can be accepted for building a digital career portfolio. Second, the amount of the interviewees participated in the research was considered as small and it was not possible to generalize the common state of the labor market in terms of significance of a portfolio in a recruiting process and its influence on a decision of the recruiters in terms of the selection of job candidates.

Suggestions for further investigation

In spite of various limitations of the research the findings were considered as significant and relevant for the purpose of the research. It is recommended to study further a digital career portfolio in terms of possibility to replace personal web site, which is used as the basic tool for creating a portfolio, by modern platforms and applications. Moreover, it is vital to forecast what new techniques can be integrated in the process of building a successful career portfolio. For further investigations on the research topic it is important to broaden amount of the interviewees in order to generalize the common state of the development of a career portfolio and its integration into the recruitment process.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Invitation to the interview

Invitation to the interview

Hello,

I am fourth year student of JAMK University of Applied Science, International Business Department (Jyväskylä, Finland). I'm writing a thesis about key elements of a successful digital career portfolio for building a strong personal image in the competitive labor market.

My research will be very useful for students in terms of future recruitment because it may show evidences of importance of a digital career portfolio for being successful job applicant in labor market.

Is it possible to organize Skype-interview with a person who is responsible for recruiting employees in your company in order to discuss importance of a digital career portfolio? (It will take around 40 minutes and the interview will consist of 8-10 questions).

Please, let me know if participation in Skype interview is possible for you.

Thank you in advance.

Best regards,

Olga Afanasyeva

International Business

JAMK University of Applied Sciences

Appendix 2. Predetermined questions for the interview

Predetermined questions for the interview

1. What is the key area of business of your company?
2. How many employees are there in your company? How often do you search for new employees?
3. Could you describe recruiting process in your company?
4. What role does a digital career portfolio play in the process of employees' selection in your company?
5. What in your opinion are the key elements of a successful digital career portfolio that could attract your attention to the certain job applicant?
6. What characteristics of a digital portfolio are important for you?
7. What is your opinion concerning the possibility of a successful digital career portfolio be a key factor to select certain candidate?
8. What is your opinion concerning digital career portfolio based on Instagram, blogs or video blogs?
9. Could you give examples of successful digital career portfolios that would attract you attention?