

Virtual resumes

Online job postings, applications replace paper

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Patricia "Dawn" Giles of Pensacola remembers not so long ago when she routinely checked the job board at Pensacola Junior College in search of a part-time job.

But in the four years since Giles has been taking classes at PJC, the job-hunting process has evolved from paper to computer keyboard and mouse.

That's fine by Giles, who is sold on searching for jobs online as she gets ready to graduate in May. "It's so much easier to find what you're looking for," she said.

Employers often can find what they're looking for in the same way. Job-seekers who once mailed paper resumes more frequently post the information on Web sites, e-mailing information to prospective employers when asked.

From the elaborate to the simple, these Web sites allow job seekers to include extra items -- such as samples of their work. But career counselors and local human resource officials warn against getting too carried away on what should still be a professional-looking, first impression for job



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ONLINE RESUME TIPS

Incorporate key words on the resume so it attracts more employers searching job sites.

Make the resume left-justified. Avoid using bold face and other eye-catching features that could garble the resume when it's sent.

Avoid offensive-sounding e-mail addresses or opt for a second e-mail address specifically for job hunting.

Limit resumes to two pages with only relevant information.

Avoid listing references or saying they would be available upon request.

Have references ready to send electronically on a separate page.

Make sure the resume is posted on a safe site.

Source: Kenneth Shugart of PJC and Nathan Ford of UWF



Patricia Dawn Giles, 36, is about to graduate from Pensacola Junior College. She is looking for a full-time job and remembers when she would look for jobs at the college's job board. Now everything is posted on the Internet.

Katie King/kking@pnj.com

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Some of the better known national job hunting/recruiting sites:

Monster.com

Hotjobs.com

Dice.com

CareerBuilder.com

Thingamajob.com

America's Job Bank

Jobs.com

USAJobs (federal jobs)

candidates.

A 20-something job-seeker might think he's showing creativity with a flashing, multicolored online resume. A 40-something employer may be looking for a more professional, straight-forward presentation.

And while employers are searching the Web for employees, they are also looking at social networks like myspace.com for information about future employees.

For that reason, Nathan Ford, assistant director of career services at The University of West Florida, suggests students be as careful about what they put on their social online sites as well as what they put on their resumes.

Paper resumes fading away

Online resumes are so popular that some local employers rarely get paper resumes.

Shannon Lands, human resources manager at Saltmarsh, Cleaveland & Gund in Pensacola, said she typically gets about one paper resume for every 99 resumes sent electronically when the accounting firm is actively seeking workers.

About 99 percent of the firm's recruitment is done via online job sites. The one exception is for entry-level accountants, who are often recruited through on-campus interviews, she said.

Not only do the sites help find employees, they also help screen potential candidates, Lands said. "It makes it a lot easier for them and the employer," she said.

Lands said she has seen all kinds of bells and whistles on resumes, including flash art and one person whose name was highlighted in rainbow colors.

"I'm not a fan of that type of resume at all," Lands said. "I am looking for a professional-looking resume, and I don't

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Using a lot of extra bells and whistles

on an electronic resume is not a good idea, says Jennifer Whitfield, a freelance Web designer from Milton.

"Keeping in mind that some companies will use software to scan electronic resumes for keywords, applicants should stick to the traditional information found on a resume," Whitfield said. "Too many bells and whistles can hinder your job search."

Just having an electronic resume tells potential employers the applicant is somewhat computer savvy without overwhelming them with extras that the employer's computer may not even be able to open, she said.

"I would only suggest adding extra features such as multimedia packages if they are directly related to your field of work," she said. Others should list what they can do. "If employers are interested, they will ask for it," she said.

Resumes as attachments to e-mails can also be tricky. "They can get lost in technological space," she said.

Whitfield has done some resumes for people. She prefers to design Web sites when she's not working as the digital media coordinator at the University of West Florida Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development. She's also working on a graduate degree in human performance technology.

At her Web site, Jenwhitfield.com, she includes a traditional resume with a separate portfolio of her work.

care what the position is."

Officials at Sacred Heart Health System are also getting more online resumes after they started an all-out effort about two years ago to encourage people to apply on the hospital's Web site.

Laura Toellner, director of recruitment and employment at Sacred Heart, said she noticed the online trend about four or five years ago before she worked for Sacred Heart.

Even when Sacred Heart goes to job fairs looking for recruits, all the literature directs applicants to its Web site. And if job-seekers don't have access to a computer, they can fill out their applications online at the human resources office.

The process really makes it easier for the applicant who can check the Web site and apply without having to come in and pick up an application, Toellner said. It also allows applicants to apply for three positions at the same time, which can come in handy for nurses, for example, who may be interested in different shifts.

If a person happens to send a resume in the mail, it's forwarded if it applies to a specific position. But if it's a general application, the applicant is called and encouraged to apply online, Toellner said.

Even with hundreds of jobs posted daily on numerous Web sites, there are plenty of students who are still finding it hard to find a job, local job counselors says.

At UWF, Ford said it's important for job seekers to remember that not everything is posted online. In fact, only 15 percent are posted somewhere, he said.

He tries to encourage students to do more networking, even to the point of carrying extra resumes in their cars in case they run into somebody at the gym or coffee shops.

"Sixty-five percent of the jobs are found through

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networking, with Pensacola probably even higher than that," he said.

Ford, 29, also is a big advocate of using the Internet to find a contact and to gather information on companies. "I think it's a wonderful resource," he said.

The purpose of the resume, whether online or on paper, remains the same -- to get a response from a prospective employer.

Typically, resumes get a 15- to 20-second look before a decision is made to keep it or throw it in the trash, said Kenneth B. Shugart, director of student job services at PJC.

But sometimes using eye-catching features on an Internet resume can result in a garbled resume when it's sent. For that reason, Shugart suggests people should keep the online resumes simple and left justified.

"While it may not look as pretty, it has a better chance of making to the employer without garble," he said.

Shugart said he likes to see items on resumes that speak of excellence, including volunteer work and high grade-point averages.

And job seekers should try to include key words that have their resumes pop up when a potential employer is searching. To find those words, Shugart suggests looking at job announcements to see what words are commonly used.

Shugart and Ford agree that references should no longer be listed on resumes. And neither should the words "references will be forward upon request."

Students should have references ready to send on a separate sheet of paper. And as a courtesy, job hunters should always let their references know they are giving their names to potential employers, he said.

Giles said if she finds a job she is especially interested in,

she e-mails her resume if asked for. But she also e-mails a letter of recommendation from her current employer, who knows she is looking for a full-time job.

Ford refers to this time of year as "senior freak-out time" for students who aren't finding jobs.

Those students usually fall in three categories, he said. There are those who send out 150 resumes and get no response; those who think the jobs go to internal candidates so they don't apply; and those who can't find jobs they are qualified for in online searches.