Project 5
Portfolios

Timing: 4 to 6 hours

Project overview

Portfolios communicate accomplishments, works in progress, or personal history. Individuals use a portfolio to showcase their work when applying for a job. Traditionally, a portfolio is a large book or leather case containing design samples. With PDF Portfolios, individuals can share print, design, and interactive work in a variety of ways: e-mail, print, and online.

In this project, students create the elements of a PDF Portfolio with Adobe Photoshop CS6, Adobe InDesign CS6, and Adobe Acrobat X Pro. They build a portfolio that features the work they have completed and explore career opportunities in fields such as advertising, PR, photography, and print production.

Student product: PDF Portfolio

Note: Portions of the Portfolios project align to the Adobe Certified Associate, Visual Communication objectives. Within the instruction steps and technical guides, the specific learning objectives for the exam are referenced with the following format: [1.1]

Project objectives

At the completion of the project, students will have developed the following skills:

Project management skills

- Planning and creating a PDF Portfolio
- Organizing and managing content
- Conducting a review and redesign
- Creating flowcharts

Design skills

- Investigating and incorporating layout and color consistently
- Designing consistent pages
- Designing for a specific audience and purpose

Research and communication skills

- Investigating and researching career areas within print production
- Communicating information to particular audiences
- Defining the goals and uses of a portfolio
- Soliciting and providing feedback

Technical skills

Photoshop

- Creating a Web Photo Gallery

InDesign

- Creating a portfolio

Acrobat Pro

- Packaging multiple documents

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Project materials

- Adobe Photoshop CS6 installed on all machines
- Adobe InDesign CS6 installed on all machines
- Adobe Acrobat X Pro installed on all machines
- Guide: How to create an e-portfolio flowchart
- Acrobat guide: How to prepare and organize files for a PDF Portfolio
- Acrobat guide: How to create and personalize a PDF Portfolio
- Guide: Peer review

Background preparation resources

- Technical and content information
- Key terms
- ISTE NETS*S Standard for Students
- Adobe Certified Associate, Visual Communication objectives

Project steps

Planning a portfolio

(Suggested time: 50–100 minutes)

1. Discuss the goals of this project:
   - Understand the goals and uses of portfolios.
   - Research career areas in design and/or print production.
   - Plan and create a flowchart for a portfolio.
   - Select and organize content for a PDF Portfolio.

2. Discuss the concept of a portfolio, its purpose and its audience.
   - What is a portfolio?
   - What are the goals of a particular portfolio?
   - What does a portfolio contain?
   - Would it contain professional experiences? Coursework?
   - How do you use a portfolio to communicate ideas?
   - What could you use to communicate these ideas (for example: images, text, page layout, organization of the portfolio)?
   - What are the long-term and short-term goals of a portfolio?
   - Who is the audience for the portfolio?

3. Show the class a variety of paper-based and online portfolios and analyze their purpose and audience with the students.

   Note: You might want to gather some examples of portfolios to show students.

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4. Ask students to research career areas in design and/or print production and then select the focus for their portfolios based on their research. Career areas include:
   - Creative/art director
   - Print production manager or coordinator
   - Book designer
   - Book jacket designer
   - Layout artist
   - Logo designer
   - Brand identity designer
   - Illustrator
   - Photo editor/Photoshop artist
   - Photographer
   - Prepress technician

   Note: You might want to explain that in researching career areas they should document a specific job description and qualifications, expected skill set, expected technical knowledge, necessary training, and expected salary. You might also want to explain that they can collect websites containing specific job-related information and, if appropriate, link to them within their portfolios.

5. Pair students and ask them to consider the work they've done in this course and other courses with respect to the design and/or print production career area they are interested in. Individually, have them select files they could include in their portfolios that would represent their best work and highlight their skills.

6. Explain the expectations of the portfolio. Some things to include might be:
   - Portfolio introduction that explains their skill set, training, projects included in the portfolio, career interests and goals, and any professional experience.
   - An image or representative visual to use on the welcome page of their portfolio.
   - Narrative introductions to each project, explaining the ways their work highlights their skills.
   - Narrative introductions including specific examples comparing their skills with the career area they are interested in.
   - Learning plan that identifies skills or concepts they might be lacking at this point but would want to learn about and focus on during the next semester.
   - Web photo gallery of images to link to their photography work.

   Note: If students are preparing to take the Visual Communication certification exam, have them create a web photo gallery of images.

7. Discuss how to organize the contents of the portfolio. Demonstrate how to create category outlines (for instance, categorizing work by project type or design principles) and corresponding flowcharts for the type of portfolio they have chosen. Ask students to create a flowchart for their portfolios, including background information as follows:
   - Describe the purpose of the portfolio.
   - Create a list of assets in the portfolio and organize files and projects into categories.
   - Using the category outline as a guide, draw a flowchart for the PDF Portfolio.

   Guide: How to create an e-portfolio flowchart

Constructing a portfolio

(Suggested time: 150–200 minutes)

8. Allow students time to build any additional summaries or written elements and design elements for their PDF portfolios, creating these visual assets in Photoshop and creating the layout and text in InDesign, using the various techniques learned.

   Note: If students are creating a web photo gallery, allow them time to select images and instruct them to use the automated Web Photo Gallery task in Photoshop.[5.1]

9. Highlight ways to prepare their selected files to use in the PDF Portfolio. Ask students to prepare and organize their files.

   Acrobat guide: How to prepare and organize files for a PDF Portfolio

10. Explain that students package their work into a PDF Portfolio instead of one continuous document. Demonstrate building the PDF Portfolio and personalizing it by adding custom welcome screens, headers, or other personal elements. Allow students time to build and customize their portfolios.

    Acrobat guide: How to create and personalize a PDF Portfolio

Presenting a portfolio

(Suggested time: 50–100 minutes)

11. Instruct students to pair up as before and test each other's PDF Portfolios. They should test items such as:
    - Links
    - Bookmarks
    - Page numbering
    - Navigation from the home page
    - Information for each element

12. Allow students time to make any needed adjustments to their PDF Portfolios. Instruct students to finalize their PDF Portfolio and make a smaller file size version for use on the web or to email.

13. Instruct students to get into groups of four, including the person they brainstormed with earlier. Explain that they should conduct peer reviews, reviewing one another's portfolios and discussing their career and learning goals and how the portfolio highlights skills that support those career goals.

    Guide: Peer review [1.4]

14. Allow students time to implement any changes to their portfolios based on the results of the technical test and peer review.

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Extension activities

You can extend the project in the following ways:

- *Map a PDF Portfolio:* To help students understand flowcharts, have them create a flowchart for an existing PDF Portfolio.
- *Portfolio:* Ask students to plan a portfolio that showcases their best work from all their courses.
- *Reflection supplement:* Ask students to write up the decisions they made in the planning process for their portfolios. This document will help students reflect on their process and provide a framework for the next time they plan a PDF document.
- *Portfolio design challenge:* Ask students to select a second-choice career path and to identify the differences in content and design if they were to tailor their portfolio to that different career.
- *ePortfolios:* Ask students to create a web-based portfolio. You can use Project 4: *Portfolios* from the Digital Design: Foundations of Web Design curriculum to teach students web design. Access this curriculum at www.adobe.com/go/digitalcareers

Assessment

- Project rubric

Background preparation resources

- Review the student step-by-step guides referenced in this project.
- To view video tutorials aligned with the skills required to complete this project, visit the Visual Design CS6 show on Adobe TV: http://tv.adobe.com/show/visual-design-cs6/
- For more teaching and learning resources on portfolios and other topics in this project, search for resources from the community on the Adobe Education Exchange: http://edexchange.adobe.com
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of Photoshop, see Photoshop Help.
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of InDesign, see InDesign Help.
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of Acrobat, see Acrobat Help.
- You might supplement this project with the following design books:
  - Lupton, E. (2010). *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students, Second Edition*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
  - Lawler, B. (2009). *The Official Adobe Print Publishing Guide, Third Edition.* Berkeley: Adobe Press.
  - Williams, R. (2007). *Robin Williams Design Workshop, Second Edition*. Berkeley: Peachpit Press.

Portfolios

- The Adobe Acrobat X Pro resources for creating e-portfolios using PDFs: www.adobe.com/go/eportfolios.
- Acrobat X ePortfolio video workshop: http://tv.adobe.com/show/acrobat-x-eportfolio-workshop/
- Examples and instructions for visualizing information and using flowcharts, mostly for a website but can be applied to a PDF: www.jjg.net/ia/visvocab/#page.

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- Teaching tips for creating student digital portfolios: www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/weeklytips.phtml/134.
- Information and examples of a variety of electronic portfolios: http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic82.htm.
- Examples of PDF Portfolios: http://education.acrobat.com/designstudent/ and http://wwwimages.adobe.com/www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/education/pdfs/highschool-student.pdf
- Instructions on how to create a web photo gallery in Photoshop: http://help.adobe.com/en_US/creativesuite/cs/using/WSe851854fd1e0856a-4b08a77612477f69f15-8000.html

Print production and graphic design careers:

- Graphic Design: A Career Guide, from AIGA: www.aiga.org/guide-careerguide/
- Lists of graphic design and print production jobs with descriptions, training requirements, and salary information: www.adigitaldreamer.com/articles/graphic-design-jobs.htm.
- Lists of possible careers in graphic and publication design: www.oswego.edu/student/career/careersin/arts.html.
- Department of Labor information and statistics for jobs in graphic design and desktop publishing: www.bls.gov/oco/ocos090.htm.

Key terms

- flowchart
- portfolio

ISTE NETS*S Standard for Students

This project is aligned to the ISTE NETS*S Technology Standards. Depending on the subject and content area the student selects you may research your own state content standards to see how this project aligns to your state requirements.

1. Creativity and Innovation

   Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:

   a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.

   b. create original works as a means of personal or group expression.

2. Communication and Collaboration

   Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students:

   a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.

   b. communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.

3. Research and Information Retrieval

   Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students:

   a. plan strategies to guide inquiry.

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b. locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
c. evaluate and select information sources and technology tools based on appropriateness of specific task.

4. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

   Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students::

   a. identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.
   b. plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project.

5. Digital Citizenship

   Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students:

   a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.
   b. exhibit positive attitudes toward technology uses that support collaboration, learning, and productivity.
   c. demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.

6. Technology Operations and Concepts

   Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations. Students:

   a. understand and use technology systems.
   b. select and use applications effectively and productively.

Adobe Certified Associate, Visual Communication objectives

1.4 Communicate with other (such as peers and clients) about design plans.

5.1 Demonstrate knowledge of preparing images for web, print, and video.

Assessment

	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Research	Absent or incomplete.	Research covers design and/or print production career area. Research is evident in the portfolio content, providing such information as job description, qualifications, skill set, technical knowledge, required training, and salary information.	Research clearly covers a specific design and/or print production career area. Research is evident in the portfolio content, providing specific information and examples such as job description, qualifications, skill set, technical knowledge, required training, and salary information.

	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Flowchart	Absent or incomplete.	Flowchart is detailed and includes an appropriate organizational structure for the planned content.	Flowchart is detailed and includes a clear and logical organizational structure for the planned content. Flowchart includes all content that should go in PDF Portfolio.
Learning plan	Absent or incomplete.	Learning plan identifies the skills and concepts the student is interested in learning.	Learning plan clearly identifies the skills and concepts tied to the job or higher education program areas the student is interested in pursuing.
PDF portfolio - content	Absent, incomplete, or unfocused.	PDF Portfolio highlights student's completed projects and includes an introduction and descriptive narratives for each project. PDF Portfolio highlights skills relevant to design and/or print production career area that interests them.	PDF Portfolio is well organized and clearly highlights student's completed projects. PDF Portfolio includes a clear and concise introduction and descriptive narratives for each project that relates to and clearly highlights the design and/or print production career area that interests them.
PDF portfolio - design	Absent, incomplete, or unfocused.	Overall design of PDF Portfolio and highlighted projects employ appropriate use of design principles, layout design, image composition, color theory, and typography. PDF Portfolio showcases student's technical skills in Photoshop, InDesign, and Acrobat. PDF Portfolio's organization includes use of links and bookmarks in Acrobat.	Overall design of PDF Portfolio and highlighted projects employs effective use of design principles, layout design, image composition, color theory, and typography for showcasing student work to potential employers. PDF Portfolio clearly showcases the student's technical skills in Photoshop, InDesign, and Acrobat. PDF Portfolio's organization includes efficient and appropriate use of links and bookmarks.

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	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Peer review	Absent or incomplete.	Peer review expresses both strengths and weaknesses of the PDF Portfolio and offers suggestions for improvement. Peer review considers how the portfolio supports career goals.	Peer review expresses both strengths and weaknesses of the PDF Portfolio. Reviewer offers clear suggestions for improvement and provides specific examples. Peer review considers and offers suggestions on how to strengthen the portfolio to support career goals.