

10 TIPS FOR UPDATING YOUR ONLINE PORTFOLIO

by [Stephan Maldonado](#) | December 18, 2018

There are plenty of reasons why an online portfolio might be exactly what you need to make a splash in the New Year. Perhaps you're an architecture student showcasing a project to bolster your internship applications. You might be a writer looking to build your readership through blogs and writing samples, or maybe you're a graphic designer highlighting successful freelance work to snag a promising new full-time position.

Any creative professional or student entering a creative industry should have a website or online portfolio—a digital space where people can access samples of your work that speak to your talents and expertise. Here are 10 tips for updating your online portfolio.

1.) **Curate the best and most relevant examples of your work.**

Your portfolio is an opportunity to show off the breadth and sophistication of your skills. Choose the work you're proud of: the pieces that have performed well, garnered positive reviews, or even won accolades. Most importantly, choose the work that speaks most to who you are.

2.) **Consider the purpose of your portfolio.**

What do you hope to accomplish through your online portfolio? Are you applying for a job or to a graduate program? Building your brand? Do you want to generate clients for your freelance endeavors? A portfolio may have more than one goal, but knowing the “why” will help you narrow your focus.

3.) **Know your audience.**

Once you identify the purpose of your portfolio, you can identify your target audience. Knowing who you want to see your portfolio allows you to tailor the design and content—whether it should be conservative and clean, or expressive and edgy. You may also consider multiple portfolios for different audiences—one for potential employers, and one for the people who follow your work on Instagram, for instance.

4.) **When updating your portfolio with a job in mind, tailor it to the job you're applying to.**

This is where having multiple portfolios really comes in handy, but even if you only have one, you shouldn't shy away from updating it frequently when you're in the job market. If you know your portfolio can prove why you're the right person for a specific job, then add the best examples of work that is directly relevant to the position.

5.) **Don't be afraid to declutter your portfolio.**

It's almost painful to choose between your favorite pieces of work, and when you're proud of everything in your portfolio, it's not easy to remove anything. But even the strongest portfolios can become overwhelming and unwieldy if they're too cluttered. Not every piece of work is relevant to your portfolio's purpose, and older work doesn't reflect where you currently are as a professional. As you add to your portfolio, be judicious when considering what you can remove.

6.) **Let your projects speak for themselves...**

One of the most important lessons I learned as a writer is that it's far better to “show” than to “tell”, and the same holds true for online portfolios. The quickest and most effective way to reach your audience is to engage them with compelling work that tells a story. Don't try to over explain or bog your work down with details that detract from the power of your talent. Like a strong cover letter, your portfolio should be concise and straight to the point.

7.) **...but don't be afraid to introduce them.**

With that said, it's always helpful to provide some context when showcasing a previous project—just enough so your audience knows what they're looking at. Clearly labeling your work with a title, and perhaps even the date and the project for which it was created can still be useful. If you designed an app for a client, say who the client was and what the app was intended for, but don't go into the minutia of your entire client experience.



8.) Spruce up your layout.

If the layout of your portfolio is working for you, then there's probably no reason to change things up. But if your portfolio feels a little stale, you might want to give its appearance an update. Keeping your purpose and audience in mind, choose a layout that does your work justice while also elevating your portfolio in new ways. Play with the format of gallery pages, the color scheme, and any other element you think could use a touch-up. Many online portfolio tools have entire libraries of templates that let you customize your users' experience.

9.) Explore different tools.

There are so many tools out there that allow you to create custom online portfolios. Some may be better suited for certain professionals than others, but they each have their own strengths. If you've found your portfolio lacking in some features you want, look around to find which tool offers what you need. Click [here](#) for some examples of popular portfolio tools.

10.) Research & Review.

If you're unsure of how you want your portfolio to look, there's nothing wrong with researching the portfolios of other professionals in your field to see what's working for them. You don't want to model your portfolio exactly like another person's, but it can be helpful to seek inspiration from the influencers you admire and the brands you follow. And of course, once you've created your portfolio, it's important to review it for errors and ensure you're presenting yourself in the best possible way. Consider asking a friend or trusted colleague to take a look as well.

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