How to Write an Internet Résumé

Résumés that are posted to the Internet are different in many significant ways from the traditional paper and ink résumés. It is important for job seekers today to understand how to utilize this resource.

Electronic Résumés

Many job seekers make the mistake of thinking that an electronic résumé is nothing more than a traditional résumé that you email to an employer. Ten years ago this may have been the case. Today employers either require applicants to submit their résumé electronically, or they convert the paper and ink résumé into an electronic document.

Why have employers embraced this media? There are two major reasons. First, it saves on paper and filing. Secondly, and most importantly, the electronic résumé allows the employer to use the computer to sort, categorize, screen and electronically file the résumés of applicants. By using this technology an employer can easily identify potential candidates. The employers simply ask the computer to list all candidates who meet certain criteria, mention specific skills and have a range of work experience or other criteria.

Job seekers need to create a résumé that gets the computer to include them whenever the computer lists possible candidates; therefore, the structure of the résumé must be computer friendly.

Because the Internet world is constantly changing, and this includes how employers utilize electronic résumés, it is advisable that you obtain the most current information about this topic. Check the following web site for the most up-to-date information: ***https://www.careerperfect.com/***.

Computer résumé tracking programs

Initially only very large corporations had the capability to electronically record, sort and track résumés. With the advent of low cost software programs for personal computers, small companies have joined this electronic age. Electronic scanners are able to scan paper and ink résumés and convert them to readable formats. Most software programs also permit the employer to "cut and paste" email résumés into their tracking programs. *Job seekers need to be aware that even if they send a traditional paper and ink résumé to an employer, the chances are high that it will be scanned and converted to a computer file.*

Internet résumé basics

- Always have two types of résumés available: a scannable paper and ink résumé and a plain-text résumé (see description below).
- Use the chronological or skills résumé you created on your word processor as your "advertisement résumé" and submit it only if you are asked to submit a paper and ink résumé.
- Learn how to email your résumé both as an attachment and as a part of the email message.
- Know the format that the employer wants before you send a résumé to them.

Employers prefer

According to surveys, employers prefer:

- Emailed plain-text résumés that are embedded within the email. Many employers refuse to open attachments from people they do not know.
- Scannable résumés that are printed on white paper and mailed in a large, flat envelope.
- Scannable faxed résumés. It must be a quality fax so that the résumé can be scanned.

Key words

The power of the electronic résumé lies in the key words. The computer allows the employer to quickly evaluate every résumé to determine if the candidate possesses a set of specific skills and/or traits. Those candidates that mention the specific skills in their résumé will be listed in a key word search and may be invited to an interview. Résumés that do not mention the skills are kept in the data base, but may not get selected.

You need to load your résumé with key words. They should be nouns and noun phrases, and industry specific. Try not to repeat key words and phrases since the computer only counts the inclusion once. Try to have as many as 75 such key words in your résumé. This is one time that more is better.

Types of electronic résumés

1. **Plain-text**. A plain-text, or ASCII résumé is an unformatted résumé without any special characters. It is a no-frills version of your résumé and contains no italics, underlining, bold, special fonts or bullets. Why plain-text? Because all computers can read and understand it. You will use this résumé 95% of the time. This type of résumé is scanable and should be used if asked to send a scannable paper résumé.
2. **Formatted**. This résumé is created using a word processor like Microsoft Word. It can contain fancy fonts, underlining, bullets, etc. This type of résumé should only be sent if the employer specifically states that Word documents are acceptable. *Do not assume that the employer can or will read a Word document.* In order to send this type of résumé, you must attach the Word document to an email. Be sure to alert the employer in your cover message that the document was created using a specific word processor.
3. **Web Résumé**. A web résumé is a résumé that you have placed on the web. If you have your own web page, or have access to a web page, you can post your résumé on the site and make the site known to employers.

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Creating your electronic plain text résumé

The plain text résumé is similar to your "advertising" fancy résumé without the bells and whistles. Because it will be read on a computer screen there are a few formatting tricks:

- Use your favorite word processor. Set your margins to allow only 60 characters per line (most computers read between 60-65 characters per line.) This way your text will not bleed over to the next line. Save your document using the ASCII Text option.
- Select a 10 or 12 point standard font like *Times New Roman* or *Courier*. Ten point will allow more text per line and page than twelve point font.
- Type in (or paste from your traditional paper and ink résumé) your résumé information, flush left. Do not attempt to center or indent any information because ASCII text does not recognize formatting. Do place parentheses around area codes so the computer can recognize the number to be a telephone number. Remember, keep it simple!
- Test to make sure it looks good. Save the completed résumé, again using the ASCII Text format. Close your word processor. Now reopen it and open your saved file. How does it look? If it changed how it looks, make your corrections and repeat this step until you get the résumé to look the way that you want. After you are satisfied with the résumé's appearance, send the file as an email attachment to a friend. Have them open it on their computer. Don't be surprised if the résumé looks different on your friend's computer. Keep making changes until it looks good on the computers of several different friends.

Content of the résumé

The content and format of the electronic résumé differs slightly from the traditional Chronological Résumé:

- **Heading**. Place your name, address, city, state and zip code, telephone number and your email address in descending order. You may highlight your name and major categories by using all capitals. Make sure each heading is left justified.

First 100 words critical

Many résumé tracking programs record only the first 100 words found in the résumé. These 100 words become the key word list. It is important that you get all of your qualifications mentioned early in the résumé.

- **Job Objective**. State what you want to do. Don't waste words. List the job title. If you are responding to an ad, make sure your job title matches the title used in the ad. This may require rewriting every résumé before it is sent to individual employers.
- **Summary of Qualifications**. This is where you list your qualifications. List the key words that match your qualifications and the requirements of the job. In preparation for writing your Internet résumé, you should compile a list of your skills and tasks that are germane to the job sought. These skills need to be mentioned in your qualifications. Use short sentences filled with key words. For example, *Able to use the following computer applications: Word, Excel, WordPerfect, PowerPoint and Facebook.*
- **Experience**. Begin your list of employers with your most recent employment. Be brief. When listing tasks performed and accomplishments, be mindful of key words. Employers are primarily interested in how your experiences match those of the job you seek.
- **Education**. List educational accomplishments. Be sure to mention relevant extra educational and training programs and certificates.

Emailing your résumé to employers

Emailing your résumé is the single best way to reach employers. It is fast and targeted; it reaches the person who has the authority to hire you. Review the **JobSearch Guides**: ***How To Make Cold Calls***, ***Using Your Network to Locate Job Openings*** and ***How to Respond to Newspaper Want Ads***.

When responding to an ad or sending a cold email, send only a plain text résumé that is embedded in the email unless asked to send a formatted résumé.

- Copy your plain text résumé to the clip board. Your word processor program Manual will explain how to do this. If you need help, ask for assistance from your local American Job Center.
- Create a cover letter email. At the end of the message, paste your résumé from the clip board to the message.
- In the subject line of the email, type *Résumé of John Doe*.
- Before you send the message make sure your email program is sending the message as text and not the Internet language, HTML. Send the email.
- If the employer has requested a formatted résumé, attach your résumé rather than embed the résumé into the cover letter. Make sure that you have told the reader in your cover message the word processor which was used to create the résumé.

Posting your résumé to a data base

This process is relatively simple. Follow the directions given by the site. Some will allow you to paste your text résumé to a data base; others will have an online form to complete. If asked to complete a form make sure you include all of your key words from your résumé. Be wary of any Internet posting service that makes you pay for the posting service.

Posting to a Company Web Site

More and more companies allow applicants to submit résumés directly to the company on their web site. Check the company web site for directions. Some will ask you to email your text résumé; others will have a form. Be sure to emphasize your key words!

The electronic cover letter

Just as you shouldn't mail a résumé without a cover letter, you shouldn't send an electronic résumé without a cover letter. Review the **JobSearch Guide** ***How to Write a Cover Letter***.

The electronic cover letter is similar to the paper and ink variety except shorter. Remember, the cover letter is to be an introduction of you and a statement of why you are sending the résumé. Conclude the brief note detailing the next step. Examples include, *I will call you next week to arrange an interview* or *I am looking forward to discussing possible positions with you.*

Internet resources

https://idealistcareers.org/8-resources-to-help-you-craft-the-perfect-resume/-- Excellent resource for writing and posting your résumé online.

www.job-hunt.org/internetresume.shtml -- Making your résumé cybersafe.

www.wikihow.com/Post-Your-Resume-Online-- How to post your résumé on line.