Module 3

I interviewed Stephen Anders, a digital and technical writing alum from MSU.

What sort of pieces did you put in your portfolio that came from outside your coursework?

I think that it was about half and half. My development and UI design pieces are the first three and none of them came from classes and then the last three were writing examples and those came from PW classes.

How did you show your personal identity while remaining professional?

I tried to make it a little more personal with a picture of me and my wife as well as my tagline, which I wanted to show a bit about myself and what I am passionate about. I tried to make my portfolio more about my work and my skills and I figured I would fill in the personality a bit more in the interview.

Why did you choose the pieces in your portfolio?

I chose the pieces because I wanted to show my diversity. PW gives you a lot of different tools and I think it's important to highlight all of them. I have 2 sections web development and writing. I began with my development experience because I was looking for a development job. I used the start up that I was working at PrezentMe.com (since gone under) as my big example because I did a lot of work on that. Then I did some UI design experience and some freelance work. I chose the writing portions to show that I have a diverse group of skills that might set me apart from other candidates who have a more pure development background.

Do you still maintain your portfolio? Has it helped in your career today?

I do not maintain my portfolio. This is something I have struggled with a little bit. I think to have an updated portfolio is a conscious acknowledgement that you are looking for another job. I am

not looking for a job, so I have not felt the need to keep it maintained. Also I am busy and I would rather spend my time with my wife than keeping a portfolio site updated.

Looking back, are there any tips you wish you had known when starting your portfolio?

If you want to get a web development job I think making sure you have clean, commented, and professional code is really important. I needed to hire an intern and this was the first thing I did for all of the applicants. I looked at the source of their website and saw how they wrote javascript, if they commented or if they used line breaks and indentation. If someone cares enough to make their code look good then they will care about the code I have them write. My other biggest advice is to have offline examples of stuff when you go to interviews. You never know what kind of internet will be available or what kind of hardware the people at the office will have. I usually brought my tablet to interviews with me and when the internet doesn't work it makes you look dumb. It's better to have offline examples that you can control and practice with.

What I gathered from my interview was that the most important thing about making a portfolio is to show all of your skills and just specific kinds. Stephen had examples of digital and non-digital writing in his portfolio. The portfolio should focus on skills and experience, adding a few tidbits of personal information should suffice and your overall personality will show during the interview. He stressed the importance of putting your best work in the portfolio to show potential employers that you take your work seriously and will take the work they give you seriously. I will take this advice into account when making my own portfolio.