



Career Success Toolkit



Table of Contents

PART 1: Career Assets

LinkedIn Profile Guidelines	5
To Join	5
Tips for Your Profile	5
GitHub Profile Guidelines	10
To Join	10
Tips for Your Profile	10
Resume Guidelines	14
Getting Started	14
Content	15
Heading/Contact Section	15
Summary Section (Optional)	16
Experience	16
Education Section	18
“Other” Sections	18
What Not to Include	19
Cover Letter Guidelines	20
Getting Started	20
Content	20
Portfolio Guidelines	23
Getting Started	23
Content	23
Design / Color Scheme	24
Projects	25
GitHub	25
Additional Notes	26
Portfolio Examples from Previous Students	26
Useful Resources	27
Career Readiness Checklist	28

PART 2: The Job Search

How to Set up a Job Tracking Spreadsheet	32
Networking Tips	33



LinkedIn Tips	34
Set Your Job Preferences	34
Search For and Save Jobs	36
Job Board Tips	39
Finding jobs	40
Keywords	40
Stay Organized	40
Cover Letter Tips	41
Start strong	41
Explain, don't repeat, your resume	41
Use the job description	41
Avoid cliches	42
Skip the hard sell	42
Interview Tips	43
Be prepared!	43
Know the job description	43
Get personal	44
Skip the cliches. Seriously	44
Address your lack of skills	44
Be engaged/ask questions of your own!	45
Calm down	45
Behavioral best practices	46
What to bring to an interview	46



Part 1: Career Assets

As you round the corner of the second half of the course, you are probably starting to think about life after DigitalCrafts -- mainly, getting that first job. Crafting a portfolio, resume, and online presence that effectively show off your new skills, as well as your personality and past experience, is key to a successful job search. We have prepared detailed guidelines for what we believe are essential elements to include in all these career assets.

As you follow these guidelines, please reach out to the Student Services Coordinator (@katym) or any other staff member if you have any questions.

When you feel your portfolio and resume are complete, please use the Career Readiness Checklist at the end of this section as a final step. After completing the checklist, you are ready to submit your portfolio and resume to the Student Service Coordinator for review and feedback.

LinkedIn Profile Guidelines

LinkedIn is a social site used as a networking tool. You create a profile, and build connections through your professional contacts. A carefully curated LinkedIn profile is an essential part of every job seeker's online presence -- you can always assume a prospective employer will look up your profile when considering you for a job. LinkedIn is also used by recruiters, who use keywords to search through thousands of profiles to find candidates who have experience in the skills that match their open positions. The guidelines below will provide a roadmap to building a professional, complete LinkedIn profile.

To Join

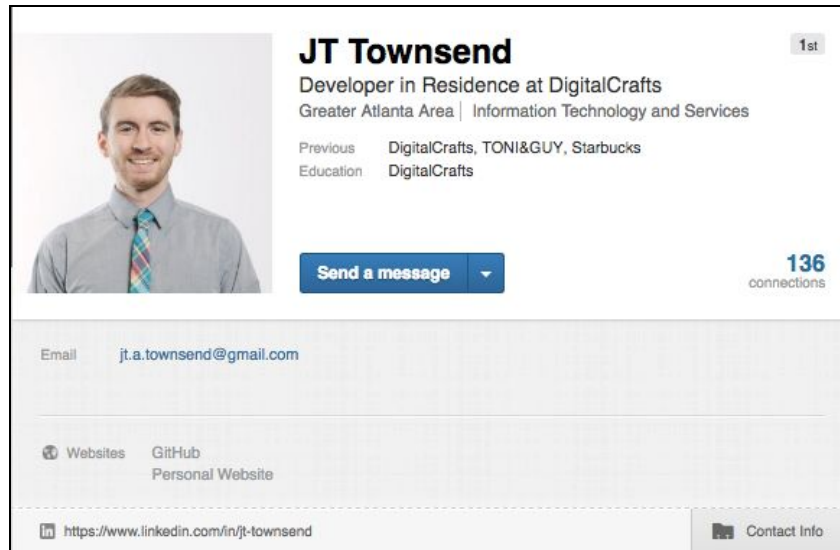
- If you don't have a LinkedIn account, [click here to register](#).
- Once you've registered for an account, complete your profile to the best of your ability before proceeding to the next steps.
- If you already have an account, update all your profile information using the guidelines below to reflect your most relevant and up-to-date experience.

Tips for Your Profile

- Include a profile picture
- Change **Location** to your desired work location
- Change **Headline** to include keywords that reflect the job you desire such as "Software Developer", "Software Engineer", "Front End Developer", "Full Stack Developer", or be even more precise like "JavaScript Developer"
- In the **Contact** section, include the follow items:
 - Link to your GitHub profile
 - Link to your portfolio
 - Link to your blog, twitter, and include your email if you feel comfortable sharing

(refer to next page for example)

Example:



- In the **Summary** section, include 3 to 5 sentences describing yourself, your previous educational or work experience, and a brief overview of what led you to be interested in a software development career. This is the most important story employers will want to hear. Why do you want this for a living?
- In the **Experience** section, add your most recent educational experience as “Student at DigitalCrafts.” Refer to the image below and make sure to select the DigitalCrafts option, which should automatically appear in the dropdown menu once you begin typing.

Experience

[+ Add position](#) [↑](#)

Company Name *

Title *

Location

Time Period *
 2016 - 2017
☐ I currently work here

Description









[See examples](#)

[Save](#) [Cancel](#)

- In the **Skills & Endorsements** section, add some of the skills you consider your strongest. Adding skills to your profile is very important. Recruiters and employers will search through profiles based on these key terms.

Skills

Top Skills

16	Front-end Development	+	
16	HTML5	+	
16	JavaScript	+	
15	jQuery	+	
14	Cascading Style Sheets...	+	
13	AngularJS	+	
12	Python	+	
14	Node.js	+	
11	MongoDB	+	
11	Express.js	+	

JT also knows about...

Version Control	+	8	Hair Cutting	+	5	Customer Service	+				
6	Coaching	+	5	Fashion	+	8	Microsoft Office	+	5	PowerPoint	+
5	Public Speaking	+	4	Time Management	+	1	Cosmetology	+			
1	Styling	+	1	Hair Care	+	1	Microsoft Excel	+	1	Leadership	+
3	HTML	+									



- In the **Education** section, add the courses you are expecting to graduate from at DigitalCrafts. You can use the content below.
 - **Degree/Certificate Name**
Core Curriculum:
 - *Full Stack Immersive Program, Software Development*
 - *Full Stack Flex Program, Software Development***Electives:**
 - *iOS App Development Elective, Native Mobile Development*
 - *UI/UX Design Elective, Web Design*
 - *Computer Science Fundamentals, Software Development*
 - **Description:**
 - *DigitalCrafts is a top-rated coding bootcamp teaching the fundamentals of programming through an intensive classroom experience, transforming beginners into full-stack software engineers with cutting edge skill sets.*
 - ****Make sure to select “DigitalCrafts” from the dropdown menu that should appear when you start typing in the School field. If you do not select the DigitalCrafts drop-down option, your profile will not appear in the Student & Alumni directory - [click here](#) to view the directory. Note: You may not appear immediately on the page, but you should appear in 48 hours after listing your education on your profile.**
 - Make sure to include the year you enrolled and the year you will graduate in the field under School (behind the drop-down in this image)

A screenshot of the 'Education' section of a user profile form. The form has a title 'Education' and a '+ Add education' button. The 'School' field is a dropdown menu with 'DigitalCrafts' selected, and a tooltip shows the DigitalCrafts logo and name. Below this is a 'Degree' dropdown menu with 'Other' selected. There are empty text fields for 'Field of Study', 'Grade', and 'Activities and Societies'. The 'Description' field contains the text: 'DigitalCrafts is a top-rated coding bootcamp teaching the fundamentals of programming through an intensive classroom experience, transforming beginners into full-stack software engineers with cutting edge skill sets.' Examples of activities are listed below the 'Activities and Societies' field: 'Alpha Phi Omega, Chamber Chorale, Debate Team'.

- Add any certificates you've obtained to the **Certificates** section. For example, freeCodeCamp, Lynda.com, Udemy, and/or Udacity.



- Include a description of your most impressive projects, or a link to your portfolio, in the **Projects** section.
- Ask for **Recommendations** from previous employers or fellow students (members of your in-class group projects, for example)
- Don't forget **industry keywords**. As mentioned before, recruiters use industry keywords to comb through profiles and find candidates whose skills match their open positions. They also search other profile content for keywords. Research current industry keywords, and work these into your Summary, Experience, and Education sections (where relevant). Here's a [link](#) with a little more about how to optimize your profile to show up in recruiter searches.
- Some common keywords to consider:



- **Final Note:** Spelling errors, grammatical errors, and poor writing in general will hurt your employment odds significantly. If writing isn't your strong suit, ask a classmate or DigitalCrafts staff to look over your profile.

These guidelines will provide you with a roadmap to a profile that contains the essential elements a recruiter or employer will be looking for. The key to a well-rounded online presence is to make sure your LinkedIn profile is more than just a copy of your resume. Ideally, your resume will be a listing of skills and experience directly relevant to a job you are applying for; in contrast, your LinkedIn profile can provide an employer with a much broader picture of your professional and personal interests. Take some time to explore and complete the other fields in the tool (such as volunteer experience, for example).

GitHub Profile Guidelines

GitHub is an invaluable tool used by developers to work on projects both on teams and individually. In addition, a complete profile is a key element to your online presence as a job seeker, as it serves as a vehicle to showcase your work to prospective employers. The guidelines below will provide a roadmap to building a complete GitHub profile.

To Join

- If you don't have a GitHub account, [click here to join](#).
- Once you've registered for an account, complete your profile to the best of your ability before proceeding to the next steps.
- If you already have an account, update all your profile information to reflect your most relevant and up-to-date experience.

Tips for Your Profile

- Include a profile photo
- Include a bio (something more than just "Full-Stack Developer")
- Include a link to your portfolio

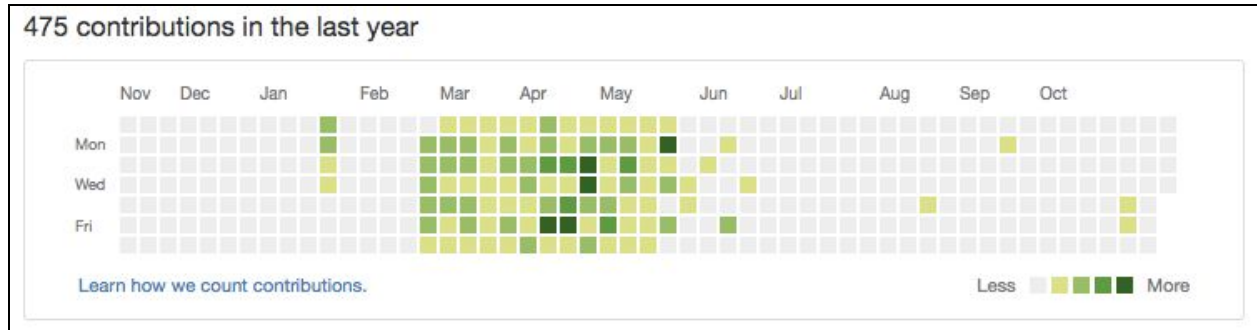
Example:



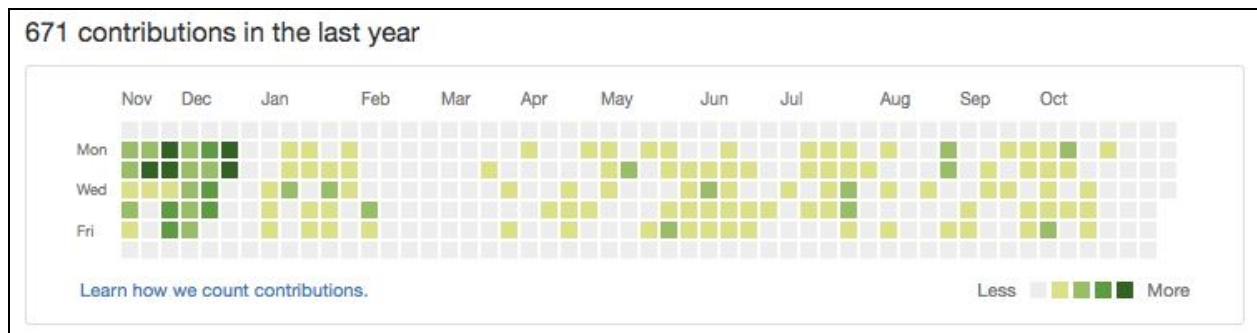
- “Pin” the key projects listed in your portfolio and resume to the front of your **GitHub profile**
- Include a detailed **Readme file** for each project that is pinned to your profile, including screenshots and code snippets. Here’s a [link](#) to an example of an excellent Readme file.
- Keep up your contribution activity throughout the entire program...and after you graduate!

Here are two examples:

Student Example: Jonathan Melin almost had a perfect record of committing everyday while in the program from late February to mid May.

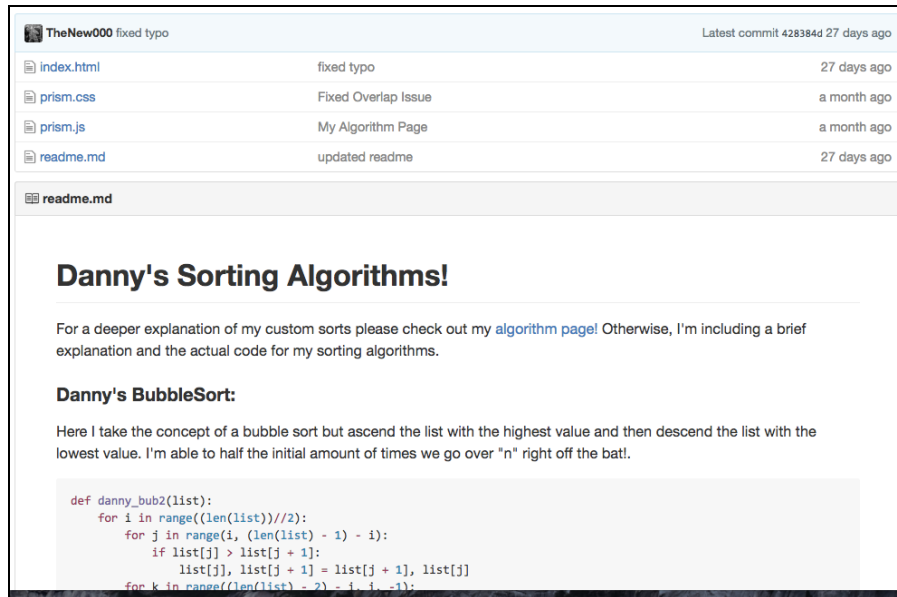


Student Example: Griffin Hammer continues to contribute to GitHub even after accepting a job in early February.



- Commit the work you complete outside of class, especially when you're practicing Object Oriented Programming and/or Algorithms.

Here's an example:



- Spelling errors, grammatical errors, and poor writing in general will hurt your odds of employment significantly. If writing isn't your strong suit, ask a classmate or DigitalCrafts staff to help or proofread your Readme files.

Following these guidelines will ensure your GitHub profile is an easy resource for any employer who wants to learn more about your projects.

Resume Guidelines

Everybody knows that a well-tailored resume is key to landing your dream job. However, sitting down to actually write your resume can be a daunting task, especially when you may be coming into software development from another career. Hopefully these guidelines will serve as a roadmap to help you craft a resume that best showcases your skills and experience.

Getting Started

- Aim for one page unless you have years and years of *relevant* experience. Fit to one page by adjusting margins and space between lines, or even using columns.
- Order your resume to highlight the most applicable sections for your job search. For example, if you do not have any prior technical experience you should consider putting your Featured Projects and your recent Education at the very top of your resume.
- Don't know where to start?
 - Check out our resume templates on Schoology! There are also TONS of free templates online.
 - The following site may be helpful if you're looking for a more classic resume look: www.hloom.com -- also, they've even categorized [templates that are optimized for Applicant Tracking Systems \(ATS\)](#).
 - For a more creative design-inspired resume, check out: www.canva.com
 - The Muse is an awesome job hunting resource - they've published a helpful [41 Best Resume Templates Ever](#) article
- It's totally fine to keep design elements minimal. You want your resume to look clean and polished, and you need to dazzle employers with your skills and experience, not your design.
- Use bold text and bullets to guide the reader to make sure your achievements stand out.
- Know your audience: Your resume will likely be viewed by 3 types of people:
 1. Human Resources (HR) Manager or Recruiter
 2. Development Team Hiring Manager (this might be the CTO for a startup)
 3. Potential Teammates (Fellow Developers)

The goal is to make sure your resume resonates with each of them. For example: make sure project descriptions are in layman's terms as an HR Manager likely has little tech experience.

- Do some research on industry keywords and add them to your resume wherever they are relevant. HR Managers often scan resumes for these buzzwords.
- **Pro tip:** Pull keywords from the job description for the job you are applying for.
- Spell key industry words correctly. Here are a few common examples:

Correct	Incorrect
jQuery	Jquery
AngularJS	Angular.js
Node.js	NodeJS
MySQL	mySQL

- Use correct grammar and punctuation. Have a friend proofread your resume!
- Use consistent formatting throughout including:
 - Ensure all bulleted lists align throughout the entirety of your resume
 - Ensure font size is consistent. Headings should be formatted the same throughout.
 - Avoid adding unnecessary space to fill the entire page, or trying so hard to fit it in one page that it is unreadable
- Check your resume before sending it to an employer. Is there anything you can change or augment to highlight your fit for the position you are applying for? If so -- edit it!
- Spell check, spell check, and spell check again!
- When saving, include your first name, last name, current year, and the word “resume” in the filename. For example, you can save your file type as “Doe, John - 2017 Resume” or “John Doe Resume 2017” but please avoid “johndoe_resume_v2_dev” or “john-resume-revised-v11” as it looks unprofessional.
- **Pro tip:** Save resume as a .PDF before sending to employers or submitting an application online. Saving your resume in the .PDF format will ensure your formatting stays consistent if and when an employer views it on a mobile phone, tablet, or computer screen.
- If you do have a penchant for design, make sure you also have a simple version of your resume that is compatible with ATS portals:
 - Simple formatting
 - Avoid “Serif” fonts
 - No images, tables, etc.
 - Single column format
- Ensure all URLs work properly after saving resume in .PDF format (i.e. try clicking on every link - don’t say we didn’t warn you!)

Content

Heading/Contact Section

- Include a link to Portfolio
- Include a link to LinkedIn profile



- Include a link to Blog (if you have one relevant to development)
- Include a link to GitHub account
- Email address and phone number
- Location: city and state versus your actual address. Some employers may think your commute to the office is too far if you provide them your exact address. For example, include “Atlanta, GA” or “Willing to Relocate” not your full address like “3423 Piedmont Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30305”

Summary Section (Optional)

- Include a Summary that discusses your years of experience, skills, honors, and accomplishments. This can be especially helpful if you don’t have any prior experience in web development or the tech industry--you can use the Summary to quickly highlight your transferable skills. Think of it as your “sales pitch.” Here are [two articles](#) with more information about summary statements.

Experience

- In the Experience section (or a separate Featured Projects section), include a minimum of 2 of your most impressive projects, whether developed in-class or outside of class. **These projects should also be featured in your portfolio and pinned to your GitHub profile.** Each project description should include the following:
 - Project Name
 - Date of completion
 - URL to live demo
 - URL to GitHub repo (all projects on resume should include a detailed Readme file on GitHub)
 - Detailed description of the technologies used in project, but not just a list of the skills

Here is an example:

Featured Projects

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| Convo Buddy convobuddy.rocks github.com/Linustorvalds/convobuddy | January 2017 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conversation-generating tool for ESL teachers to use with their students - Built with HTML, CSS, SCSS, AngularJS, Node.js, Express, and MongoDB - Features ability to view questions all at once or filter by specific categories as well as randomize the presentation order | |
| Jamón Depot jamondepot.club github.com/Linustorvalds/jamondepot | December 2017 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E-commerce site that sells a fine selection of cured Spanish ham - Built with HTML, CSS, SCSS, AngularJS, Node.js, Express, and MongoDB - Integrated the Stripe API to allow for customer checkout and enabled sign up/log in for user accounts | |
| Blackjack myblackjack.com github.com/Linustorvalds/myblackjack | November 2016 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The classic card game Blackjack (aka 21), featuring betting and ability for the player to hit, stand, double down, and split - Built with HTML, CSS, SCSS, JavaScript, and jQuery - Wrote program adhering to OOP principles and utilized Jasmine to test functionality while building | |
| Nerd Review nerdreview.co github.com/Linustorvalds/nerdreview | October 2016 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A product review website where users can add products and write reviews as well as browse existing reviews - Built with HTML, CSS, JavaScript, jQuery, Python, Flask, and PostgreSQL - Designed and assembled a fully mobile-responsive layout and routed information being passed from the database | |

- Include your prior professional experience (if applicable). For each professional experience, include **a minimum of 3 bullet points** detailing your role, responsibilities, but most importantly the changes, improvements, and accomplishments you made at the company or don't include the experience at all. Your goal is to explain to the employer the value you will bring to their organization by detailing your prior achievements.
 - Further tips for bullet point content:
 - Even if you don't have any prior professional experience in the development field, you can use your past work experience section to showcase the skills used in these jobs that are relevant to a career in development (problem solving, analytical thinking, etc.).
 - You want to convey to future employers that you will add value to their organization, so it's always best to include "changes you made" versus "your responsibilities" of the job itself.
 - It's always best to quantify achievements if possible:
 - Here's an example, if you were previously a stock trader:
 - Actively managed portfolio of \$5MM+ over a 16-year period navigating volatile markets and rapidly changing markets
 - Increased portfolio value by 30%+ while managing a team of 6 junior equity traders
 - Optimized trading strategies by implementing a quantitative and data analysis approach leading to an overall cost savings of \$3MM in 5 years



Education Section

- DigitalCrafts should be included in the Education section. Here is an example:

<u>Education</u>	
DigitalCrafts Immersive Coding Bootcamp	September 2016 – January 2017
Atlanta, GA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 16-week intensive, full-time accelerated learning program▪ Learned Python and full-stack JavaScript, including Node.js, MySQL, Express, AngularJS, HTML/CSS, and Amazon Web Services	
Clark University B.A.	Fall 2008 – Spring 2012
Worcester, MA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Psychology and Sociology double major	4.00 GPA - Dean's List 2008, 2009

- If you would like to include a longer description in the Education section, you can use this example:

DigitalCrafts - Full-Stack Software Development Program 07.2017 – 11.2017
Atlanta, GA

- **Full-Stack Web Development:** Immersive course covering HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Python, including an emphasis on cutting-edge frameworks like React / Redux and server-side technologies including Node.js, Express, and MySQL.
- **UI/UX Design Elective:** Evening course bringing the methodologies of research together with industry design tools such as Sketch, Photoshop, and InVision to develop a project from wireframe to working prototype.

“Other” Sections

- Include any extracurricular activities, organizations, and/or certificates which you deem relevant like Member of freeCodeCamp Meetup, JavaScript Meetup, Girl Develop It, PyLadies, or participation in any Hack-a-thons events.
- Include any awards or special honors in their own section so they stand out
- Note about Skills sections: It's generally unnecessary to have a Skills section listing each and every technical skill you know -- your project descriptions should have descriptions of the technologies you used and how you used them. However, feel free to include one if you want a place to highlight skills that aren't addressed anywhere else in your resume.

What Not to Include

- References, or the phrase “References Available on Request”. However, it’s always good to have a list of references at the ready in case they are requested.
- An Objective statement -- Some older resume templates may include this type of section. It’s generally considered to be outdated and unnecessary, and if you’d like to include a little more of a personal statement in your resume, consider a Summary (described in more detail above).
- Your GPA (unless it’s really, really high)
- A photo
- Excessive design
- Hard-to-read or tiny fonts
- False information - Hopefully this should be obvious, but it needs to be stressed nonetheless. It’s fine to talk up your accomplishments, but *never* claim proficiency in a technical skill you are not familiar with. The employer will find out, and it will be embarrassing. This is not to say you shouldn’t apply for a position if you aren’t familiar with a skill or two in the job description - employers often expect that some kind of training will be required to onboard new-hires to a position. If you are upfront and honest about where you stand in relation to their requirements, they can determine how best to fit you in.

Taking the time to follow these guidelines will ensure that your resume contains all the necessary information to ensure that you are competitive in your job search. The most important thing to remember is that your resume is a malleable document: before sending it to an employer always check your resume against the job description and make adjustments to highlight relevant strengths and skills.

Cover Letter Guidelines

First of all: Yes, you have to write a cover letter and yes, someone will read it! We know a cover letter can feel redundant since you're sending the employer an application, resume, and a portfolio with links to your social profiles. However, remember your cover letter is your first impression; a poorly written or copied-straight-from-a-template cover letter can easily cause an HR Manager to not even look at those other items. Use the guidelines below to learn to write a cover letter that stands out from the pack.

Getting Started

- Always address your cover letter to a specific person. If you've done your research but still can't find out the hiring manager's name, "Dear Hiring Manager" is an OK substitute (not the archaic "To Whom it May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam").
- Use correct grammar and punctuation.
- Spell check, spell check, and spell check again!
- The Muse has a great article with [31 cover letter tips](#) and another one on [opening lines](#) to avoid. In addition, they've crafted an excellent [template](#) that is designed to show off transferable skills (this is key if you have little professional experience in the position you are applying for). We've also created an example cover letter based on this template, which you can find at the end of this section of guidelines.

Content

- Above all, avoid the generic -- Customize your cover letter content specifically to the company and position for which you are applying. You don't want a cover letter that reads like you just changed the names on a template. Similarly, don't cut and paste anything from your resume; this is obvious and gives the impression that you don't care.
- Reference company knowledge -- an HR Manager wants to know that you are interested in the position and company, and not just because it's any job. Demonstrate that you did your research -- what about this company makes you want to work there? What about this position is exciting to you?
- Be specific. Think of your cover letter as your chance to explain your resume -- to tell your story. Instead of just rattling off the skills that are already listed on your resume, go into specifics. What exactly was it about your past job that allowed you to develop those stellar leadership skills? How exactly have you been praised for your attention to detail? When was it you first learned that you were especially talented at MySQL?
- Focus on what you can bring to the company, not how good the position would be for you and your career.



- A catchy opener and/or a personal anecdote are easy ways to set yourself away from the pack.
- Don't be afraid to brag -- a cover letter is where you should sell yourself!
- Don't apologize for lack of experience or skills; focus on your strengths and successes. Use the job description as a guide for what strengths you should highlight.
- If you know someone in the company, a cover letter is where you can drop that name.
- Pay attention to format: Keep paragraphs short, and use bullet points to make specific accomplishments or intentions stand out.
- Closing language is important: It's your last chance to make an impression! Here are a few closing language [do's and don'ts](#) from the Muse.

In conclusion, a well-written cover letter is the perfect opportunity to introduce yourself to the HR Manager and highlight elements of your experiences and skills that can't be conveyed through other means. To a certain extent, resumes can be impersonal, LinkedIn profiles all look the same, and your GitHub profiles and portfolios focus primarily on your body of work. Therefore, be professional in a cover letter, but don't be afraid to let your personality shine through. A great cover letter will be compelling, leaving the HR manager curious to know more about your skills and experience.

(refer to next page for example)



Example:

Dear Mr. Bock,

With the utmost enthusiasm, I would like to express my interest in the Junior Developer position at Home Depot. Through my career, my interest in problem solving has led me from sales, to management, to a full stack development bootcamp. I always knew that I wanted to build and create useful products, not just market them, and in the past six months I have gained and refined the skills I need to do so, and the confidence to apply these skills to a job I believe in. I believe that my passion for web development, strong commitment to continuing to learn and develop my skills, and deep interest in and respect for the work being done at Home Depot make me an ideal candidate to join your development team.

As a candidate, here's what I could immediately bring to the table:

An effective communicator: In my role at AT&T, I consistently received positive feedback from my staff and I was named manager of the month three months in a row. I was also able to showcase my communication abilities as a team lead in our project "AT&T in Motion," acting as a liaison between inner-city schools and our company. The skills I learned through these negotiations will allow me to quickly assimilate into the company culture at Home Depot, and seamlessly begin working with my team to build quality products.

A disciplined problem solver: I have always displayed my careful approach to problem solving by taking the time to consider each option and determining only the most effective results. In my days in sales at AT&T, I frequently encountered customers whose problems required quick, undivided attention, and I was consistently praised for my quick and effective solutions. As a junior developer at Home Depot, I would apply this same diligence to working with my team to build state-of-the-art, easy to use, user-friendly websites and applications.

A passionate learner: Since discovering my penchant for web development, everything I have engaged in this past year has been driven by my keen interest in the field. Even during my time in the customer service industry, I always felt happiest when I was solving logical problems and creating a product that I believed in. It is this passion that has driven every one of my career decisions thus far, and that will continue to drive me to excel and grow in a career with Home Depot.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I look forward to contributing my skills and experiences to the Junior Developer position at Home Depot and hope to have the opportunity to speak with you further about how I can be an asset to your team.

Sincerely,
Linus Torvalds



Portfolio Guidelines

Getting Started

- Know thyself. Designing and developing are two very different things, and some of the best developers around can't design a decent landing page. If look-and-feel isn't your strength, don't try to design a custom portfolio.
- Rather, find a relatively simple template or existing portfolio online that you really like. Find more than one if you want, and borrow the design features that interest you.
- If you must, it's okay to download or purchase a template, but this is not recommended. Recreate the template / designs that you chose from scratch. We're outsourcing the designer here, not the developer! Make sure to write clean, indented, well-commented code. You never know when an employer might right click and hit "View Source."

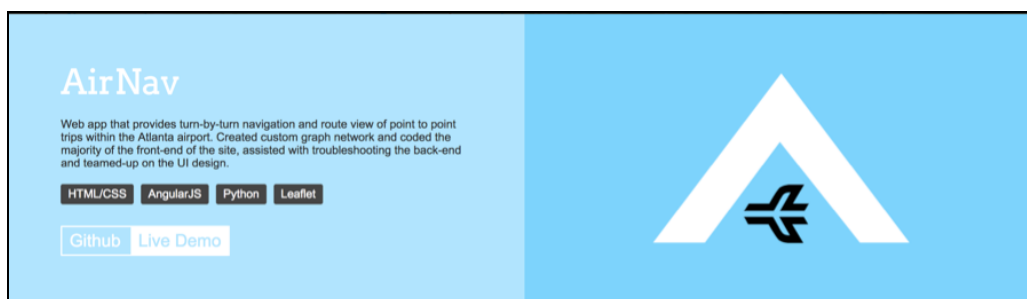
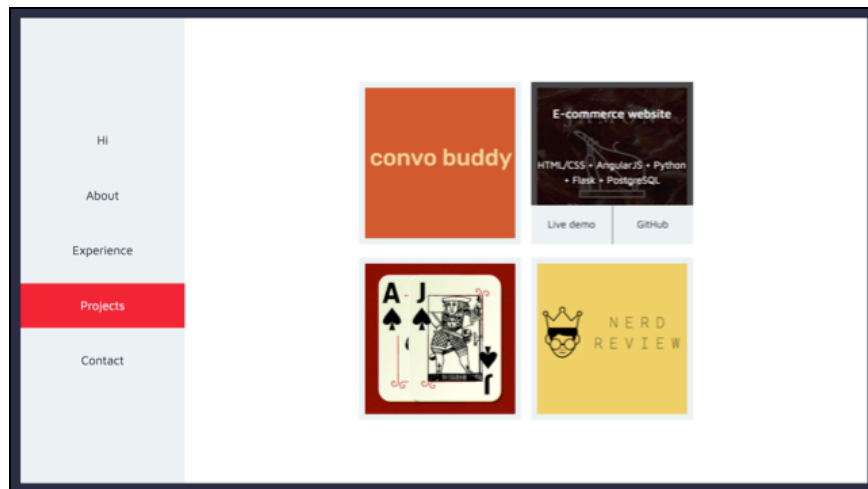
Content

- Include a paragraph or two about yourself: your hobbies, your education, path to present day, and most importantly – your goals as a developer and what you can bring to a potential client or employer. A lot of hirers want to see your personality and gauge if it's a good fit for their team.
- Include a section displaying the technologies you have had exposure or experience with. We do not advise using the all-too-common "proficiency percentage" format with your skills / technologies. Almost no one feels comfortable giving themselves a 100%, which might come across as cocky, and what's the point of labeling yourself with a "45% Python" score? **It's the employer's job to determine your aptitude, not yours!**
- If you have any related experience or education, try to include some mention of it. As your portfolio is online, use links for things like *DigitalCrafts*, as employers may not know what *Immersive Bootcamp Student* means.
- Don't include your address or neighborhood on your portfolio or resume. It could count against you in an employer's eyes if your commute would be long. Long commutes might equal late mornings.
- Employers are looking at your portfolio and work with a filter. **Never present anything that could negatively trigger their filter.** If you have *lorem ipsum* placeholder text somewhere, update it. If you have bugs in one of your displayed projects, fix them.

Design / Color Scheme

- **YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT HOW IT LOOKS.** Some of our strongest students programmatically have been guilty of not caring about the front-end design of their projects / portfolios. It doesn't matter if you would prefer to leave the design up to others throughout your career; your portfolio is your main representation of yourself online and in the job search. The HR person receiving resumes likely doesn't understand that there's a difference between your front-end looking poor and your incredible back-end code.
- **Unless you're borrowing from a professionally designed template, it can be difficult to implement self-designed dark color schemes.** Whitespace is "in" these days, and making it look nice seems to come easier to most. Generally speaking with portfolios, "less is more."
- Center things and apply padding around elements when appropriate. We've had strong programmers leave the bulk of a project bunched up in the top left corner of the screen, which can severely distract from the functionality.

Good Examples:



Projects

- Every portfolio should focus on getting the user to click on your best project. That doesn't mean include 9 projects in a jQuery image gallery, with the hope that a visitor will pick the best one. **Focus on drawing attention to 2-3 of your strongest work examples. If you *must* include more than that, proceed with caution.**
- We often see students represent projects with screenshots that aren't sized appropriately, creating distorted thumbnails of what the project looks like. Put time into this, and make sure whatever thumbnail images you use are the best glimpse at your project possible.
- Put your strongest / most impressive project in the top left (generally) of your projects section. People read websites like they read books, and the top-left project / links will always receive 80%+ of the clicks. Link to them using Bitly to track clicks if you'd like.
- **Update your portfolio to include your final project!** Some students don't bother to include their final projects on their portfolio. You worked hard for three weeks, it should be your most impressive project, why not show it off?
- **IF YOU HAVE BUGS IN PROJECTS THAT ARE INCLUDED IN YOUR PORTFOLIO, FIX THEM! IF THEY'RE UNFINISHED, FINISH THEM!**
- It's imperative to have some explanation regarding the technologies / challenges / solutions pertaining to each project. Some do this with hover effects, or modals in-between clicking on the project and actually landing. I prefer when it's visible from the get-go, but it's up to you.
- It may take a little extra work, but we strongly encourage you to use QuickTime (or something else) to record a video of you walking through your most impressive 1-2 projects. Put it on your portfolio and YouTube, and link to it from your resume. Think how powerful it would be for you to be able to include a video in introductory emails to employers, proving that you can speak intelligently about the tech and programming behind your favorite project! It's like sneaking an interview on them without an invitation.
- **TEST YOUR OWN SITES!** Do not include broken links, and don't link to projects that don't work. If you want to include a project that has a bug, fix the bug! If your API key has expired for some project, fix the issue.

GitHub

- Link to GitHub from your portfolio, and also link to the corresponding GitHub repos alongside your projects. Have excellent ReadMe files telling what the application does, the technologies used, challenges faced, favorite code snippets, etc.
- Don't worry about committing "bad" projects in the beginning of class to GitHub. Employers aren't going to dig through every repo you've created. You want to show consistency and improvement. One guest speaker told our students he looks at

applicant's GitHub profiles and checks to see if they're a "9-5er, committing only Monday through Friday," or if they're still coding on the weekends. Consistency is important, including after graduation!

- If you're up for it, consider creating an open-source tool / feature for others to use. Even if only a few classmates use it, 5-10 forks can prove a powerful talking point in an interview!

Additional Notes

- If writing isn't your strong suit, ask a classmate or member of our staff for help proofreading. **Copy the text from your site into Microsoft Word and use Spell Checker.** Sublime / Atom won't do it for you!
- **Buy a custom URL for your portfolio.** Most people use their name, but that's up to you. It's typically less than \$15 (and often \$4-5), and well worth the small expense.
- While you're welcome to host on Heroku, I'd advise against it as it does take awhile to spin up when a visitor lands on your page. Remember, HR folks may not understand the cause of issues like that. Amazon Web Services have extensive tutorials and offer the first year for free. Some other options include Host Gator, GoDaddy, etc.
- **Make sure your portfolio is responsive to mobile devices. TEST THIS.**
- **Optimize your images for your site.** Don't include any images that are over ~500kb, as it will slow down your load time and is considered very basic front-end best practice. We've had an employer partner turn down a student for this very reason – it's a red flag.
- If you include an image of yourself (and it's our opinion that you should), make sure it's professional. It doesn't have to look like a photo at the DMV, but a picture of you with beers in both hands and "sleepy" eyes doesn't do anyone any good.
- If you *are* particularly creative, run with it. Check out Jonathan's portfolio below for an awesome example of something out of the ordinary.

Portfolio Examples from Previous Students

- Jonathan Melin - <http://jonathanmelin.com/> (big points for creativity!)
- Jesslyn Landgren - <http://jesslynlandgren.com/>
- Jackson Yeager - <http://volition-dev.com/>
- John Coppola - <https://johnnycopos.github.io/>
- Kyle Luck - <http://kyleluck.com/> (except the skill progress bars)
- DeeAnn Kendrick - <http://deeannkendrick.com/>
- Carolyn Daniel - <http://www.carolynsdaniel.com/> (main image loads slowly)

Useful Resources

- Dribbble - <https://dribbble.com/> (“Show and tell for designers”)
- Theme Forest - <https://themeforest.net/> (portfolio templates)
- Cody House - <https://codyhouse.co/> (“Free HTML, CSS, JS Nuggets”)

Heat Map Showing User's Attention On Site

Note that it follows an “F” pattern.





Career Readiness Checklist

Once you've completed your LinkedIn and GitHub profiles and created your portfolio and resume using the guidelines in this packet, it's time to submit them to the Student Services Team for feedback! Before you do so, please use the following checklist to make sure you've included all the required elements.

LinkedIn Profile Checklist

NOTE: Read the LinkedIn Profile Guidelines before proceeding with this checklist

- ☐ Profile photo
- ☐ Location is desired work location
- ☐ Current job title contains a keyword which reflects the job you desire: "Software Developer" "Front-End Developer" "Full-Stack Developer" "JavaScript Developer", etc.
- ☐ **Contact Info** section includes:
 - ☐ Link to your GitHub profile
 - ☐ Link to your portfolio
 - ☐ Link to your blog, twitter, and include your email if you feel comfortable sharing
- ☐ **Summary** section includes 3 to 5 sentences describing yourself, your previous educational or work experience, and a brief overview of the job you are hoping to secure after graduation.
- ☐ **Experience** section includes:
 - ☐ "Student at DigitalCrafts" (listed first).
 - ☐ Detailed entries of your other professional experience.
- ☐ **Skills & Endorsements** section: Relevant skills and technologies selected
- ☐ **Education** section: DigitalCrafts listed first: Entries for main curriculum and elective
- ☐ **Certificates** section lists certificates you've obtained: freeCodeCamp, Lynda.com, Udemy, etc.
- ☐ **Projects** section includes a description of your most impressive project, or a link to your portfolio

GitHub Profile Checklist

NOTE: Read the GitHub Profile Guidelines before proceeding with this checklist

- ☐ Profile photo
- ☐ Bio
- ☐ Link to your portfolio



- ☐ Projects that are featured in your portfolio and resume are pinned to the front of your GitHub profile
- ☐ Each project that is pinned to your profile has a detailed Readme file including screenshots and code snippets.

Resume Checklist

*****NOTE: Read the Resume Guidelines before proceeding with this checklist*****

- ☐ Link to Portfolio
- ☐ Link to LinkedIn profile
- ☐ Link to Blog (if applicable)
- ☐ Link to GitHub account
- ☐ Contact information including an email address and phone number
- ☐ A minimum of 2 projects in either the Experience section or in a separate Featured Projects section. **These projects should also be featured in your portfolio.**
 - ☐ Each project description includes the following:
 - ☐ Project Name
 - ☐ Date of completion
 - ☐ URL to live demo
 - ☐ URL to GitHub repo
 - ☐ Detailed description of the technologies used in project
- ☐ A **minimum of 3 bullet points** for each professional experience detailing your role, responsibilities, changes/improvements you made at the company, and accomplishments.
- ☐ DigitalCrafts included in the Education section.
- ☐ All extracurricular activities, organizations, and/or certificates are included
- ☐ Spell check, spell check, and spell check again
- ☐ Filename includes first name, last name, year, and the word “resume”
- ☐ All URLs work properly after saving resume in .pdf format

Portfolio Checklist

*****NOTE: Read the Portfolio Guidelines before proceeding with this checklist*****

- ☐ All links and forms work properly.
- ☐ Images optimized to the smallest file sizes possible. (Ideally, images should be under ~400 KB)
- ☐ Mobile responsiveness has been tested (with several different kinds of phones, if possible).



Key Contact & Profile Information

- ☐ Link to LinkedIn profile
- ☐ Link to GitHub account
- ☐ Contact form or contact information: (email address at a minimum as an active link)
- ☐ Link to downloadable version of resume in .pdf format
- ☐ About Me section or page describing your passions, skills, and what you plan to bring to future employers.
- ☐ Optional (but encouraged): Headshot or other photo

Project Information

- ☐ **Gallery includes minimum of 2 of your most impressive projects** with the strongest projects on the top row and/or on the left side of the gallery.
- ☐ For project galleries with over 3 or more projects: the best projects are featured prominently.
 - ☐ Each project description includes the following:
 - ☐ Project Name
 - ☐ URL to live demo
 - ☐ URL to GitHub repo (all projects in portfolio include a detailed Readme file on GitHub, including code snippets and screenshots, and are 'pinned' to the top of your GitHub profile)
 - ☐ Description of the technologies used in project

Congratulations! You're now ready to submit your portfolio and resume to the Student Services Coordinator for review.

[Click Here](#) to submit a request for feedback.

Part 2: The Job Search

Now that you have received feedback on your resume, portfolio, and online presence and made any revisions necessary, it's time to start the job search! We know that this can be a difficult and stressful process; the following pages contain some tips and tools we hope will make it a little easier.

As you read through these tips, please reach out to the Student Services Coordinator (@katym) or any other staff member if you have any questions.

Happy hunting, and good luck!



How to Set up a Job Tracking Spreadsheet

Organization is key to the job search process. A job tracking spreadsheet can be a helpful tool to be able to see the status of all your applications at a glance.

Please follow these steps carefully.

1. Open the Job Tracking Spreadsheet Template using [this link](#)
2. Rename the File “Last Name, First Name - Cohort Start Date - Job Tracking Spreadsheet”
Example: “Hadden, Jake - April 2017 Cohort - Job Tracking Spreadsheet”
3. Save the spreadsheet to your personal GDrive account for future use by clicking Add to My Drive.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Share your file directly with Jake Hadden (jake@digitalcrafts.com) by clicking the blue button in the top right corner “Share” so our Student Services team can be kept up-to-date with your job search progress.
5. Continuously update your spreadsheet after an application is submitted and/or you hear back from a recruiter or hiring manager.

Networking Tips

Never underestimate the importance of networking! It is estimated that up to 80% of jobs aren't posted online. Tell everyone you know about your journey in this transition. You never know where a lead will come!

In addition:

- Check out Meetup groups in your city. Search specifically “software development” related groups. There’s a good chance there is a Monthly JavaScript Meetup in your city or a freeCodeCamp meetup.
- Attend hackathons, conferences, anything industry-related! Don’t just focus on meeting employers and recruiters, your peers in the industry are valuable contacts as well. A junior developer might know about an open position in their company and be able to pass along a good word about you.
- Don’t be afraid to cold email companies that you have a strong interest in. Who knows, they may be considering adding someone to the team but haven’t got around to actually posting the job yet! [This article](#) has some good information about sending that cold email, including a template (as well as a ton of other advice about interviewing).

Tips:

- Perfect your elevator pitch -- the answer to the question “Tell me about yourself”
Go farther than simply stating your intention “I just graduated from a coding bootcamp and I’m looking for a junior developer job.” ← this is boring and not memorable. Instead:
 - Make it a story. Remember: “People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.”
 - Quickly address transition doubt (“I’m grateful to have learned X in my career, but what was missing was...”). It’s very important to be able to clearly articulate why you quit your job or skipped college to pursue development as a career.
 - Clearly state your goal (“At the moment I’m hoping to transition into a junior developer job”). “Transition” is key here. You don’t want to mention negatives, like unemployment or job hunt stress.
- Have a plan -- Think about possible topics that will come up. Rehearse questions/answers with a friend or your partner if need be. You don’t want to prep a beautiful elevator speech just to get tongue-tied when your contact asks you follow-up questions.

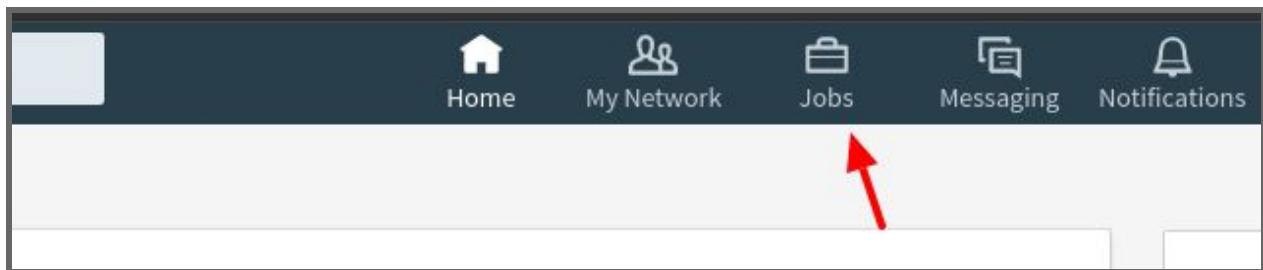
LinkedIn Tips

LinkedIn is an important tool for keeping in touch with your networking contacts, but it is also very helpful for the job search process.

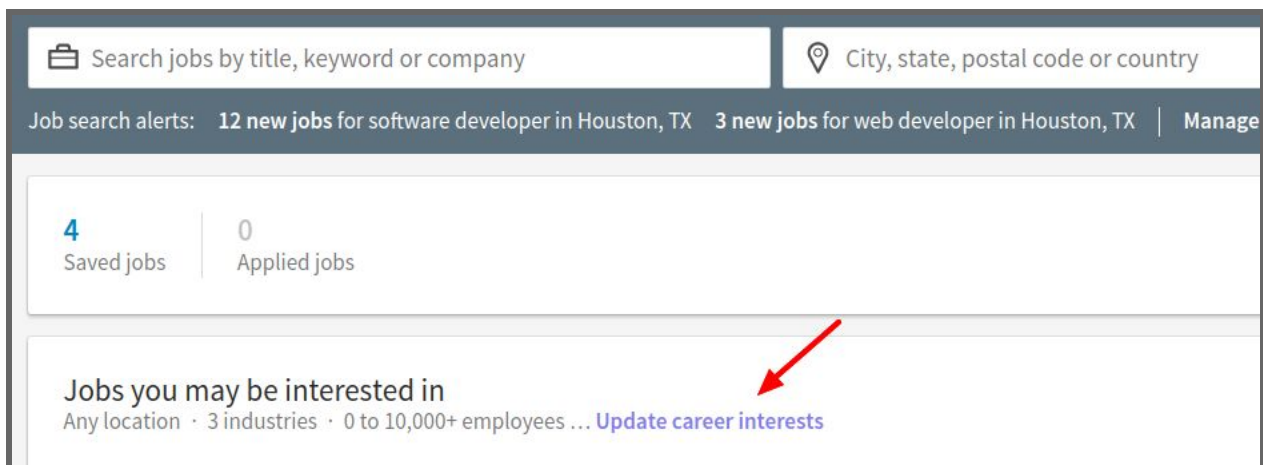
Set Your Job Preferences

Setting your job preferences will help you find the most recent and relevant job opportunities based on your preferences. By setting your preferences, jobs will begin to automatically appear in your Home Page news feed.

1. Select “Jobs” from the navbar:



2. The Jobs page is where you can search for Jobs, see your saved jobs and jobs you’ve applied for On the Jobs page, select "Update career interests"



3. Fill out the Career Interests page:

- Make sure the “Let recruiters know you’re open” switch is “On”
- Fill out the optional “Note to recruiters section” with a quick intro.
- Add job titles you are interested in.
- Check the boxes for the types of employment you’re interested in.

Career interests

[Privacy settings](#)

Let recruiters know you’re open

We take steps not to show your current company that you’re open, but can’t guarantee complete privacy. [Learn more](#) On ☒

Note to recruiters (optional)

Fill out this section with a note about your strengths, etc.

61/300

What job titles are you considering?

☒ Full Stack Developer ☒ Javascript Developer ☒ Software Engineer [+ Add title](#)

What locations would you work in?

☒ Houston, Texas [+ Add location](#)

What types of jobs are you open to?

☒ Full-time ☒ Part-time ☒ Internship ☒ Remote ☒ Freelance ☒ Contract

Show company preferences [▼](#)



- You can also select company preferences:

Which industries do you prefer?

✓ Information Technology and Services + Add industry

What size company would you like to work for? (Number of employees)

1 to 10,000+

Hide company preferences ^

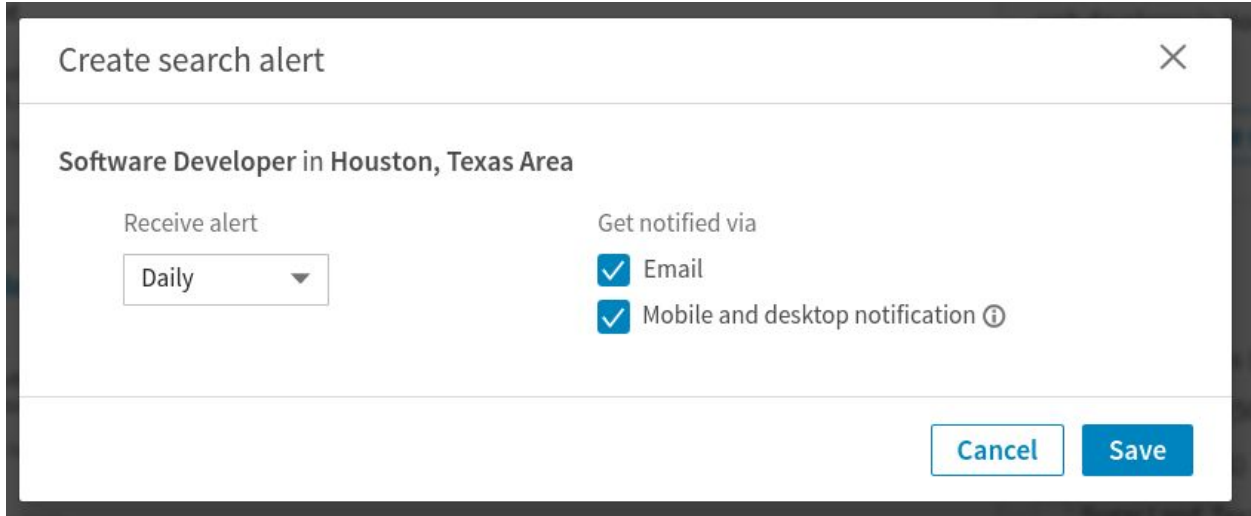
Search For and Save Jobs

Searching and applying for jobs on LinkedIn is very user friendly. When searching for a job, you can actually save your searches and specific job postings.

1. If a certain search returns results you like, click on “Create search alert”

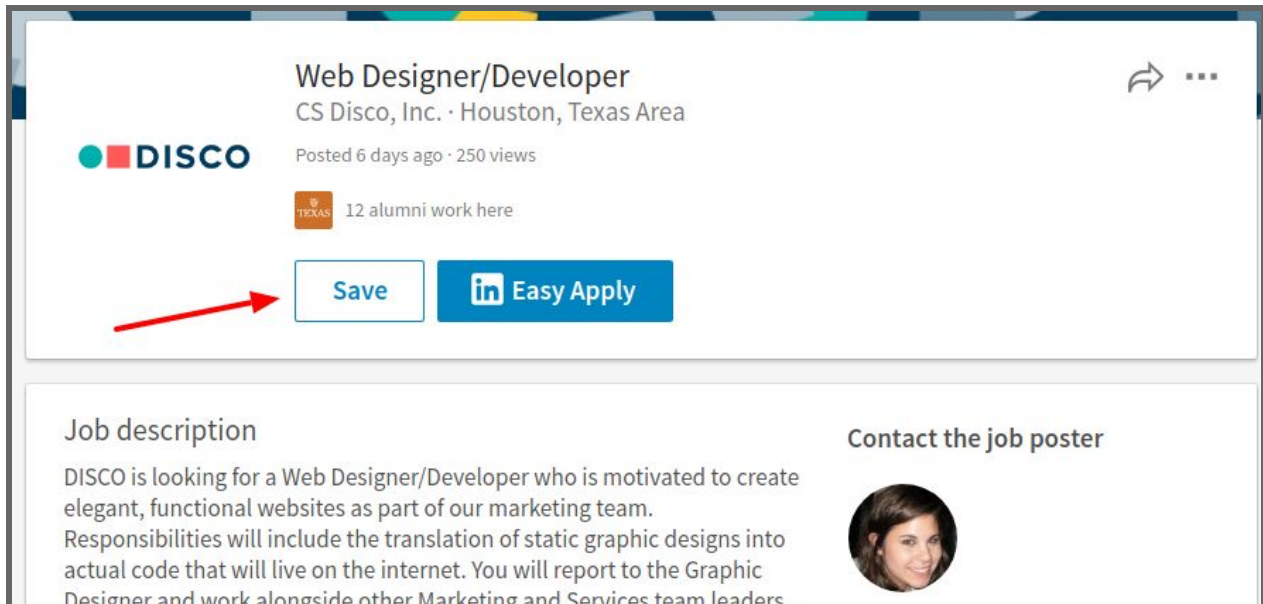
A screenshot of the LinkedIn search interface. The search bar at the top shows 'Software Developer' and 'Houston, Texas Area'. Below the search bar, there are tabs for 'Top', 'People', 'Jobs', 'Posts', 'Companies', 'Groups', and 'Schools'. The 'Jobs' tab is selected. The main content area shows 'Showing 734 results.' and a 'Sort by: Relevance' dropdown. A job listing for 'Software Developer' at 'Connective Talent' is visible. To the right of the job listings, there is a sidebar with 'Saved job searches • Manage' and a list of saved searches: 'software developer in Houston, TX (12 new)' and 'web developer in Houston, TX (3 new)'. Below this list is a 'Create search alert' button, which is highlighted with a red arrow. At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a 'Filter jobs by' section.

2. This will take you to a dialog box where you can set your contact preferences:



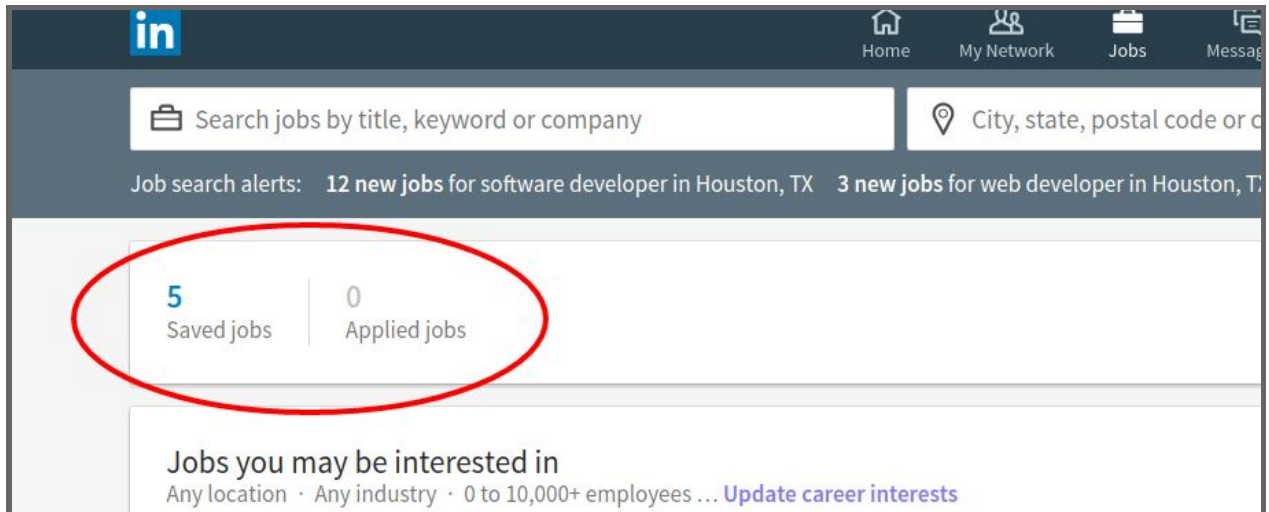
The dialog box is titled "Create search alert" and has a close button (X) in the top right corner. Below the title, the search criteria are displayed: "Software Developer in Houston, Texas Area". There are two main sections for configuring the alert. The first section, "Receive alert", contains a dropdown menu currently set to "Daily". The second section, "Get notified via", contains two checked checkboxes: "Email" and "Mobile and desktop notification" (which has an information icon). At the bottom right of the dialog, there are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Save".

3. Once you've found a job that interests you, you can apply right away, or save this job to your profile to stay up to date on any changes:



The image shows a job listing for "Web Designer/Developer" at "CS Disco, Inc. · Houston, Texas Area". The listing includes the DISCO logo, the text "Posted 6 days ago · 250 views", and a badge indicating "12 alumni work here". Below this information are two buttons: "Save" and "Easy Apply". A red arrow points to the "Save" button. The job description section below the buttons states: "DISCO is looking for a Web Designer/Developer who is motivated to create elegant, functional websites as part of our marketing team. Responsibilities will include the translation of static graphic designs into actual code that will live on the internet. You will report to the Graphic Designer and work alongside other Marketing and Services team leaders." To the right of the job description is a section titled "Contact the job poster" which includes a circular profile picture of a woman.

4. You can keep track of jobs you've applied to and jobs you've saved back on the Jobs page:



Job Board Tips

Below is a list of some of our favorite job boards. Of course, there are many more. Check out the Job Boards list on Schoology (under Student Resources), which we keep constantly updated.

LinkedIn

- www.linkedin.com
- Large database of jobs and easy to set up daily or weekly job alerts.

Indeed

- www.indeed.com
- Large database, upload your resume to apply quickly. Easy to set up alerts.

The Muse

- <https://www.themuse.com/jobs>
- Easy interface including some company reviews. Bonus: sign up for their newsletter to get good-quality job search tips.

Dice

- www.dice.com
- Tech recruiting agency with large database. Can search job database w/out an account (but need an account to apply)

AngelList

- <http://angel.co/jobs>
- Jobs in startups, create a personalized account

Pro Tip: Have Jobs Brought to You

Indeed Prime

- <https://www.indeed.com/prime>
- Indeed Prime is a free service that helps engineers, designers and product managers secure top offers from leading companies - by bringing opportunities to you, and not the other way around.

Hired

- <https://hired.com/>
- Hired matches outstanding people with the world's most innovative companies

Finding jobs

Generally, you're going to be looking for junior developer or entry-level developer positions that are asking for anywhere from 0-3 years of experience. **Pro tip:** Don't always search for "junior" or "entry-level" in the job title. There are a lot of opportunities for junior developers where the job title simply says "Software Engineer".

Of course, remember -- always be honest on your application, resume, and cover letter. NEVER claim to know a language that you don't know. It WILL come out later, and it will be embarrassing.

Keywords

There are several different titles for programming jobs; don't limit your search to just one.

- Use different combinations of keywords:



- Full Stack, Front End, etc., are sometimes written as one word (FullStack) or with a hyphen (Full-Stack), so remember to search for both variations.
- You can also search by skill or language, such as "JavaScript," "CSS," etc.

Stay Organized

It's easy to get overwhelmed by the job search process. Staying organized will help you feel a little more in control. Remember to use your Job Tracking Spreadsheet to stay on top of all your applications and contacts.

Cover Letter Tips

Note: Make sure to also check out the Cover Letter Guidelines in Part 1 for a more in-depth guide to the structure of a cover letter, including a template.

Cover letters are often the most overlooked asset in the job application process, so we thought we'd take a second and emphasize their importance.

The truth is, a bad cover letter is probably not going to stop you from getting an interview. However, a killer cover letter absolutely CAN push you over the top and actually get you an interview. This is especially true in the case of career changers, who may be light on skills and experience.

Many new developers are so busy worrying about their portfolios and resumes that they neglect this important career asset and miss out on this valuable opportunity to set themselves apart from the pack. Below are some tips that you can follow to make sure you don't do the same.

Start strong

Without a doubt, the most important part of a cover letter is the opening. Just like a good newspaper article, novel, or essay, a cover letter needs to start with something that draws in the reader's attention. You can go a little outside of the box here -- do you have an anecdote that relates you to the company or the company's mission? Don't be afraid to get a little personal! Resumes are usually dry and all business. Your cover letter is where you get to show a little of your personality. Think of it as an intro to talking points for an interview.

Explain, don't repeat, your resume

Don't just rehash -- or worse, cut and paste -- the language from your resume. A cover letter is your chance to explain those short bullet points.

Think over your work experience -- where in the past have you used those transferable skills you have highlighted in your resume? Be specific. What exactly has prepared you for this role?

Use the job description

Don't forget that the employer has provided you with a valuable road map: the job description itself. Make sure to use it!



An easy strategy to make sure you cover everything an employer wants to know about: First, study the job description. Now, list one skill or role mentioned in the job description. Write it down. Now, think of something you have done that shows you have this skill, or are qualified to fill this role. Write that down. Do it again. It's that simple -- no need to go into cover letter cliches about being "a self-starter" or "fast learner" or "uniquely qualified for the position." Prove it!

Avoid cliches

Speaking of cliches, this is something that's worth reiterating. A phoned-in cover letter full of template language and cliches that could apply to every applicant is a waste of everyone's time. Remember, your cover letter is a valuable tool to show that you are up to the task, even if you don't have some of the technological skills an employer is looking for. If you don't use your cover letter to bring attention to all of your positive transferable skills, all the employer will have to go on are your resume and portfolio, which are more project- and skills-based.

The whole point of the application process is to get an employer to think that you are a good fit for their company, and not just because of your technical skill set. As mentioned before, a good cover letter gives an employer a sense of your personality, and demonstrates that not only can you do the job, you're nice to have around!

Skip the hard sell

Finally, don't confuse confidence with cockiness, especially if you don't have the years of experience to back it up. Hiring managers are people too -- they're unlikely to respond positively to boasting ("You'll never find anyone like me") or minor threats ("You'll regret it if you don't call me"). Yes, you are trying to sell yourself here, but no one likes to feel like they're being sold something. If you've done your job right, your cover letter should make the employer feel like it is their idea that you are a great candidate for the job. The conclusion should just reinforce "their" decision.

Interview Tips

It's no secret that interviews can be stressful. And, as you begin your career in development, you're probably going to have several interviews before you land a job that is the right fit.

It's important to look at the interview experience in a positive light. You can learn a lot from a job interview, about yourself, your career, and the industry that you are joining. Even a job interview that doesn't land you a job can be a great learning experience. Below are some tips that we hope will make your interviews go as smoothly as possible.

Be prepared!

It may seem obvious, but many people go into interviews without having done all the relevant research. You should be familiar with everything that is easily available on the Internet -- bonus points if you dig a little deeper to find more.

At a minimum, before your interview:

- **Research the company** - Check out their website, of course, but also do some general Google searches for recent news about the company.
- **Look for clues as to the company culture** - Does it look like a buttoned-up suit/tie kind of place? Or relaxed and fun? Check out the employees listed on LinkedIn and on the company website. Can you tell what kind of people work there?
- **Research your interviewer** - If you don't know the name of the person you will be meeting with, look for HR people in LinkedIn and on the company website.
- **Research/practice potential questions** - The best interviewee doesn't leave much chance for surprise in the interview. There are tons of resources out there with sample questions. This article from Forbes shares [50 of the most common questions](#), and this one from the Muse is a must-read for every job seeker, with a [deep dive into the top 31 questions and how to answer them](#). In addition, here's a Quora thread with some "[smart answers](#)" for further inspiration.

Know the job description

Again, this should go without saying, but you'd be surprised how many people go into a job interview with only a vague idea of what the role they are applying for entails. This often happens when you're applying for a lot of jobs. However, if an employer senses you don't have a firm grasp on what they want you to do, it's likely they'll assume you're not serious about the job (or worse, not *capable* to do the job!).

- Study the job description the night before your interview, and again shortly before you go

in.

- **Pro tip:** Memorize key terms used in the description so you can casually use them in your answers.

Get personal

The employer has seen your resume -- they know what skills/background you are bringing to the table. The main purpose of a job interview is so that an employer can determine whether you would be a good fit at their company, in short, whether they want to hang out with you every day.

Make sure that you can relate specific aspects of your past experience to their current needs. (“I noticed that you mentioned ... in the description. When I worked at ... I got a lot of experience doing and I think it could really translate to this role.”)

Also, just because it’s a job interview doesn’t mean you have to just stiffly answer questions and only talk about work! Feel free to bring up other aspects of your life when answering questions. Just remember -- keep it professional and light.

- YES: I’m glad you brought that up because I’ve been thinking about that a lot lately. I saw this movie last week called _____ that was all about that, and it really made me think...
- NO: My greatest learning experience this year was when my girlfriend broke up with me suddenly, so I had to move out of the house in three days. It was difficult, but it taught me...

Skip the cliches. Seriously

Yep, same as in your cover letter. You can assume the employee is interviewing many candidates, and chances are the majority are saying things like how they are a “team player” or “detail oriented” or “really interested in the company.” These candidates are all going to blend together.

However, if you’re offering creative, thoughtful, and well-prepared answers they will actually become engaged, and have a good time. In that moment you will transform from “just another qualified candidate” to a memorable one. (This is especially important for career changers who may be light on experience -- the burden is on you even more so to demonstrate that even though you might be less qualified than some candidates, you’re the most interesting, and therefore worth investing in.)



Address your lack of skills

The employer knows from your resume that you went to college, worked in Marketing for five years, quit your job and went to DigitalCrafts, and are now looking for a job. Plainly, you know and they know that you only have three-four months of programming experience, as opposed to some of the other applicants with three-four years.

So, should you spend the interview skirting the issue, hoping the employer doesn't bring it up? No way! Bring it up! Say "I know that on paper I'm new to programming, but I wanted to make sure you know that..."

Be engaged/ask questions of your own!

Don't do all the talking -- make sure to ask some questions of your own!!! This shows that you've been thinking about the company and position, and that you're truly interested in the job. Also, this is a perfect place to subtly show off how much research you have done about the company/employer.

People feel good when they are talking. You want the employer to recall the interview as an interesting conversation, not just them sitting there silently while you droned on about your experience.

Just remember, you don't want to get creepy with this. If your research led you to a deep crawl through their Facebook page, it's probably better to keep that to yourself.

- YES: I read the article you published in Fortune magazine last month. I thought that...
- NO: Oh hey, I noticed your niece turned 5 the other day! I have a niece too..."

Calm down

It's OK to be nervous. It's perfectly natural, and most people get nervous before an interview, even if they're overqualified! The goal is to just manage that energy so that it doesn't negatively affect how you present yourself.

The best thing you can do to fight the anxiety is to give yourself plenty of time to prepare, in the days before the interview and on the day of. If you have practiced interview questions and researched the company, you can feel confident that you know what you're walking into.

It's perfectly fine to bring notes with talking points and questions if you tend to get tongue-tied when you're nervous. If you've prepared and practiced, chances are you won't have to use them -- however, just knowing that they're there will be a comfort. Likewise, always bring a paper



copy of your resume to use as a reference (that way you don't have to puzzle out things like the years you were working at certain places).

Take a few moments before the interview to do some deep breathing exercises, practice power poses -- whatever relaxation techniques work for you. Likewise, if you find yourself getting overwhelmed in the interview, pause and take a deep breath.

Above all, try to remember to be yourself! People can tell when you're holding back, or worse, boasting or exaggerating your skills.

Remember, this is an exciting time. You've worked so hard to get to this place, and you're going to be interviewing for positions you are really excited about -- make sure this enthusiasm shows!

Behavioral best practices

Finally, a few basics to keep in mind:

- Stay professional -- keep personal stories light and appropriate
- Don't forget eye contact!
- Watch your body language -- firm handshake, try not to fidget/play with your hair or pen, etc.
- Don't be late
- Don't be SUPER early. Ten - fifteen minutes is fine. Otherwise you'll catch everyone off guard and it will be awkward.

What to bring to an interview

- Two paper copies of your resume (one for you and one for the employer, in case they'd like to use it)
- Pad of paper to take notes with and a pen
- Notes with talking points/questions
- References list



Now, start submitting applications! We have champagne waiting!

