Kate Johnson

9/16/2014

WRA 210

For module 3, I contacted former PW alum, [Kelsey Beachum](#). Kelsey is a 2012 MSU grad from the Professional Writing program with a focus is Writing, Editing, and Publishing. Kelsey made herself available via email and had some really great feedback and insight for me moving forward.

(Kate Johnson) How do the pieces in your portfolio best represent your skill sets?

(Kelsey Beachum) Honestly, they don't anymore, but at the time... In terms of writing, my portfolio demonstrates that I can create different types of writing in various tones for a range of purposes (e.g. critical but casual writing for online publication, more formal entertainment writing for a magazine, humorous writing for a video game, etc.). The editing section is intended to showcase both my editing skills and my ability to work with a team to create a solid deliverable. My portfolio's existence demonstrates that I have some level of skill with design work and basic coding, and I've included links to social media to show that I'm at least familiar with it.
It's kind of a broad set of skills to try to represent in one portfolio, but I was looking for a job with a small publishing company, and I knew from an internship I did with a small publishing company that I'd need to be able to wear a lot of hats. My portfolio was designed to try to show I would be a good fit for that type of publishing.

(KJ) How would you critique your portfolio?

(KB) I do a lot of creative projects, and these are pretty underrepresented in my portfolio. I think the editing section is a little weak — I'm planning to update that soon. It's fine for copyediting, but I do much more in-depth editing, and my portfolio doesn't represent that as well as it should. (Really, I need to update the whole thing.)

(KJ) What is your favorite piece in your portfolio?

(KB) I'm pretty fond of that Graeme McDowell profile. It really impressed the people I was working for at the time I wrote it, because I knew next to nothing about golf and even less about Graeme McDowell, but I was able to write about him with warmth and in a way that resonated with people who actually did care about him as a golfer. It was a rewarding piece to write.

(KJ) Do you have anything that you wish you'd know when you were starting out that you'd like to share with a new PW major (me!)?

(KB) I don't have any advice, per se, but I will say that I'm using skills I learned in PW every day at my job, even skills I thought I wouldn't necessarily need. I'm working as an associate editor at a small publishing company, and it's almost scary how relevant my PW major ended

up being: project planning, basic HTML and CSS, technical editing, design... I enjoyed WRA210, but I never thought I'd use what I learned in that class as much as I do.

(KJ) How do you think your portfolio has changed over time?

(KB) It hasn't changed much, to be honest. I initially had a little cartoon drawing of me up and I swapped that for a photo, because it felt a little more professional and more appropriate for the types of jobs I was applying for. I think I added that album review, too, but I'd already like to swap that out for a better one. I've pulled a few samples and replaced them with better ones, but I really need to do a major overhaul and replace those samples with more current ones.

Kelsey's insight was very helpful in that, she gave me a lot to think about with regards to the program and the usefulness of the courses, particularly WRA 210. It's reassuring to know that the courses all tie together and make realistic use of themselves in the professional setting.

I actually contacted several alums and got feedback from a few, but Kelsey's was the one that I garnered the most useful information from (and on time!). She did a great job of being honest about her website, portfolio and the purposes it serves. I was most curious about whether or not alums were keeping up with their sites after securing jobs in the professional setting, and it seems that they don't as much. Many alumni links on the WRAC page were dead, which was a pretty resounding answer to my suspicions from the get go.

Ultimately, I'm glad that I was asked to complete this assignment so early on because I can certainly see now it's relevance as I move throughout the program and moving forward in my career.