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Title: What should be in your portfolio?

Date: 2016-3-26

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I received a question today that reads:

*I have a question regarding portfolios.*

*I have a line on a possible job, and they are asking for one. Bad news is that I don't have one yet.*

*I am currently collecting work that I have done in the past, but I am not sure what employers look for.*

*Any suggestions or resources?*

I am of the principle that one portfolio is enough to get a conversation going, but in order to get the job and create the most confidence for your employer you should consider having 2 or potentially 3 portfolios.

1. Personal portfolio. The personal portfolio should be projects you have enjoyed working on and you believe came out well. Of all the portfolios you have, this is the most generic. This can be varying sizes, from 3 or 4 pieces on the small side, to hundreds on the large size. Normally there isn't really a focus for the TYPE of work, so you will see everything from T-Shirt design, to model airplane painting, to ux, to cooking, to photography. For example check out [https://work.simplebits.com/](http://work.simplebits.com/) done by the great Dan Cederholm or my behance site, [https://www.behance.net/merryt/](https://www.behance.net/merryt) .
2. Career portfolio. Some people opt to skip the more generic portfolio above and go straight for a targeted portfolio, I am calling this portfolio your career portfolio. This portfolio should start to develop a specific focus that aligns with the jobs you are looking for. If you are building a portfolio for UX it should show your end to end process. This means a couple pictures of you conducting interviews, followed by some example personas, and journey maps. Then perhaps some wireframes, and lastly a couple screen shots of the finished products. For example: <http://michaelthomaswilson.com/>
3. Job focused portfolio. When you get a specific job you are looking for, chances are they have a specific set of requirements. This is your opportunity to set yourself apart from the compilation. Use the job description as a todo list for your portfolio, everything listed as a requirement and "nice to have" in the job description should be represented in the portfolio.

Having all three isn't essential to getting a job. That being said, an employer will always feel like you care, and are willing to go the extra mile when then receive a link to yoururl.com/their-company/ or a PDF portfolio with their logo, and a copy of your cover letter in it.