

To: Christie Daniels
From Caroline Poole
Subject: Portfolio Analysis
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Overview:

As a freshman, landing a solid career seems like a long way into the future. I still have over three years to plan, build my resume, and gain professional experience. However, despite having those three years to plan and prepare, I understand the importance of getting a **head start** and that starting to organize my portfolio as a freshman will give me that essential head start and make me a **stronger candidate** when the time comes for me to apply a job.

To begin my portfolio planning process I examined a Professional Writing alumni's portfolio to see what techniques worked best and what didn't work so well. I used the **CRAP** Principles (Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, and Proximity) to highlight the best and worst aspects of the portfolio in order to give me an idea on how I should construct my own.

CRAP-Alignment:

I analyzed the portfolio of Jackie Knudson, a 2013 Professional Writing graduate from Michigan State. While browsing her website, I noticed how easy it was to navigate. The entire website was organized into different tabs that separated her different types of writing. Each page on the site was organized with the same color scheme, layout, and font. I could tell that she used a grid to help layout her website. All the elements lined up perfectly, not only giving her website an organized appearance, but also making herself look professional and able to collectively gather work and display it in a neat and clean way. If one's website and portfolio is aligned and creates visible lines, then as a prospective job candidate, they will get noticed and have a step up against the other candidates they are competing with.

Repetition-Color Scheme:

One of the first things while I was going through her website and portfolio was her **simple yet eye-catching** color scheme. She picked a simple sky blue as her main color and used gray and black as accent colors. The gray and black highlighted the blue making it stand out on the page without bombarding the viewer's eyes with color. The colors were represented and repeated throughout the entire website, making it a unified piece of work.

Area for Improvement-Contrast:

Overall, I thought website and portfolio were very well designed. It was very well organized and easy to find everything. Her portfolio **highlighted** her work by dividing all her works by tabs into different categories: writing samples, creative designs, and collaborative projects. She chose work that showed different areas of talent and displayed them in an organized way. The blue, black, and gray color scheme wasn't too flashy and looked sharp with the font she chose. However, the way she used the colors didn't point to a specific direction and while reading the pages it was difficult to tell what I should focus on. I

think **bolded letters** and **underlined words** would have helped direct my eyes to the most important parts of each section. Also instead of having similar items looking similar and different items looking very different, everything looked very similar. While I was reading through her portfolio I didn't know what things were most important and what I should pay attention to. Again a sharper contrast in fonts with underlined and bolded words would have let the reader know what was important. Different font sizes would also have helped.

However, despite the flaw in contrast, the portfolio as a whole was well constructed and is one that I plan to use as a model for my own.

Favorite Aspect:

My favorite part of Jackie's portfolio and website was the **simple design**. The design of her portfolio was very **crisp** and **professional**. I wasn't overwhelmed by colors or designs. The simplicity made me more intrigued about her and her work because I wasn't distracted with images or flashy colors. I was drawn to her and her work, which is the purpose of a portfolio. Her simple design allowed her to sell herself and have her work be the center of attention instead of the design. When I give an employer my portfolio I want him or her to be able to be completely immersed in my work. I want them to be able to see my best qualities as a writer and I don't want any distractions to get in the way, which is why I want to follow her simple design.

Conclusion:

Throughout the process of analyzing Jackie's portfolio and website, I was able to take away key qualities that will be able to help me as I design my own portfolio and website. I learned the importance of CRAP, and how each of these principles can make or break a portfolio. And as I begin drafting my portfolio in the near future, I'm confident that I will create a portfolio that successfully features my best qualities as a Professional Writer.