

Quin Hoffman
Interview with John Coyle

Q: How did you go about selecting what pieces to put on your portfolio?

A: Honestly I just threw a little of everything in there. I had a wide range of work and I wasn't really sure at the time what type of role I was looking to get after college. Tried to show that I was able produce a wide range of digital work. Or rather, that as a digital author I have a wide variety of skills.

Q: What kind of things did you consider when setting up the visuals for your online portfolio?

A: I wanted to showcase my own design mentality so I tried to make the visual aesthetic reflect what I thought were best practices.

Q: Why did you decide to include a 'Philosophy' section? What are you trying to get across to possible employers?

A: I included this in an effort to communicate my own opinions on design to see if the employer and myself are a good fit. If they do not agree with the importance of simplicity in their designs, then we probably will not see eye to eye and my skills could be better employed elsewhere.

Q: Do you have any critiques for your own portfolio now?

A: I most certainly do. It is terribly out of date and has bunch of useless information on it. It's not selling anything. It's just like, "Here's a bunch of things about me." It was crafted without any direct purpose (except to simply create one). I've come to terms with my own career path at this point and in the future I will be more decisive about it. It's ok to just have a repository of a bunch of things you made and people are often impressed with having a decent web portfolio at all. But in order to be truly effective, it must clearly define your niche.

Q: How do you feel about including pictures of yourself in an online portfolio?

A: I think it's a nice effect. People feel more trust when they have a face attached to a name. This may allow for unfair profiling, but do you really want to work for shallow assholes?

Q: How do you practice presenting your portfolio?

A: I have only "presented" my portfolio to employers twice, and both times it was generally just a conversation. I would go throw pieces and say what the goal and results of the project were, as well as the role I played in it. Then I talk about what they think of the piece. Pretty natural I think. Just don't be shy about it's hard to go wrong here. No practice required for those of us with a quick wit ;)

Q: Is there anything you wish you knew when you first made your portfolio?

A: I wish I had clearer concept of how the "professional" world works. It's all about getting to a point where people will contact you. Write a compelling email and it'll do way more than working for hours to craft the perfect resume. People respond better to being addressed directly. So this is what a portfolio should do. Tell people exactly what you think they should think about you. Ya dig?

Q: Is there any feedback from your employers that you get after they see it?

A: Honestly, few employers really make much mention of my portfolio. The one who actually offered me any kind of real feedback told me that she liked the variety of work I had there (which in my own opinion was it's main detriment) so it's a wild card.

Synthesis: John seemed to really emphasize getting your portfolio to get your foot in the door and go after an employer instead of just a thing on your resume. He also really pushed the idea of putting the real 'you' out there, supporting this by saying it will help you find the employer that you will like the best as well as the employer liking you. I think these are all important things to include in my portfolio.