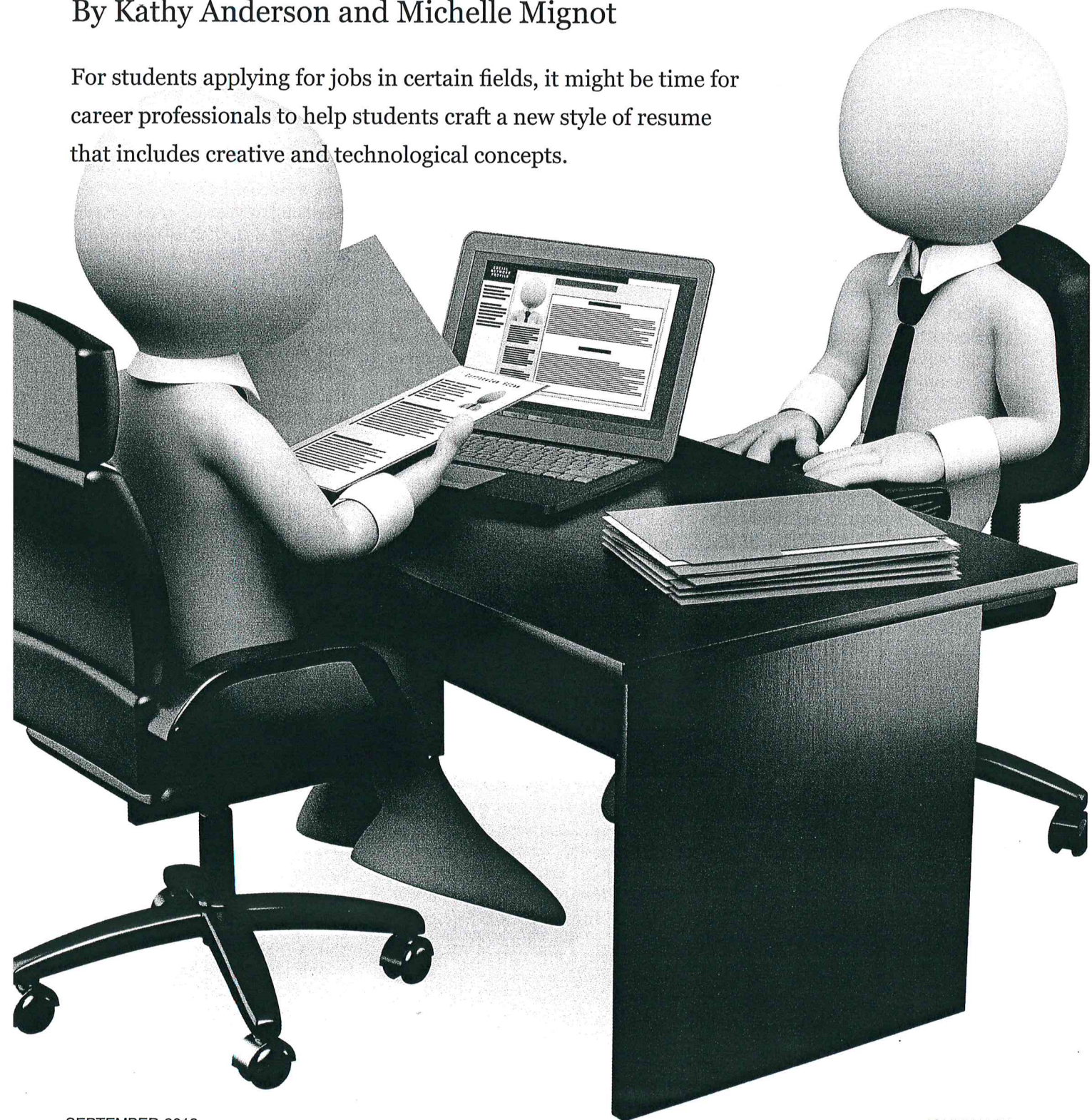


Championing the 21st Century Resume

By Kathy Anderson and Michelle Mignot

For students applying for jobs in certain fields, it might be time for career professionals to help students craft a new style of resume that includes creative and technological concepts.



When counseling students on resume writing, imagine the many possibilities of resumes that:

- Use active hyperlinks to direct employers to work samples, websites, blogs, projects, and audio and video clips;
- Stand out with touches of color or unique fonts;
- Present material with images, graphs, and text boxes; and/or
- Go beyond the traditional paper format and use LinkedIn, Pinterest, websites, blogs, and other social media and networking tools.

Why the Need for Change?

Recruiters, HR managers, and employers in general are overwhelmed by record numbers of resumes in response to job postings; in fact, studies show that hiring managers spend less than 6 seconds reviewing a resume.¹

Many of the resumes that employers receive look alike and are full of the current buzzwords. The traditional resume is a flat presentation of the student in a 3-D world, and for some

jobs, the traditional resume just doesn't cut it anymore.

In addition, people are searching for jobs in new ways, using LinkedIn and social networking, and employers are searching for talent on these platforms. As career services professionals, we need to give our students a competitive edge by encouraging them to search in new ways, using contemporary tools.

Drexel's Resume Evolution

Working at Drexel University as cooperative education coordinators helping students find co-op jobs in their industries, we watched students submit their traditional resumes to companies they longed to work for—powerhouses like Pixar, Nickelodeon Studios, and Marvel Entertainment. Lost among so many other applicants, the students frequently got no responses and no interviews. We shared their disappointment and started looking for solutions and a new approach to the traditional resume.

Like many career centers, we had been caught up in teaching the “rules” of resumes and enforcing a uniform style and content. We were

effectively ignoring the revolution created by technological changes and the entire world of social media tools. By sticking with past methods, we had inadvertently created a credibility gap with both students and employers who were already users of the technology and tools.

So, we began to research the new ways people were using technology and social media as job seekers, and we discovered a whole universe full of new approaches and fresh ideas that were appropriate to use with our co-op students.

For example, resumes of students in digital media did not show off their design skills or their expertise with the software that they would use on the job. Once students were encouraged to brand and market themselves using the same tools that they would use on the job—animation, graphics, movement, design—we immediately began to see success stories. The students produced a wide variety of resume styles that reflected their skills as well as their design styles. One student landed his dream job at Nickelodeon Studios by showcasing his personal branding across his resume, website, and demo reel.

Encouraged, we developed a creative resume guide for students in other majors, giving them guidelines, suggestions, and examples.

Creative Resume Success Stories

A screenwriting/playwriting major wrote her resume in screenwriting format, with chapter headings instead of traditional resume headings. She landed a rare paid film industry co-op job in Los Angeles. A software engineering major used a clever timeline combined with a touch of humor to garner interviews with quirky start-ups. (See the sample resume on page 35.) A product design student used a streamlined and highly styled approach to land not one but two competitive placements with New York fashion houses. A film/



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Michelle Mignot is a cooperative education coordinator at Drexel University, where she works with students studying computer science, digital media, and product design. Previously, she was an employment and career adviser at Loyalist College in Ontario, Canada, where she provided a number of services, including a career development certificate program designed to enhance student job-search skills and increase awareness of the career center. She is pursuing a master's degree in higher education.

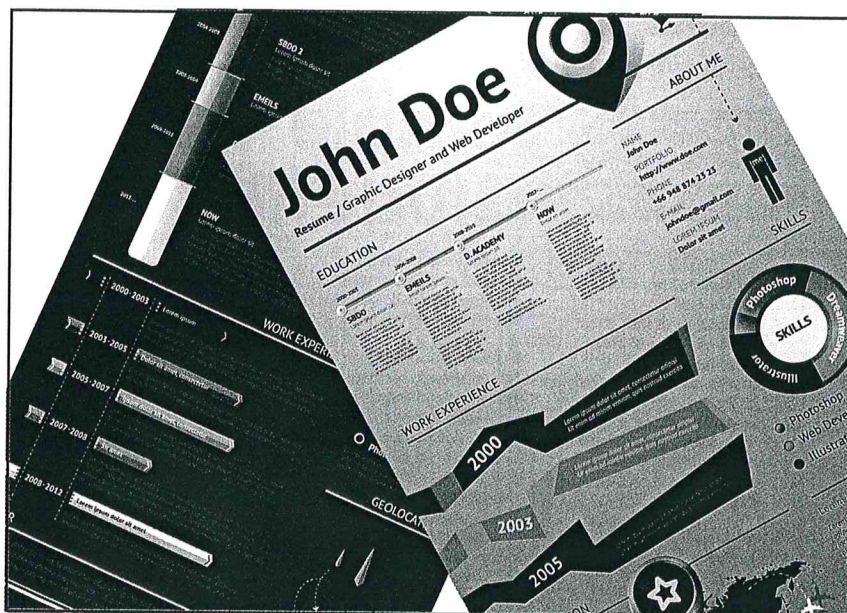
video major who loved the horror genre added a fun horror graphic to her resume and got a job at a science fiction television channel. An English major landed a highly competitive job at *Seventeen* magazine with a resume designed to look like the magazine's cover style. (See the sample resume on page 34.)

The results from the first groups of students who developed creative resumes were impressive and encouraging. More students started getting jobs at their dream companies and more students were excited to work on their personal branding.

Next, we collected examples from students and shared them with our co-op coordinators, faculty, and career services counselors in a staff development workshop. The concepts were embraced by colleagues as an exciting and necessary change. Once we familiarized ourselves with the concepts of the 21st century resume, we held a series of in-person and webinar-based student workshops. The workshops were well attended and generated a lot of buzz and excitement from students and staff.

Interestingly, the response from engineering, business, and computer and related technical majors was equally enthusiastic, proving that creative resumes are not the sole province of graphic design and digital media majors. There are so many simple and effective techniques that the other majors were able to grasp quickly and run with that we soon concluded that the 21st century resume was useful across a variety of fields and industries. And, the (mostly) simple techniques showed that this resume is achievable for anyone with basic Word skills.

In teaching creative resume techniques, we saw students excited about crafting a resume that expressed their personalities, rather than a flat, boring resume that looked and acted like it "should," rather than what it "could." Career services staff was also excited about joining in the technology and social media revolution and started promoting the idea with their students.



So What Is a 21st Century Resume Anyway?

A 21st century resume is hyper-linked and active, unique and personal, and eye-catching. It may contain these elements:

- **Color** jumps off the page and can be as simple as a header, an underline, or highlighted text.
- **Graphics** can convey tone, humor, and skill, as well as add to personal branding.
- **Unique fonts** can help the information stand out from the crowd.
- **Text boxes** can be a great way to highlight a lot of information in an attractive way, for example, long lists of software.
- **Columns** are a simple trick to break the full-page one-column monotony.
- **Personal traits** can show employers more than the flat one-dimensional picture.
- **Style** related to a specific industry will highlight a deep understanding and ability to tailor a message.
- **Social media** shows creative thinking and demonstrates social media fluency.

Hyperlinks are critical to the 21st century resume. Think about the unlimited potential of links on a student resume:

- **Business or marketing major:** Link to a sample business or marketing plan.
- **Computer sciences major:** Link to his or her open-source coding projects.
- **Engineering major:** Link to a prizewinning robotics team design and video.
- **English major:** Link to his or her blog or website with writing samples.
- **Fashion design major:** Link to a Pinterest content sharing page to showcase designs and influences.
- **Graphic design major:** Link to his or her online portfolio.
- **Film/video major:** Link to a demo reel, YouTube channel, or website.

Since many employers now rely on LinkedIn profiles to get more information about a potential employee, all majors can be encouraged to create and expand their LinkedIn profiles and link to them in their e-mail signatures and on their resumes. The LinkedIn format allows students to show off their skills, honors, awards, connections,

exclusive/the resume

An English major looks for the perfect internship at a national magazine where she can hone her editorial and web skills.

Sample Student

The Triangle

Assistant Entertainment Editor
June 2012-Present

- Edit 4000+ words of staff copy for each weekly issue of Drexel's campus newspaper
- Collaborate with the Entertainment Editor on the layout of the section each week using InDesign
- Write eye-catching headlines weekly for each story published
- Publish each issue's articles on the web using WordPress

Philadelphia Magazine

Editorial/Foobooz.com Web Intern, Freelancer
April 2012-Present

- Pitched, wrote and published 5-10 articles per day on WordPress for Foobooz.com
- Fact checked multiple features per week for Foobooz.com and all sections of Philadelphia Magazine
- Utilized Twitter in successful social media campaign for "Best of Philly" feature winner announcements
- Currently pitch, write and publish 5-10 articles per week on WordPress for Foobooz.com

Permanent Press Magazine

Founder and Editor in Chief

- An independent, Drexel student-run style and fashion magazine
January 2012-Present
- Manage a staff of 12 students and edit all submitted copy for content and style
 - Write and research 5-7 feature-

length stories per issue

- Layout and design over 20 magazine spreads per issue using Adobe InDesign

ApotheCom

Editorial and Communications Technology Intern, Freelancer
June 2011-Present

- Fact checked and proofread research for publication
- Wrote and edited pieces of copy including short doctor biographies for annual conference publications
- Developed and edited presentations and illustrations for print conference publications using Adobe Illustrator

Entertainment U.

Writer and Section Editor

- EntertainmentUonline.com
December 2010-Present
- Edit staff copy of 300+ words for publication 2-3 times a week
 - Write entertainment and food stories for publication weekly and as needed

Maya

Writer, Book Designer, and Editorial Staff Member
Drexel University Literary Magazine
December 2010-September 2012

- Read, discuss, and choose submitted work for publication in annual issue
- Design annual issue including layout of 40+ pages of text and color photography using Adobe InDesign

Contact Me

3201 Arch Street
Philadelphia PA, 19130
215-895-2185
abc123@drexel.edu
Personal Website
LinkedIn
@samplestudent

Education

Drexel University
Philadelphia, PA
B.A. English
Anticipated
Graduation: 2015
GPA: 3.91

Other Experience

Kiwi Frozen Yogurt

Customer Service Representative

- Philadelphia, PA
April 2012-Present
- Assist customers with product choice, sales, and loyalty card redemption
 - Train new staff members to prepare product and complete transactions

Skills

Content Management Systems: advanced experience in WordPress and Joomla!

Adobe CS 5: advanced experience in InDesign, InCopy, Illustrator; proficient in Photoshop

Social Media: advanced experience in Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and Tumblr

major who uses the content sharing "pins" to highlight their designs, point to their inspirations, and show off their industry knowledge and goals—all using photographs and illustrations. Now think of the employers who are hungry to find that good fit to their design aesthetic and you can see how a targeted Pinterest site can help a student pin down a great job.

Practical Concerns

Nontraditional resumes are not suitable for every application. As practitioners, we need to help students decide when a creative resume is appropriate.

When a student researches a company's website, social media, and Internet presence, he or she should assess the branding of the company to see if a creative resume is a good fit. If the HR department head's title is "Chief People Wrangler," chances are good that the company would welcome a quirky, individualized creative resume. If the job description is written in a casual, fun style that urges applicants to show off their individuality as well as their skills and experience, it's a green light for the 21st century resume.

Advise students to check out company execs' biographies, company Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, and other social media to get a sense of the corporate culture. Students can also ask for advice from faculty and industry contacts on whether to submit a creative resume to a particular company.

If a student chooses a newer approach to a field like medicine or banking, there's a chance that it may be welcomed enthusiastically by the employer. For example, at one of our workshops, an employer from a museum said he'd love to see a creative approach from more job applicants. In a pile of black-and-white sameness, sometimes the use of color, humor, and creativity can stand out and show a candidate as a creative thinker and leader.

As with all resumes, students should write legibly and clearly present work

projects, recommendations, portfolio samples, and more.

New Resume Styles

Although new resume styles include the use of such elements as infographics and video, and can be posted on LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Facebook, these resumes are not for every student and every job application.

A student's LinkedIn profile can actually turn into a resume through its resume builder function. Users can customize the content, and then share resumes through LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking tools. When needed, the LinkedIn resume can be made into a PDF and e-mailed.

An infographic resume is a visual explanation of skills, experience, and more. As a graphic, it integrates words and pictures in a fluid, dynamic way, is completely self-explanatory, and is universally understandable. The infographic resume can convey a large amount of information about a potential job candidate in a unique and effective way.

A video resume is a way to show off creative skills and also to give job seekers an opportunity to deliver their "30-second commercial" about themselves to an employer. It's as if the flat resume stood up and started talking to the hiring manager.

Pinterest can be used to showcase the unique skills and tastes of a job candidate. Imagine the interior design

history and skills. Here are technical tips to ensure a 21st century resume is uniformly effective:

- Check any links to ensure they are accessible to all. For example, if linking to a YouTube video, make sure the video is set up as “public” rather than “unlisted.”
- Ensure the links work on a variety of computers and web browsers.

We advise students to have multiple resume versions prepared. A clear version in Word with a simple font is essential for uploading to online applications. Keywords are important, and students should know that automated HR screening programs hunt for specific words.

Students may need to try different styles until they find one that has success. If a resume is not resulting in interviews, encourage students to change it rather than continuing to send out one that is clearly not working.

Most importantly, it is vital that a student’s resume reflects the student and her or his personality rather than being a copy of a clever resume that worked for someone else. The beauty of a good creative resume is that it shows fit, but that fit has to be accurate and based on the individual.

Getting Started

Here are some ideas for you and your staff to get started with 21st century resumes:

- **Start small:** You might want to start working with one major or one college within your university.
- **Do your research:** Read about new resume styles and try revamping your own to see if they work for you. Collect samples that you think are great to share with colleagues and students.
- **Ask your employers:** If you work with regular employer partners, start the conversation. Would they welcome a new approach? Would

Sample Student

B.S. Software Engineering
Cumulative GPA: 3.3
Anticipated Graduation - 2015

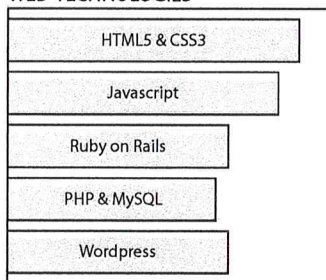
CONTACT

Tel: 215.895.2185
Email: sample.student@drexel.edu

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Data Structures & Algorithms	Calculus III
Advanced Programming Techniques	Discrete Mathematics
Principles of Microeconomics	Linear Algebra
Math Foundations of Computer Science	

WEB TECHNOLOGIES



OTHER TECHNOLOGIES

JQuery, Backbone.js, Coffeescript, HAML, SASS
Node.js, MongoDB
C++, Python, Perl
Adobe Photoshop & Illustrator

samplestudent.com

Open source: [samplestudent.github.com](https://github.com/samplestudent/samplestudent)

I am an enthusiastic software and full-stack web developer that has experience with many languages, platforms, and technologies.

I have an insatiable thirst for creation and challenges. I love to bring ideas to life and build projects from the ground up. And I love tea.



hyperlinks to work and design samples be useful for them? How important is a student’s LinkedIn profile? What technology and social media do they want to see on a resume?

- **Collaborate with faculty:** As industry experts, your faculty may be able to offer invaluable insight into their fields and help with specifics for resumes in their areas.
- **Keep up-to-date:** Familiarize yourself with trends in resumes and new ways that people are finding jobs.
- **Cultivate an open mind:** You don’t have to bill yourself as an expert in the area, but your open mind can encourage students

to find their own way, using guidelines you provide.

Career services professionals can help students move forward and use these new tools while also adapting and growing our own skills and knowledge.

Go forth and cultivate creativity! ■

Endnote

¹Keeping an Eye on Recruiter Behavior, TheLadders. <http://cdn.theladders.net/static/images/basicSite/pdfs/TheLadders-EyeTracking-StudyC2.pdf>.

²Confessions of the Recruitment Industry, BeHiring. <http://behiring.com/blogs/7>.