# What are best practices for organizing my online portfolio?

An online portfolio is an essential tool for technical writers and job seekers in the current job market. Chances are, you've already worked on creating an online portfolio during one or several of your college classes. You can use the following guide to update your existing portfolio, or create one from scratch.

## Hosting options

If you have not yet created an online portfolio, consider which platform you want to use and how you want to create it. Your online portfolio can be as simple as a Wordpress website or as complicated as a custom HTML website hosted on your own server.

How you choose to create your online portfolio will say something about you, so choose accordingly. For example, if you want to highlight your content or editing skills, you might not need a fancy portfolio and a simple Wix website might be sufficient. But if you want to highlight your technical skills, perhaps a custom solution might be better.

### Website and hosting

The easiest all-in-one options offer graphical web design and hosting services in one. While free and easy to use, the tools and design options can be very limited and your site will also display ads.

- https://wordpress.com/
- https://www.wix.com/
- https://www.squarespace.com/

## Website only

With thousands of free templates available, you can save a lot of time by simply editing existing HTML/CSS projects. Make sure that the template you choose is free to use and modify. Some examples include:

- https://html5up.net/
- https://technext.github.io/100-template-bundle/

## Hosting only

Once you have your HTML site, you still need to host it. Some hosting options include:

- https://www.godaddy.com/
- https://www.bluehost.com/

## Hard mode

You can also write a HTML website from scratch and host it on your own network attached storage (NAS). Or use a template and host it yourself. Using this option makes you less dependent on third-party services.

# General best practices

Online portfolios are more than just a collection of the work you have done. The work, projects and information you choose to share, along with how you present it, all determine your branding and, ultimately, how your potential employer might perceive you.

Branding starts with website design, so make sure to think about how you want to present yourself while working on your site. There is no right or wrong when it comes to your branding. You just have to make sure that it conveys who you are and how you want to be perceived. It can help to think about the industry and specific job you are interested in.

## Samples

Including samples in your online portfolio is essential. Samples can take many forms. As a technical writer, you probably have writing samples saved as word documents or PDFs. You might even have DITA projects or similar code samples.

Before uploading:

- Make sure your sample is complete and not missing any important parts
- Reread your sample and make sure there are no errors or typos
- Make sure to keep a backups of your samples
- Share only relevant samples; the samples you choose determine how you present yourself to a potential employer.
- Make sure that the file name of your sample makes sense and is descriptive. Viewers might need to download the file to view it.

Formatting samples:

- Samples need to be accessible. Make sure to convert any writing samples to a universally accessible standard such as PDF.
- When using inline PDFs, remember that not all browsers might support this feature.
- Embed samples if it doesn't affect the project as a whole. For example, YouTube videos can be embedded easily. Make sure that your video allows playback when embedded on other sites.
- Link out to your project if it is hosted on a different platform, and if integrating it into your online portfolio would affect the experience. For example, news articles or GitHub projects are best viewed on their own sites.

General pointers:

- Make sure to display only relevant work. Don't overload your site with every project you have ever worked on.
- Showcasing recent examples is usually better than older ones.

## Stand out as a technical writer

Study the job posting you are interested in and tailor your portfolio accordingly. Certain projects or samples might become more or less relevant depending on the job and industry. It can be helpful to have a CV or other collection of all your work and projects, making it easier to pick and choose relevant items from a complete list. This is similar to how you might want to design your resume.

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# Additional resources

- List of more HTML/CSS template websites:
  - https://github.com/bradtraversy/design-resources-for-developers#html--css-templates
  - https://picocss.com/

# Credit

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