

# Creating Scannable and Web-based Résumés

By Myra Faye Turner

**T**echnology affects every aspect of our lives, including the very way we search for jobs. This how-to article will tell you everything you need to know about preparing your résumé to meet today's new technological advances.

## Scannable Résumés

Recruiting online has become a mainstay of many corporate human resource departments and recruiting firms. Do you know how to write a scannable résumé? You'd better. But don't panic—creating a scannable résumé is easy. If you have five spare minutes, I can show you how.

Scanning is simply the process of taking written words and changing them into electronic data. This electronic information can then be used in a database. Here's how recruiters and corporate human resource departments use scannable résumés.

First, your résumé is scanned into a computer database. Then the recruiter or HR person uses keyword searches and phrases to match potential candidates with an open position. The process is similar to what happens when you use a search engine to find information on the Internet. If you want to make sure you do everything you can to assure your résumé is one of the lucky ones selected, there are a few essential steps you must follow.

The main difference between a scannable résumé and a traditional one is in the formatting. With a scannable résumé, the key is simplicity. Although your scannable résumé should still contain the traditional headings, such as contact information, work history, goals and experience, don't use any of the fancy formatting you might use with a traditional résumé. The following list provides a general guideline for creating a scannable résumé.

- ▶ Don't use decorative fonts. Instead, stick with plain, commonly used fonts such as Courier, Times or Arial.
- ▶ Keep the font size to between 11 and 14 points.
- ▶ Don't **bold**, underline or *italicize*.
- ▶ Don't use bullets, graphics or shading.
- ▶ Use a high-quality laser or inkjet printer. Send only originals printed on one side of white 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper.
- ▶ Mail the résumé flat; don't fold it.
- ▶ Don't staple your résumé pages together.
- ▶ Use job-specific keywords and terms that a potential employer might use in a keyword search.
- ▶ Don't try to cram a lot of information on one page. If your résumé is longer, don't worry. Unlike traditional résumés, which we're told to keep to a page or

two, a scannable résumé can run slightly longer (three to four pages).

- ▶ Use a one-column format.
- ▶ List your name on one line, followed by your address on another and your phone and fax number on subsequent lines.
- ▶ To make headings stand out, use ALL CAPS.
- ▶ If your résumé is longer than one page, make sure you place your name at the top of all subsequent pages.
- ▶ Don't use parentheses and brackets around phone number area codes.
- ▶ It's okay to use common abbreviations such as BS, MA and Ph.D. Otherwise, spell things out.
- ▶ Don't use tabs.
- ▶ Don't use horizontal or vertical lines.
- ▶ Use wide margins.

Here's how your contact information might look on a traditional résumé:

Myra Faye Turner  
12 Anywhere Street, Somewhere, USA  
60504 • PHONE: 555-555-5527 •  
E-MAIL: thisisme@yahoo.com

And how it would look in a scannable format:

Myra Faye Turner  
12 Anywhere Street  
Somewhere, USA 60504  
Phone: 555-555-5527  
E-mail: thisisme@yahoo.com

As you can see, creating a scannable résumé is easy. The same is true for Web-based résumés, as you're about to learn.

## Web-based Résumés

A Web-based résumé, quite simply, is one that resides on the Web. It can be a simple document, an electronic version of your paper résumé, or it can be an elaborate affair complete with links to works that showcase your talent. For instance, because I'm a writer, my Web-based résumé might contain links to writing samples. This can be in the form of samples that have appeared in print publications or links to Web sites that I've written for.

Of course, you'll need a place to host your Web site. That shouldn't be a problem, because the Internet overflows with servers that will host your

site for free. Your Internet service provider will generally offer you free space to build your homepage. This might be your best option. Or try a free service such as Yahoo!, which comes with easy templates for building your site, if you happen to be HTML-impaired.

Here are some things to consider when creating a Web-based résumé.

► Web-based résumés, unlike the traditional paper ones, can be somewhat longer. You can use your Web-based résumé to showcase your skills.

► Use hyperlinks sparingly. It's okay to have a hyperlink that takes your viewer to a page that discusses your educational achievements, career goals or special awards and honors. But don't have a link to the Web site of your past and present employer—unless, of course, it shows you receiving an award for employee of the year. Also try to avoid links to your school's homepage unless it's pointed to an achievement you've earned.

Remember, you'll have to check any links periodically to make sure they are still active. There's no value in linking to something that no longer exists.

► Use hyperlinks to aid in navigation. For instance, provide a link that will take viewers back to the top of the page after they've scrolled down.

► Make it easy for the recruiter to contact you; provide a link to your e-mail address.

If you want to see examples of Web-based résumés, surf over to [www.cas.ilstu.edu/English/249/Projects/resumes.html](http://www.cas.ilstu.edu/English/249/Projects/resumes.html) for sample résumés from students at Illinois State University. Try the links that say "New" first; they're the ones most likely to be active.

Will paper résumés go the way of the dinosaur? Probably not, but as we move forward in this technological age, many more companies are using the Internet to recruit the best talent for open positions. Many of these companies will require applicants to submit scannable résumés. Knowing the basics can make

the difference in whether your résumé rises from the vast pool of applicants. To market yourself effectively, you may want to consider Web-based résumés that you can post online for viewing by recruiters.

You are now equipped with the knowledge to create both forms of résumés. Happy job hunting! ❖

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