Technical report on traditional graphic design portfolios and their advantages ov...

Abstract

The Digital Revolution has impacted all aspects of contemporary culture and in the graphic design industry, the widespread availability of computer technologies has created a niche for digital arts. For artists seeking employment in the industry it has always been conventional to submit a portfolio consisting of oneA? A? A? s best printed pieces. This portfolio was traditionally a black book or large binder that showcased the artistA? A? A? s samples to prospective clients or employers. The pieces were carefully chosen to best represent the skills and talents of the artist and for employers, served as a good assessment for the mastery of the applicant.

However with the spread of computer technologies and digital media in the past decade, these portfolios have moved away from the traditional black book and into digitized portfolios that can be viewed via the Internet, CD or DVD. They continue to showcase samples the artist feels best represents his work but are focused on digitally created pieces and computer enhanced art.

This shift away from the traditional graphic design portfolio makes it difficult, if not impossible, to assess the actual artistic skill and creative power of the applicant. Digitized portfolios offer an adequate measurement of a candidateA? A? A? s computer skills and software mastery, but not of their creativity, attention to detail, style or skill.

To correctly assess the skill and mastery of craft of an applicant, a traditional graphic design portfolio should continue to be the standard because of its

ability to measure an artistA? A? A? s aptitude with precision. The trend of digital portfolios should not affect the industryA? A? A? s demand for the traditional portfolio and although they may be suitable for clients, should not be accepted for applicants seeking work in the graphic design field.

Introduction

For any graphic design artist, having a portfolio is necessary. It is a A? A? A? formal way to present collected samples of oneA? A? A? s workA? A? A? (Myers, 2005) and to date, there is no better method for displaying oneA? A? A? s skill and creativity as an artist. It is the professional equivalent of a resume for any artist, showcasing oneA? A? A? s best projects in an organized manner. They offer a reflection of the style of the artist, the breadth of their experience, their level of discipline and their degree of creativity. The portfolio has a two-fold mission: on one hand is useful for presenting oneA? A? A? s talents to potential employers who are hiring and on the other hand, it is a favorable tool for advertising oneA? A? A? s creativity to promising clients.

Employers regularly request a portfolio in the following ways, depending on their flexibility and need:

1. Drop-off Portfolio

2. Portfolio Review

3. Mail-in Portfolio

Drop-off portfolios are requested when companies allot a certain day and time to review the portfolios of potential candidates to a position. A pick-up time is usually given and if impressed by the portfolio, an interview is subsequently set up to discuss the work and possible assignments. In a portfolio review, the artist formally presents the contents of their portfolios, combining the portfolio review with the interview and allowing the artist to elaborate on their work. The mail-in portfolio tends to be requested by employers or clients who may be limited by distance to arrange for interviews or drop-off. In this case, the graphic design portfolio does not send original artwork, but reproductions of the work, as employers tend to not return the portfolio (" How to Create a Traditional Graphic Design Portfolio, A? A? A? 2007).

In the midst of the Digital Revolution, the A? A? A? digital portfolio has gained popularity as a replacement for the traditional graphic design portfolio, A? A? A?(Bender, 2008). Digital design portfolios can showcase an artistA? A? A? s work through photographed reproductions that are then used as digital pictures or as original digital content created for the purpose of online use. These portfolios have mixed critics in the design industry. Some employers prefer them for their accessibility, ease of viewing and ability to assess the applicantA? A? A? s computer skills as well as their creative talent. Others feel that the digital portfolio measures only the ability to manipulate computer software and design programs and do not truly determine a candidateA? A? A? s artistic skill or discipline.

Discussion

Traditional Portfolios

The traditional portfolio consisted of A? A? A? a black, spiral notebook with black pagesA? A? A?(Sher, 1992) upon which an artistA? A? A? s original work could be displayed in a systemized format. Artists tend to feel that A? A? A? a black background offers the least distracting way to show [their] art, A? A? A?(Myers, 2005) which is why black has become the default color for portfolio books. Typically an artist will A? A? A? choose fifteen to twenty of the pieces [they] feel best exhibits [their] skill, style and experienceA? A? A? (Sher, 1992) as a graphic designer.

These black notebooks are the A? A? A? basic standard for portfolios, A? A? A?(Myers, 2005) however more complex versions can be made for the same purpose. If work varies in size or cannot be displayed in a book format, open portfolios are also an option, considered still a traditional graphic design portfolio.

In an open portfolio, work is compiled in a thin briefcase that can be taken out and shown to an employer in their original size and form. The benefit of this lays in its A? A? A? ability to preserve the artistA? A? A? s samples in their original form, A? A? A?(Eisenman, 2006) which can then be examined for hints of the artistA? A? A? s discipline in working and presenting finished work. These types of portfolios also enable the employer to see the medium of the artistA? A? A? s work and their ability to organize and compile their

work in a meaningful manner. It is a clue as to how the applicant will present subsequent work to clients and the company.

Both the notebook portfolio and the open portfolio allow for these detail oriented factors to be reviewed whereas they can not be determined in a digital portfolio.

Digital Portfolios

The digital portfolio has become increasingly popular in todayA? A? A? s modern world full of computer technologies and the emerging market for digital arts. Digital portfolios allow the artist to share their work without the possibility of damage to original work, thus preserving their samples. They are also cost efficient and allow for multiple companies and clients to view the work simultaneously, as individual copies of the portfolio can be sent to multiple locations, or can be viewed online via a website.

Despite these advantages to both the artist and the employers, digital portfolios are poor measurements of the aptitude and creative skill of an applicant. Digital portfolios A? A? A? rely heavily on computing skills and the accessibility to graphic design programsA? A? A? to create and compile oneA? A? A? s work. Furthermore, they can be complicated by A? A? A? unnecessary graphics, effects and music [that] can distract from the workA? A? A?(Bender, 2008) and bias the opinion of the art unfairly.

The ability to use modern technologies to A? A? A? enhance the work processA? A? A?(Bender, 2008) is an important skill to have in the graphic

design markets of today, however digital portfolios often assess only that ability and not the more important aspects of creative discipline that graphic design is founded on and still requires out of its artists. To judge a personA? A? A? s innate creativity, organization and dedication to the true art of graphic design, the digital portfolio does not come close to the information that the traditional portfolio offers.

Conclusion

It is clear why the traditional graphic design portfolio is advantageous over modern digitized portfolios when it comes to assessing an artistA? A? A? s skill and talent in the industry. Correctly measuring the various aspects of an artistA? A? A? s work and method can only be seen through the traditional graphic design portfolio that allows employers to review not only oneA? A? A? s work, but also their organization, presentation and creative skills. It enables a true measure of the artistA? A? A? s ability to work in the industry where clients still like to see hard-evidence of a personA? A? A? s creative abilities and not merely their computing skills.

Digital portfolios are useful in determining oneA? A? A? s capabilities in utilizing modern technologies to present material but not their artistic talents or discipline in the field. Furthermore, there is no way of evidencing whether it was the artist or a paid software professional who compiled the digital portfolio to impress the employer or client, and so is not even a foolproof method for measuring computing skills.

Employers should maintain the high standards expected from traditional graphic design portfolios and in assessing an applicantA? A? A? s contribution to a company or project, should not welcome digital forms of portfolios.

Recommendation

In determining an applicantA? A? A? s artistic abilities and aptitude for a graphic design position, there is nothing better than the traditional graphic design portfolio. While digitized portfolios have the benefits of being cheaper to reproduce, easier to review and promote quicker sharing among clients and employers, they are not correct assessments of an artistA? A? A? s creative abilities. Digital portfolios are good markers of a personA? A? A? s technical skill and their capabilities to work with modern computer technologies in efficient and creative manners, but can not measure their discipline, creativity or artistic style in the same manners as conventional graphic design portfolios. For this reason, employers should not accept digital portfolios and should maintain standards of reviewing only traditional graphic design portfolios when considering an applicantA? A? A? s work.

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