

List of Files/Tables Produced in the Portfolio Builder

Files/Tables Produced (Possible Capstone Project)

Filename	Description
<i>[Your initials]</i> Printouts	Your printout list. A list of printouts to include in your representational portfolio.
<i>[Your initials]</i> Prospects	List of prospective employers for use in targeting your database objects and printouts.
Up to 10 printouts	Printouts listed in your printout list (your representational portfolio).

Additional Documents Discussed (Actual Job Search)

Résumé	
<i>[Your initials]</i> AppInfo	Information for use in filling out employment applications.
Cover letter	
Thank you letter	
Contact log	



Portfolio Builder

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

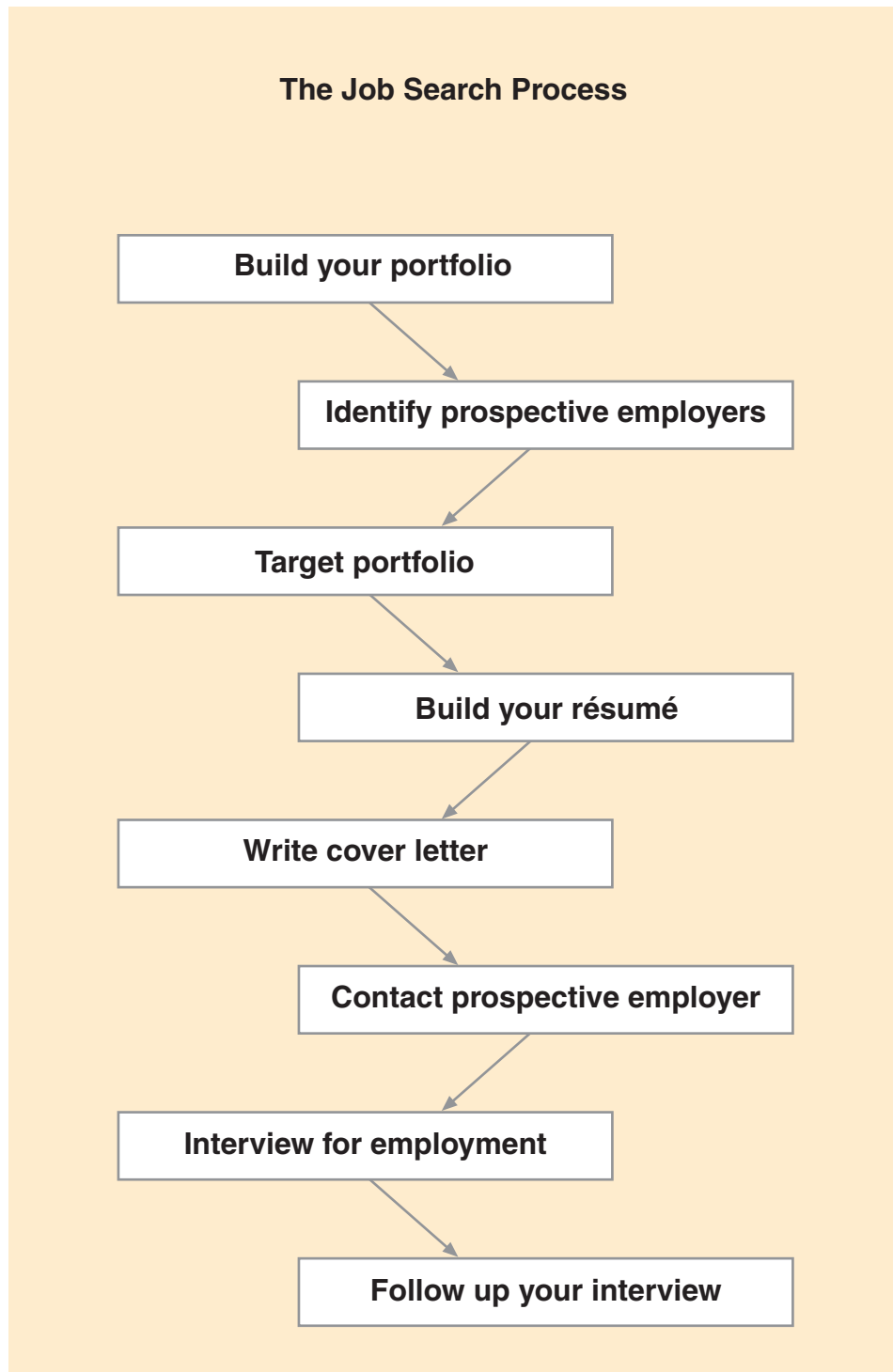
1. Create and adapt Access databases for a portfolio.
2. Identify prospective employers.
3. Target your portfolio to a specific employer.
4. Feature your Access skills in your résumé.
5. Fill out an employment application.
6. Prepare and present yourself at an interview.
7. Follow up an interview.

Finding a job is difficult—especially if the economy is bad or companies are downsizing. The number of applicants often exceeds the availability of jobs. It is important for you to distinguish yourself from other people interested in the same job. You need to show a prospective employer what you can do.

This Portfolio Builder helps you build a “representational portfolio”—a collection of your best work that you can show as evidence of your Access skills. The databases and printouts in your portfolio will be geared to specific employers and could actually accompany a résumé and cover letter, or they could be brought with you to a job interview. Some instructors might use this representational portfolio as a capstone project for the course.

Objectives 4 through 7 of this Portfolio Builder lead you through an actual job-search process, including identifying and contacting prospective employers, filling out employment applications, presenting yourself, and following up after interviews.

FIGURE P-1
The job-search
process



The Portfolio Builder will be helpful to you if you're planning to search for immediate employment. However, Objectives 1 through 3 are also a useful final project, because it requires you to demonstrate skills you have gained over the entire course. Even if you're not looking for a job, it will help prepare you for an eventual job search.


Building Your Portfolio

While your résumé describes your experience and your skills, your portfolio actually demonstrates your skills by representing the best work you can do. It also should be work with which a prospective employer can identify—that is, tables, reports, and forms that the employer will understand.

The first step in building your portfolio is to decide what types of printouts belong in it. Use the following checklist as a starting point for creating a list of possible printouts for your portfolio.

TABLE P-1 Possible Printouts for Portfolio

WORKSHEET	COMMENTS
Customers Report	Indicates that you know your target company's market. Customers may be entirely artificial, but should be realistic. To identify your target company's customers, research the company on line or at your local library. Read their annual report (if they are a publicly-owned company). Additional printouts: portion of a customer table, customer entry form, mailing labels.
Products Report	Indicates that you know your target company's products and services. To obtain information about your target company's products, research the company's product line either on line or in print. Additional printouts: portion of a products table, product entry form. In some cases it may be appropriate to scan a company's catalog and include images in the report.
Sales Report	Indicates that you are aware of your target company's sales history. This type of information is available on line, in the company's annual reports, or in press releases carried by the local paper. If such information is not available, discuss possible strategies for estimating sales realistically (so as not to underestimate a company's sales, and in so doing, to hurt your chances for employment). Additional printouts: portion of monthly sales table, sales entry form.

 **NOTE:** The printouts produced in the course of the Lesson and Unit Applications may also be used in your portfolio. You can personalize them (using the suggestions above) so that the Carolina Critters database contains data that might be more appropriate for your target company. (Obviously, any changes to the Carolina Critters database should be made on a copy of the original database.)

EXERCISE P-1 Develop a List of Printouts for the Portfolio

1. Develop a list of up to 10 printouts for inclusion in your portfolio. Use Table P-1 as a checklist, but also consider printouts that you may have prepared in the Access course. If you have work experience, list actual printouts that you have created. Use the following headings for your list (see Figure P-2):

Number Type of Printout Description

2. Save the list as *[your initials]Printouts* and print it.
3. Finalize your list by reviewing it with someone who is familiar with your job-search area. Adjust the list as needed. Save and print it.

FIGURE P-2 Sample printout list for student seeking a database-entry position with a high-technology manufacturing company

No.	Type of Printout	Description
1	Customer Report	Customers, sorted alphabetically.
2	Customer Report	Customers, grouped by state, with a calculation showing the number of customers from a state (or region).
3	Customer Report	Filtered list, showing only customers from a particular region.
4	Product Report	Products, grouped by product line. (If possible, add images.)
5	Product Report	Products, sorted by product ID (add a ProductID field if the company's products do not have a product ID number).
6	Sales Invoice	Shows customer information and product information.
7	Sales Report	Sales by product, sorted by product line.
8	Sales Report	Sales by group, sorted in ascending order over a period.

continues

FIGURE P-2 Sample printout list for student seeking a database-entry position with a high-technology manufacturing company *continued*

No.	Type of Printout	Description
9	Sales Report	Sales by product, for products over a specific sales goal.
10	Inventory Report	Products in inventory, filtered to show products for which inventory is low.

EXERCISE P-2 Build Your Portfolio

It isn't necessary to begin a database from scratch. In fact, it may not even be a good idea. You may be able to modify an existing database (perhaps even the Carolina Critters database used in the course or the sample NorthWind database provided by Microsoft).

TABLE P-2 Possible Exercises for a Representational Portfolio

LESSON/UNIT	EXERCISES/APPLICATIONS*
Lesson 1	1-26
Lesson 2	2-27
Lesson 3	3-29
Unit 1	U1-2, U1-3
Lesson 4	4-22
Lesson 5	5-21
Lesson 6	6-28, 6-29
Lesson 7	7-30, 7-31
Unit 2	U2-2, U2-3
Lesson 8	8-27, 8-28, 8-29
Lesson 9	9-25, 9-26, 9-27

continues

TABLE P-2 Possible Exercises for a Representational Portfolio *continued*

LESSON/UNIT	EXERCISES/APPLICATIONS*
Lesson 10	10-22, 10-23
Unit 3	U3-2, U3-3,
Lesson 11	11-33, 11-34, 11-35
Lesson 12	12-23, 12-24, 12-25
Lesson 13	13-24, 13-25, 13-36
Unit 4	U4-2, U4-3
Lesson 14	14-26, 14-27, 14-28
Lesson 15	15-25, 15-26, 15-27
Lesson 16	16-26, 16-27, 16-28
Unit 5	U5-2, U5-3, U5-4

*The “On Your Own” exercises are especially suitable as a representational portfolio. Note, however, that they build from the first lesson to the last.

1. Create each of the printouts on your list.
2. Adjust every printout to give it as professional an appearance as possible. Focus on formatting. Demonstrate the skills you learned in this course.
3. Consult the appropriate style reference for your profession to check that your formatting is acceptable.
4. Spell-check your report labels and, if appropriate, the data itself.
5. Ask someone familiar with your future profession to review your printouts (and, possibly, your database). Then modify them appropriately.

Identifying Prospective Employers

Your next step is to identify prospective employers, starting with the companies in your area (and the people within those companies) that might be hiring people with your skills.

Always try to identify the manager in each company or organization who heads up the division, department, or group in which you hope to work. Avoid applying through a Human Resources staff member, if at all possible. In the Human Resources Department, it’s easy to become just another applicant who receives no special attention.

Help-Wanted Ads

Help-wanted ads can be a useful way to research the hiring trends of a local company. Help-wanted ads are, however, less useful as a source of real employment opportunities. They should never be used as the primary focus of your job search. In fact, some experts believe that only 10 percent of all available jobs are listed in the newspaper.

Use back issues of your local newspapers to find out whether a company has been hiring recently, what kinds of jobs have recently been advertised, and who was listed as a contact person in the ad.

Networking

Talk to people who are in a position to provide information about job leads and the hiring process at particular companies. They can be friends, relatives, acquaintances—anyone who can put you in touch with a job contact. Try to identify the people within a company who have the power to hire you. Get the correct spelling of each person's name and their official correct job title, department, company, and, if possible, telephone number.

Company Research

An easy way to begin your company research is with the Yellow Pages. Use it to locate businesses in the field in which you're interested. (You might need to use the "Business-to-Business" section for some types of businesses.)

The business section of your local library contains reference books that can give you even more information about local companies. Some of the best sources are:

- *Standard & Poor's Register of Corporations, Directors, and Executives*. McGraw-Hill. (Volume 2 lists companies by location.)
- *The National Directory of Addresses and Phone Numbers*. Gale Research, Inc.
- *Million Dollar Directory*. Dun & Bradstreet.
- *Job Seeker's Guide to Private and Public Companies*. Gale Research, Inc.
- *Peterson's Job Opportunities. Business*. Peterson's Guides, Inc.
- *Peterson's Job Opportunities. Engineering and Computer Science*. Peterson's Guides, Inc.

Some of these sources are also available in easy-to-use software versions with which you can search for particular companies based on specific criteria. Your local librarian can often provide help in locating information about specific companies, as well.

Using the Internet

Many sources of company and career information are available on the Internet. Many companies operate their own Web site or home page, and some even list their job openings there. If a prospective employer is a large company, search the Internet based on the company's name. Often, promotional materials from the company will indicate its Internet or Web site address. (Promotional materials from local companies are often available in your local public or school library.)

Many Web search engines (such as Google.com, Lycos.com, Excite.com, or Go.com) offer career-oriented services. Search for such general keywords as "career," "employment," or "job." A targeted search using more specific keywords might produce results more immediately useful to your job search.

You can also use your Internet browser to search for locations with appropriate keywords. For example, one recent search showed 600,000 matches for the keyword "career." Obviously, the more targeted your search of the Internet, the more useful it might be.

Specialized employment search engines on the Internet might prove useful. Because these services list jobs from across the nation (and around the world), they might be less useful for a local job search. A list of places to look for jobs on the Internet follows (remember that Internet options change rapidly, so this list might need to be updated and new options might be available):

- HotJobs
One of the most widely used Web-based job-search sites
www.hotjobs.com
- The Monster Board
Another well-established Internet job-search service
www.monster.com
- CareerBuilder (formerly CareerPath)
One-stop "mega job search" of 75 Internet job-posting sites
www.careerbuilder.com
- Headhunter (formerly CareerMosaic)
www.headhunter.net
- JobOptions (formerly E-Span)
www.joboptions.com

EXERCISE P-3 Identify Prospective Employers

1. Identify at least five prospective employers. They may be located anywhere but should represent the type of company for which you could imagine working.

2. For each prospective employer, obtain the name of a job contact. (This person would typically be a manager of the department, division, or group in which you would like to work.)
3. Key the list of prospective employers in a database or a worksheet. Include the contact's name, department, company name, address, city, state, ZIP code, telephone number, and FAX number. Save the list as **[your initials]Prospects** and then print it. You'll use this list throughout the remainder of this Portfolio Builder.

Targeting Your Portfolio


So far you've created a portfolio of printouts that reflect something about you. Now it's time to target a specific company and tailor your portfolio to that company.

EXERCISE P-4 Target Your Portfolio to an Employer


The job contact at your targeted company is likely to respond more favorably to your portfolio if you take the time to tailor it to the company. Doing so shows that you made an effort to learn about your prospective employer. It might also provide more conversational opportunities in a job interview.

1. From your list of five prospective employers, choose one as your target. Review the information you've gathered about the company. If you feel you don't have enough information, collect additional material. Ultimately, you should be very familiar with the company—and the position—you've targeted.
2. Review Table P-3.

TABLE P-3 Targeting Your Portfolio

 TARGETING SUGGESTIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> Use the targeted company's name in reports and other printouts. Use the company's address where appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/> Modify the contents of your database so it applies specifically to the targeted company.
<input type="checkbox"/> You may decide not to change some of the more specialized database objects created for your class (other than to make any corrections your instructor might have recommended). Sometimes it's a good idea to let the targeted company know that the printout was submitted as a class assignment, especially if it relates to your chosen field.

3. Based on the checklist shown in Table P-3, modify your database objects to increase their appeal to the targeted company.
4. Spell-check your database and save it.
5. Create the printouts for your portfolio. Use standard printer paper.

 **NOTE:** If you are building your portfolio as a capstone project for your course, it is not necessary to go beyond this point. You can turn in your representational portfolio. The following information is presented for students who might be constructing a representational portfolio for use in an actual job search.

Creating a Résumé

To present yourself properly to a potential employer, you'll need more than just a portfolio. You'll also need a résumé describing your education and work experiences and a cover letter that introduces you, expresses your interest in the position, and summarizes your credentials. (Many good books are available about developing résumés. You could also consult the Portfolio Builder in *Word 2002: A Professional Approach* by Deborah Hinkle.)

Your Access skills should be a prominent feature of your résumé and cover letter. For example, if you interned at a company where you were required to use a monthly accounts-payable report, you might include the following line in your résumé:

- “Created monthly accounts-payable Access report.”

Or, if you are a whiz at using Access's graphics features, you might write:

- “Created weekly national sales report in Access, showing state-by-state distribution as a pie chart.”

It is usually considered acceptable to include any printouts produced for a previous employer in your portfolio, provided that they honestly represent examples of your work and provided that you change any proprietary or confidential information contained in the printouts. It's best to indicate clearly on such printouts that the data has been altered. This demonstrates your integrity.

Filling Out an Employment Application

Some companies require that every applicant, at every level, fill out an employment application. Other companies don't even use one. Generally, however, companies do use some form of an employment application. Whether you need to fill out such a form will depend on the company's internal personnel policies.

Often applicants are asked to fill out an employment application when they arrive at the company for an interview. To minimize stress in an already stressful situation, prepare for the employment application beforehand by creating

a reference sheet that contains any information that might be included in the application and isn't found on your résumé. (Of course, you should refer to your résumé in filling out your employment application. Make sure to bring an extra copy for reference.)

Tips for Employment Applications

- Be as specific as possible when describing the position you are seeking.
- Be careful when listing a required salary. A salary that is too high might eliminate you for some acceptable jobs, and a figure that is too low might weaken your negotiating position. Sometimes it is better to leave this line blank.
- Be prepared to list dates (month and year) for the schools you have attended. Some applications might also ask for your grade-point average and your class rank.
- Be prepared to list the following information for your previous employers: address, telephone number, name and title of supervisor, start date and end date (month and year), and a description of your duties.
- If some questions are not applicable to the job you are seeking, it is usually acceptable to write "Not Applicable" next to the question.

EXERCISE

P-5

Create a Reference Sheet for an Employment Application

1. Review the "Tips for Employment Applications." Note any information that isn't covered by your résumé.
2. Key all information that you will need to fill out an employment application. Use any format that makes sense to you.
3. Save the file as *[your initials]AppInfo* and then print it.

Preparing for Employment Interviews

After you have contacted a potential employer and scheduled an appointment to meet, you'll need to prepare yourself to make a good impression in person. No matter how good your résumé or credentials are, only the interview can, ultimately, land you the job.

The more interviews you go on, the better your interviewing skills will be.



NOTE: If possible, avoid scheduling an interview on a Monday, which is often the most hectic day in a business environment.

Preparing Yourself

- Confirm your appointment the day before, and make sure you arrive at the interview on time.
- Become as familiar with the company as possible. Read articles about the company, if they are available, or talk to people who are or have been employed by the company. It's always flattering to a prospective employer when an applicant appears knowledgeable about the company in an interview.
- Approach the interview with a clear mental picture of your capabilities and your job objective. Review your résumé immediately before meeting the prospective employer. Think positively.

Presenting Yourself

- Come to the interview equipped with copies of your résumé, your references, and any recommendation letters you have gathered. Have your portfolio on hand, as well as a notepad and a pen.
- Look your best. Your attire and grooming are critical to making a good impression. Dress neatly and professionally, in a manner that is appropriate to the company you are visiting. If necessary, get help in selecting an interview outfit from someone who is familiar with your prospective company's style of dress.
- Be yourself. Act as relaxed as you possibly can, sit in a comfortable position, and focus on the interviewer.
- Ask questions. Learn what you can about the job, the company, to whom (or to how many people) you'd report, and so on. If no job is available or the job opening is not appropriate for you, ask for recommendations about other people you might contact in the company.
- At the end of the interview, if you want the job, express your interest in it and be ready to explain why the company should hire you.

Frequently Asked Interview Questions

The following questions are frequently asked in interviews. You might want to rehearse your answers before the interview. Never offer negative or unnecessary information to an interview question.

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- Why should I hire you?
- What are your major strengths? Weaknesses?
- What are your short-term goals? Long-term goals?

- Why do you want to leave your present job (if employed)?
- Why did you leave your previous job?
- What do you enjoy most (or least) about your current (or previous) job?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What salary do you expect to receive?

Following Up the Interview

To be successful in the interview process, you should take two important follow-up steps:

- Send a thank you letter.
- Keep track of your contacts.

Thank You Letters

Always send a thank you letter within 24 hours after you've interviewed with someone. It creates a positive impression, shows that you have good follow-up skills and appropriate social skills, and reminds the person of your meeting.

The letter should be short and friendly, thanking the person for his or her time and for any information he or she might have provided. You might want to mention something that reminds the person of who you are, in case many people have interviewed for the position.

Even if you know that the interview will not lead to a specific job offer, a thank you letter demonstrates your professionalism.

FIGURE P-3 Sample thank you letter #1

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the sales position. I enjoyed meeting you and appreciate the information you shared with me.

I am very interested in the position and believe I could quickly become a productive member of your sales team.

Thanks again for the interview, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

FIGURE P-4 Sample thank you letter #2

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for the interview and the information you gave me yesterday. I really appreciate your recommendation that I meet with John Doe in the Marketing Department.

I have scheduled an interview with Mr. Doe and look forward to meeting him. If this contact eventually leads to a job offer, I will be most grateful.

Thanks again for your time and help.

Sincerely,

Keeping Track of Contacts

Be organized in your job search. Create a contact log to keep track of everyone who has received your résumé.

FIGURE P-5
Sample format for
contact log

Date Sent	Contact Name	Company	Telephone	Comments

In addition, develop a system for organizing your contacts so you can follow up with telephone calls as appropriate. You can use your contacts log for this, as well.

Name Your Name

Date 10/1/00

Comments

Students: Attach a Comments form to every document you include in your portfolio. In the Student Comments section describe the skills and techniques you demonstrated in the document. Also note any especially useful techniques and suggest how new techniques might have been used in earlier documents or in other settings. Your peer reviewer (a fellow student) and your instructor may also write comments on these forms when your portfolio is reviewed.

Document Number / Filename	Type of Document	Description	Revised?
(Sample) 1.g17-18	Memo	Memo with tabbed columns, sorted text, and bar tabs.	Yes 10/15/00

STUDENT COMMENTS

Skills Demonstrated

Had no problems with tabbed columns or sorting text. Had to look at the textbook for help with bar tabs, but I don't have any problems with them now.

Techniques to remember

Have to remember how to do bar tabs.

EVALUATOR COMMENTS

Peer Reviewer MKS

Date 10/13/00

Watch out for spelling.

Teacher Evaluator DH

Date 11/1/00

Perfect final product. Nice job.

If you show me this document with leader tabs, a different type of box border, and the Gateway offices sorted by descending order, you can boost your grade.

