



Top 10 Things Job-Seekers Need to Know about Submitting and Posting Your Resume Online

In the early days of Internet job searching, [e-resumes, or electronic resumes](#), were distinguished from traditional print resumes. Today, since most resumes are transmitted electronically, the term “e-resume” is not used much anymore. Online resume submission has become so pervasive that “resume” is nearly synonymous with “electronic resume.” Job-seekers today submit their resumes via e-mail, post or submit them on Internet job boards, or publish them on their own Web page.

1. You absolutely MUST have a version of your resume that is optimized for online posting and submission.

A job-seeker simply cannot succeed these days with just the traditional formatted resume intended to be printed out as a visually pleasing marketing piece. The formatted “print” resume is still important, but it can no longer be the only resume tool in your kit.

More than 90 percent of employers place resumes directly into [searchable databases](#) and an equal percentage of employers prefer to receive resumes by e-mail. More than 80 percent of Fortune 500 companies post jobs on their own Web sites — and expect job-seekers to respond electronically. Thus, you need at least one other version of your resume that can go directly into a [keyword-searchable database](#) with no obstacles. Formatting that needs to be removed before the resume can be placed in a database is an example of such an obstacle.

Sending your resume in text-based format directly in the body of an e-mail message removes all barriers to an employer’s placing your resume right into a [searchable databases](#). Some employers still prefer the formatted document version of your resume attached to an e-mail message (so they have the option to print it out, for example), while others won’t open attachments because of concerns about viruses and incompatibilities among word-processing programs.



The formatted “print” resume is still vital because the employer may wish to visually review your resume, especially once the database search has narrowed down the candidates, and the formatted, print version will be more reader-friendly than the text-based version. You’ll also want to have a print version of your resume on hand for networking, to take to interviews and career fairs and for the rare occasions when employers request resumes in old-school ways — by mail or fax.

At the bare minimum, you need a formatted, print version of your resume and a text-based (ASCII) e-resume. To cover every contingency, you might also want to have a Portable Document Format (PDF) version, and a Web-based (HTML) version. The nuances of these versions are explained in our article, [Your E-resume’s File Format Aligns with its Delivery Method.](#)

2. Your resume must be loaded with keywords.

Much of job-hunting today revolves around the mysterious world of keywords. Employers’ dependence on keywords to find the job candidates they want to interview has come about in recent years because of technology. Inundated by resumes from job-seekers, employers have increasingly relied on placing resumes in keyword-searchable databases, and using software to search those databases for specific keywords that relate to job vacancies. Most Fortune 1000 companies, in fact, and many smaller companies now use these technologies. In addition, most employers search the databases of third-party job-posting and resume-posting boards on the Internet.

The bottom line is that if you apply for a job with a company that searches databases for keywords, and your resume doesn’t have the keywords the company seeks for the person who fills that job, you are pretty much out of luck. Read more about the importance of keywords in our article [Tapping the Power of Keywords to Enhance Your Resume’s Effectiveness](#) and how



you can identify the best keywords in [Resources for Identifying Keywords](#) and [Researching Keywords in Employment Ads](#). Consider using our [Resume Keywords Worksheet](#).

3. Your resume must be accomplishments-driven.

Accomplishments are the points that really help sell you to an employer — much more so than everyday job duties. In fact, there's a direct relationship between keywords and accomplishments in that keywords can be tied to accomplishments rather than job duties, so a good way to make the leap from keyword to a nice, contextual bullet point is to take each keyword you've identified as critical to the job and list an accomplishment that tells how you've used the skill represented by that keyword. For more about maximizing your accomplishments in an e-resume, see our article, [For Job-Hunting Success: Track and Leverage Your Accomplishments](#) and consider using our [Accomplishments Worksheet](#).

4. Technically speaking, a resume for online posting and submission is not too difficult to create.

It's surprisingly easy to create an e-resume once you get the hang of it. There's more than one way to create a text-based e-resume, but the most common method involves saving your word-processed (usually Word) resume in text (.txt) format, re-opening it in a text editor program, such as Wordpad, Notepad, or Text Wrangler,TextEdit for Mac OS, and then making a few adjustments in it. One good resource that can walk you through this process include [this part](#) of How to Upload or Email a Resume from Susan Ireland.

Even a Web-based HTML resume is not that hard to craft. Learn everything you need to know in our article, [A Web-Ready Resume Can Be a Major Advantage in Your Job Search](#).

For basics on creating other forms of e-resumes, such PDF, see our article, [Your E-Resume's File Format Aligns with its Delivery Method](#).

5. Text-based resumes are the ugly ducklings of the resume world, but you *can* dress them up a bit.

Job-seekers and resume writers have strived for years to develop ways to make resumes visually appealing and graphically interesting — through font choices, bold and italic type, rule lines, bullets, centering, indents, and more — only to have all that formatting thrown out the window in the e-resume world. Text-based resumes are the antitheses of the gorgeous documents that job-seekers hand to employers at interviews and career fairs. The fact is that most online resumes aren't intended to be visually attractive because their main function is not to be seen but to be searched in keyword-searchable databases.

Still, they may be seen at some point. Employers may see the resume you've posted on an online job board. Their primary interest is whether the content of your resume (indicated largely by keywords) shows you to be qualified for the opening you've applied for and/or for which the employer is searching the database. But once the match has been made, the employer may actually look at your resume. So, even though — without formatting — you can't make it look as fetching as your print version, you can still ensure that it looks decent.

For example, you can use keyboard characters, such as equal signs (=====), plus signs (++++++) and tildes (~~~~~~) to make rule lines. You can use asterisks (*****), hyphens (—), lower-case letter o's (ooooo), and carats (>>>>) to make bullets. You can use UPPER CASE for emphasis in headings. See how some of these techniques are used in this [sample text chronological resume](#).

Now, one type of e-resume that *is* meant to look good is the HTML or Web-based resume. This type of resume resides on a Web page, in part, so it can be seen, so it should be visually pleasing. While it's not too difficult to make an HTML resume look attractive, the more you know about Web design, the better you can make the resume look. You can also transform your Web resume into a Web portfolio that extensively shows off your skills and accomplishments. If



you're not confident of your skills, you might want to enlist a Web designer or resume writer in this process. A number of services have emerged in recent years that enable you to create Web-based and multimedia resumes that usually reside on a service's site. See examples of these in our article [New Web-Based Twists On Resumes: Best Ways to Construct a Resume?](#)

Check out these [samples of Web-based resumes](#).

6. Text resumes are highly versatile.

Once you have a text-based resume, you can do a lot with it, including:

- Post it in its entirety on many job boards.
- Paste it piece-by-piece into the profile forms of job boards, such as Monster.com, that have a rigid setup and don't allow resumes to be posted as is.
- Paste it into the body of an e-mail and send it to employers.
- Convert it to a Web-based HTML resume.

7. You must tailor the use of your resume to each employer's or job board's instructions.

As you might have guessed from what you've read so far in this article, there is no universally accepted way to submit your e-resume to an employer. Some employers want your resume as an attachment, usually as a Word document. Others want your resume as text pasted into the body of an e-mail message. Still others want you to paste your resume into an online form.

If you absolutely cannot find out an employer's preference, the following is a fairly safe bet:

- A formatted, "print" resume in document (.doc because some older versions of Word cannot open .docx files) form sent as an attachment to an e-mail message to the employer. And here's a bit of common sense: Can you imagine how many resumes

employers receive with files entitled “resume.doc”? Use your name as part of the file name for your resume. Example: JaySmithResume.doc.

- A text-based e-resume stripped of most formatting and pasted directly into the same e-mail message into which your print resume is attached. Since the employer has this text-based resume, he or she can choose whether or not to open the attached version, based on compatibility, virus protection, and company policy on opening attachments. For a truly complete e-mailable, electronic package, add a text-based cover letter stripped of formatting and pasted directly into the same e-mail message into which your print resume is attached. Pat Kendall and Susan Whitcomb note in a book about online resumes that your cover letter can contain verbiage that points out the options you’re providing: “I have attached an MS Word version of my resume, as well as pasted a plain-text version below. (If the plain-text version is sufficient for your database, it is not necessary to download the formatted attachment.)”

The same lack of universality goes for job boards. Some enable you to paste your resume into a form in any format, but the board automatically converts it to text. Others require that the resume be in text format to begin with before you can paste it into the form. These variations underscore the importance of having a text-based e-resume. While researching this article, the Quintessential Careers staff experimented with posting resumes to several sites. We learned that a text-based e-resume is not only vital for boards with a text-resume requirement — but also extremely helpful when the boards convert any resume to text. Just because a job board turns your resume into text doesn’t mean it will look decent; it’s better to have a text resume to begin with so you know it will look appropriate when pasted in.

Also note that some job boards/employers limit the number of words or the size of the file that you can paste into any one field.



8. Take advantage of job-board features to protect yourself and get the most out of posting your e-resume on the boards.

Most reputable job boards have features that enable you to protect your own privacy and confidentiality, control who sees your resume, mask the identity if your current employer (so your employer doesn't know you're looking), and easily edit and delete your resume or change it from active to inactive.

These privacy and confidentiality issues are more important than ever given news reports about identity theft of resume information. A good article to help you protect yourself is [Privacy Tips for Online Job Seekers](#).

Many boards also enable you to create multiple profiles for yourself so you can look for various types of jobs. Some permit you to submit a list of your top skills. Resume submission forms generally have questions in addition to a place to submit the actual resume. Some questions are mandatory; others are optional. When a question is optional, consider whether it is to your advantage to answer it. Answering questions about salary or location requirements, for example, may be too limiting.

9. A few finishing touches can increase your e-resume's effectiveness.

Here are a few tips from the experts for getting more out of your e-resume:

- Use the “Properties” feature in MS Word to boost the keyword searchability of your attached Word resume. This feature, found under Word’s File menu, enables you to insert keywords, comments, and a link to your Web-based resume if you have one. You can use the “Comments” field to enter geographic and relocation preferences.
- A similar trick applies to using HTML commands called meta tags in creating a Web-based resume. The “description” command, for example, gives you up to 150 characters to provide a description of your document. Make sure you use words that highlight your

experience and skills. The “keywords” command gives you limited space to enter critical keywords. Be sure to use keywords that you think employers and recruiters might use in searching for the position you are seeking — and make sure those keywords are also listed at least once (perhaps in a “key accomplishments” section) in your resume. Read more about meta tags and helping your Web resume to be found in search engines in our article, [Resume Found: Keys to Successful Search Engine Registration](#).

- Do some test runs of the formatted print resume you intend to send to employers as an attachment by sending it to the computers of a few friends to see if the formatting remains consistent from computer to computer. Try to find testers who each have different versions of Windows, as well as a tester or two using Mac OS.
- Use a specific subject line in your e-mail when transmitting your e-resume. The subject line might include the reference n

by Katharine Hansen, Ph.D.