By Erika Johnson   Apr 11, 2013

Students Connect, Collaborate and Career Search on New Interactive Portfolio Platform
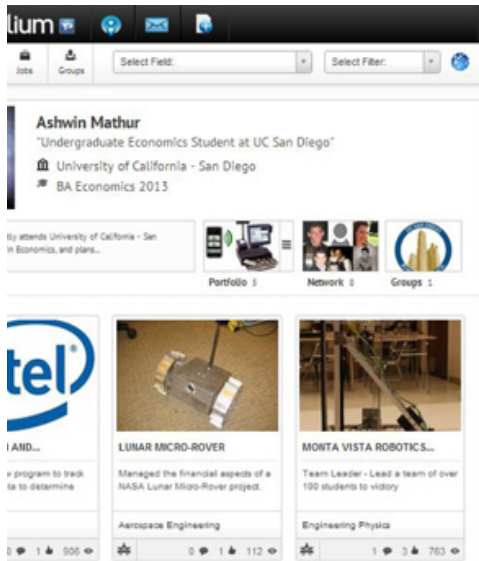
Students at the UC San Diego are known for their innovative ideas that transcend classroom walls, but these achievements can lose their vigor when confined to a single bullet point on a traditional printed resume. In a digital world that prioritizes portability and values visual content, UC San Diego alumnus Adam Markowitz believes he has a solution to help students make a lasting impression: a new interactive portfolio platform called thePortfolium. Designed to dynamically showcase students' multidisciplinary projects, the website allows users to network, upload their top work and search for jobs all in one place.

The creation of the platform stems from Markowitz's own post-graduation experiences. "After making the transition from college to career and experiencing the inefficiencies in the process, it became evident that this platform was needed," said Markowitz, founder of the new platform. "Now more than ever, it is vital for students and new grads to stand out and make an impression, and what better way than with a digital portfolio exhibiting their top projects?"

Launched in December 2012, thePortfolium was first offered exclusively to UC San Diego students and educators; more than a thousand UC San Diego students joined. The platform has now been expanded to students from more than 40 universities nationwide. Once registered, students can immediately begin adding content, browse portfolios, connect with others in their field, comment on posts and bookmark inspiring entries. Students can then share their work and activities with prospective employers, professors and peers.

Ashwin Mathur, a senior at UC San Diego studying economics, created his portfolio as a tool to present his work during interviews. "Having an interactive portfolio can give you an edge over having a traditional resume because the employer can visually see the work you have done, giving them confidence in your ability," said Mathur. "ThePortfolium is a great way to showcase your projects and differentiate yourself from all of the other applicants."

The process of creating a portfolio is simple: new users can either populate their profile by connecting to their LinkedIn account or build a new profile from scratch, customizing their page to fit their interests and career goals. Students can upload all types of media to demonstrate a wide range of projects, from animations to essays and more. A custom URL and QR code (a unique barcode leading directly to their website) can be generated to add to a business card or email signature.

One of the advantages of the platform is the myriad ways to organize content. Entries can be specific or generalized, from a single draft to a complete strategic plan of a multilayered project. Diverse or unrelated experiences can be categorized into lists, while each entry is assigned a label by subject matter, automatically grouped with similar projects from other users.

Mathur has used his site to highlight his internships, volunteer work and class projects. Many of his entries are supported by attachments; as part of outlining his volunteer work for FIRST robotics, for example, Mathur included a business plan detailing how he budgeted supplies for the team, along with photos of the events he helped plan. "I really like the visual setup of the individual portfolios, as well as the ease of viewing other member's entries," he said. "It not only shows me what else is happening in different fields, but gives me details on how the projects are being made."

Educators and employers are also invited to engage on thePortfolium; professors can highlight the work of their students through curated galleries specific to each course, while employers have the opportunity to post openings and review applicant portfolios, with certain entries earmarked by the student as the most relevant to the position they are applying for.

Nicholas Montoya, a sophomore at UC San Diego studying mechanical engineering, attributes his interactive portfolio as the key element that helped him to secure his internship at Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems. "I brought an iPad to the interview and showed them my most current achievements that weren't listed on my resume, or were underrepresented," he said.

Montoya credits thePortfolium as the source of his success when speaking with recruiters at job fairs. With more than 25 entries included in his portfolio, Montoya has built a strong collection of his passions and academic engagement both inside and outside of the classroom—an amount much more than he could give justice to on a printed resume.

All those with a valid email address can sign up to create their own free interactive portfolio. For more information and to get started, visit thePortfolium.com.

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