

Scannable Résumés

Roadmap

1

What is a Scannable Résumé?

2

Why a Scannable Résumé?

3

Electronic, Email, and Web Résumés

4

Lifecycle of the Scannable Résumé?

5

General Format

6

Dos and Don'ts

What is a Scannable Résumé?

A **scannable** résumé can be scanned into a computer using imaging technology.

It allows employers to search for applicants using keywords.

JOHN Q. JOBSEEKER

Boiler@purdue.edu

Current address

420 Boilermaker Ave. Apt. 22
West Lafayette, IN 47906
(765) 555-2424

Permanent address

2800 N Credibility St
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
(260) 555-1234

Objective

A full-time position developing management information systems in the banking industry, which will allow me to apply my database development and financial analysis skills

Education

Purdue University, West Lafayette IN, expected May 2006

GPA: 3.6/4.0 (Major GPA: 3.8/4.0)

Bachelor of Science in Management

Minor: Management Information Systems

Significant Courses

Database Management Systems, Applied Systems Analysis and Design, Decision Support and Expert Systems, Computer Communications Systems (all graduate level courses)

Computer Skills

Proficient with IBM and MAC computers and with MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access), Lotus, Visual Basic, PowerBuilder, Oracle, SQL, and MS Publisher

Work Experience

Assistant Coordinator/Tutor

Purdue University Writing Lab, West Lafayette, IN

January 2005 to Present

- Hire, train, and supervise tutors while creating a motivational climate
- Coordinate promotions through the production of marketing materials and promotional events
- Tutor students with business writing needs

Financial Analyst Intern

Merrill Lynch, Chicago, IL

Summer 2005

- Prepared balance sheet and income statement analyses
- Evaluated various tax statements and other financial publications
- Joined a project team for establishing databases of pertinent information for use in analyzing future plans, forecasts, and acquisitions

Business Analyst Intern

State Farm, Bloomington, IL

Summer 2004

- Assisted in developing and maintaining computer-based systems and procedures
- Analyzed financial systems and provided systems analysts with documentation of business

Why a Scannable Résumé?



Scannable résumé databases allow companies to search through a larger number of applicants.



Internet technology is more cost effective for employers; they do not need to spend as much time looking at résumés.



More and more companies are requiring applicants to forward a scannable résumé.

Electronic, Email, and Web Résumés

Electronic Résumé

- A résumé that is written into a text box provided by the company or job search site
- Generally written in very simple text and saved as an ASCII or text-only file

Email Résumé

- A résumé that is written in plain text and can be sent as an attachment or in the email frame

Web Résumé

- A résumé that is published onto a web site or page using graphics and hypertext

Lifecycle of the Scannable Résumé?



Once it reaches the company, it is scanned into a database. The computer takes a picture and creates another version.



A software like ResTrack or Resumix extracts words and dates from the new version that can be searched by employers.

Formatting and Submission Guidelines



General Format



Avoid Punctuation



Without Punctuation



Font and Typestyle



Addresses



Use Nouns Instead of Active
Verbs



Keywords

7

General Format

- Left justify the entire document
- Avoid punctuation as much as possible
- Avoid vertical and horizontal lines, graphics, and boxes
- Do not fold or staple
- Use only those abbreviations that are familiar with your field of study

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Avoid Punctuation



If the computer is conducting a word search, it might not recognize the word **leader** if it is presented as **leader**.



No piece of punctuation should ever touch a word.

Without Punctuation

- Punctuation can affect the employer's ability to find matching terms in a keyword search.

CAREER OBJECTIVE

- A position in business management with an interest in computers and banking emphasizing management information systems teamwork and customer service

Font and Typestyle

- Use fonts like Times New Roman, New Century, Courier, Helvetica, and sometimes Palatino
- Font size should be between 10-12
- Avoid fancy font styles such as *italics*, underline, and shadows.
- **Boldface** and CAPITAL letters are acceptable provided that the letters do not touch each other
- Provide white space between words
- Avoid condensing the spaces between letters and lines

Addresses

- Include an address for several reason:
 1. Lack of an address can be read as a read flag and the employer may wonder whether you have something to hide
 2. Offering an address increases your credibility
 3. An address can help the employer to consider if relocation is needed
 4. Some employers may request your address
- When Including your address also consider privacy issues and biases.
 1. Include a general address for delivery
 2. Include city and state
- When including more than one address, place one on top of the other. Using side by side columns will cause the lines to be misplaced and garbled

Campus Address

Ernest Hemingway
Young Graduate
House 2A
West Lafayette, IN
47906
765-494-3723

Home Address

Ernest Hemingway
2000 Sunshine Blvd.
Fisherman's Way,
USA
555-555-5555

Use Nouns Instead of Active Verbs

For example, if an employer is looking for a “**graphic designer**” that created “**brochures**” and “**multimedia presentations**”

Conventional résumé

Developed promotional materials and brochures,
created multimedia presentations, ...

Scannable résumé

Graphic designer creating four color brochures multimedia presentations and newspaper ads

Graphic Designer

ABC Creative Studio, New York, NY Summer 2021

- Graphic designer creating four color brochures multimedia presentations and newspaper ads

Keywords

Keywords are the most important aspect of a scannable résumé.

- Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) and recruiters often search for these specific terms to determine whether a résumé matches a job description.
1. Mirror the language from the job posting — use the exact phrasing where possible.
 2. Focus on **nouns and noun phrases** rather than long sentences, as ATS systems scan for these terms.
 3. Include a mix of **hard skills** (technical abilities) and **soft skills** (leadership, collaboration, communication) if they appear in the posting.
 - Industry-specific terms
 - Skills and competencies
 - Certifications or technologies
 4. Place keywords naturally throughout headings, job titles, and bullet points in your work experience section.

Examples of Keywords

Keywords for a mechanical engineer	Using them as nouns
Manufacturing	Manufacturing Supervisor
Design	Design Assistant
Production	Production Manager
Injection	Injection Molding Inspector
Assembly Line/ Assemble Machines	Assembly Line Supervisor

Experience Example

Manufacturing Intern

- Wabash National 1998 2000
 - Production assistant for quality assurance
 - Injection molding inspector
 - Machine assembly

Work Experience

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Keyword Summary

- It can be included on a second page or in place of the skills statement at the top of the résumé

Category	Keywords for a person seeking entry level position
Education	• Bachelor of Science • Systems Engineering
Technical Areas	• Power Engineering • Human–Machine Interface (HMI) • Maintenance Subsystem Design • Maintenance • Procedures • Systems Integration • Process • Improvement
Professional Experience	• Consulting Firm Experience • Municipal Utility Operations • Research & Analysis • Data Analysis
Management & Operations	• Staff Management • Budget Management • Inventory Control • Small Business Operations
Career Level & Skills	• Entry-Level Engineering • Technical Problem Solving • Team Collaboration • Project Coordination

Dos and Don'ts



Important Reminders



What to Avoid



Where Can I Get Help?

Important Reminders



You still want your résumé to be organized in a way that emphasizes your strengths.



Keep your skills, experience, education, honors/activities, and objective statement or summary of qualifications.

What to Avoid

A scanned conversational resume

Work Experience

Assistant Coordinator + Tutor @ Purdue Writing Lab (Jan '05 – now)

- Hired + trained tutors & made sure everyone vibed w/ a motivating team culture
- Helped get the word out: made flyers, ran promo events, all that good stuff
- Tutored biz writing + helped students sound pro + clear in their work

Financial Analyst Intern @ Merrill Lynch, Chicago (Summer '05)

- Dug into balance sheets + income statements 
- Reviewed tax docs + financial reports
- Worked w/ a project team  to build databases for future plans + forecasts

Where Can I Get More Information About the Job Position?



Contact the company



Human resource departments are excellent resources for your résumé information.



It is acceptable to contact them. They may provide you with specific formatting instructions for scannable résumés.

References

- Schall, J. (2014). *Computer Scannable Resume*. College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University. https://www.e-education.psu.edu/styleforstudents/sites/www.e-education.psu.edu/styleforstudents/files/file/chapter%208/Resume4_new.pdf
- Purdue OWL®. (2006). *What is a Scannable Résumé?* Purdue OWL® -Purdue University. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/resumes_and_vitas/scannable_resumes/index.html
- USAJOBS. (n.d.). *Update your resume now so it meets new resume requirements*. USAJOBS Help Center. Retrieved November 6, 2025, from <https://help.usajobs.gov/faq/application/documents/resume/page-limit>

Thank You

Both the Online Writing Lab and On-Campus Writing Lab are great resources to support you in visual rhetoric like PowerPoint. You can discuss your presentation with a trained consultant at any stage of the process.

Schedule an Appointment:

- The second floor of Krach
- owl.purdue.edu
- (765) 494-3723