Creating an Efficient and Relevant Professional e-Portfolio in the Digital Media Age

A Capstone Project submitted to Southern Utah University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Interdisciplinary Studies

July 2021

Submitted by

Cesar S. Caballero

Project Committee:

Cynthia Kimball Davis, Ph.D., Chair Lexie Grant, Committee Member

Crystal Rockwood, Committee Member

I certify that this document satisfactorily meets the scope and quality as a final paper, and that it fulfills the capstone requirement for the degree **Master of Interdisciplinary Studies.**

Cynthia Kimball Davis Cynthia Kimball Davis, Ph.D., Capstone Chair	
Lexie Gran	t
Lexie Grant, Committ	ee Member
Crystal Rockw	ood

Crystal Rockwood, Committee Member

Acknowledgments

I am so thankful to so many individuals who have helped me during this educational journey. First and foremost, I am grateful to my mother Graciela de Luna. She has always been my greatest cheerleader and supporter. No matter the idea I have or the journey I am on, she is always the one who has my back and helps me figure things out. She was excited when she found out I would go back to school, and she constantly checked on me during this intense yet gratifying year at Southern Utah University (SUU).

Second, I am thankful for having met such as outstanding individual and professor such as Dr. Cynthia Kimball Davis. She was and still continues to be an amazing source of information. At this point, I think of her more as a mentor and friend than just a professor. This speaks volumes to her approach to the relationship she builds with her students. She has always been approachable; not once did I feel like I could not talk to her. SUU is lucky to have such a professional, determined, talented and dedicated professor at the head of their Master of Interdisciplinary Studies program. I could never give Professor Kimball Davis enough praise or thanks for what she has done for me during my educational endeavor with SUU.

In addition to Professor Kimball Davis, there are three more professors who made my educational journey challenging yet rewarding. Ms. Crystal Rockwood was my second teacher during my courses, and she constantly challenged me. At times, I was ready to give up and change my area of study since sometimes I felt as if it were too much, but this tremendously helped me figure out things that otherwise I would have not been able to on my own. She continuously pushed for more and this in turn helped see what Crisis Management was all about. I am forever in debt to Professor Rockwood for her teaching methods and for challenging me in such a way that the best of me came out resulting in a great experience. The next professor was Professor Lexie Grant; she was such a source of information. She is talented and passionate

about her subject areas. She always provided me with the information and knowledge I needed in order to learn more about grants and fundraising. Professor Grant was always open to conversations; she was helpful beyond words. Her classes may have been challenging in a different way as there was so much information disseminated throughout the courses, but she was always open to conversations with her students. I could not have been happier than I was learning from such a talented individual. I can only aspire to know and to be a fraction of what she is in the nonprofit management world. Finally. Dr. Crystal Koenig has to be included here. I took one class with her, and she made such a lasting impression in my life. Not only is she talented, approachable and an expert in her field, but she also challenged all her students in an amazing way. There were times, when we had to read so much material and again, I felt like maybe this was not the right place for me. I was trying to balance my personal life with my work and degree. It felt impossible at times during her class, but I will say that none of the material we read ever felt boring or unnecessary. I enjoyed her class beyond words, and it truly made me happy to have selected leadership as one of my areas of concentration. She deserves so much praise for being such a source of information and for helping students change their way of thinking or seeing things. Her strategic thinking is commendable, and she passes that on to her students. I am forever thankful to her for having helped me develop into a better leader.

Finally, I want to thank all my family and friends who were there during this intense year. Thanks for putting up with me when I could not go out or do something. Thanks for knowing sometimes I was actually too busy to do anything. It helped we were during a pandemic, but still, thanks to everyone. I have four friends who were such an inspiration: Andrea Ordonez, Emily Perez, Ruby Tristan and Rosario Jasminoy. Thanks for always being the amazing human beings you are and above all, the best friends I could possibly have. Thanks to everybody!

Table of Contents

Abstract	6
Introduction	7
Theoretical Framework & Literature Review	8
Connection Between Articles, Framework, and Project	11
Methodology	12
Implementation	13
Conclusion	19
References	20
Appendices	21
Appendix A - Statement of Purpose	22
Appendix B – Project Proposal	27
Appendix C - Timeline	30
Appendix D – Budget & Resources	31
Appendix E – Website Structure	33

Abstract

One of the biggest issues people find when looking for a job is they may not have an advantage over other job seekers. Thinking of that gave pause to the fact that creating an electronic portfolio ahead of time, the prospective employee can give himself or herself a 'calling card' that will set him or her apart from the rest. It is a competitive world out there and if one is to make sure to land a dream job or find something worthwhile, then one has to have an 'ace up their sleeve.' This Southern Utah University (SUU) Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (MIS) capstone project concentrates on the fact that an electronic portfolio has to be effective and relevant in order to be that 'calling card.' The researcher focused on the contents of the eportfolio as well as the creation of three different subsections that would deal with different aspects of the educational and career background of the researcher. The areas of the portfolio were entertainment social media, educational social media, and education in general. In addition, graduate samples and other important key areas were included in order to enhance the final product. The goal was to make sure that all possible relevant pieces were included in order to make a lasting impression in future or prospective employers. The final project website address is: www.cesarscaballero.com

Introduction

This Southern Utah University (SUU) Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (MIS) capstone project's objective was to create an electronic portfolio that could help the researcher when looking for a job. Not only was it important to develop the e-portfolio in a creative manner but special attention had to be paid to the contents and relevance of such portfolio.

There was extensive research conducted on the importance of creating an electronic portfolio as well as the contents that should be included. Details on the presentation and the way the content curation should be conducted was important as well. It was determined that in order for the e-portfolio to be effective, the researcher had to divide it into several sub sections that would highlight the researcher's background in a better and more suitable way.

The research by different field professionals was helpful and added urgency to this project as the researcher found out what he had to include and what he had to do in order for the project to be successful. Asides from finding different content that could be adapted electronically for this project, the researcher also considered information and works from his SUU educational tenure in order to make this project not just more relevant but also a true success. Finally, the best way to put everything together was through the creation of a website hosted on WIX and through several slideshows created on Canva. The final result is the website, www.cesarscaballero.com

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Taking an interest in connecting all three areas of study from the SUU's program into practice, the researcher began analyzing ways to showcase not only his previously acquired skills but the ones he learned through the three areas: nonprofit management, leadership, and social media with public relations. These disciplines correlate to each other and align perfectly to create a professional portfolio that will serve to show prospective employers who the researcher is. While portfolios are not a new thing to the job market, the approach that was going to be taken for this professional portfolio, while not technically new, was going to be a modern way to make sure the researcher is marketable and in demand in this ever-changing job market.

This portfolio, given the current technological and digital landscape, rather than being on paper was to be an 'ePortfolio.' In the last few years, many researchers and well-known professors have explained that e-portfolios have become an integral tool to help identify the best new employees (Jones & Leverenz, 2017). Knowing ePortfolios are popular at this point in time, the researcher concluded that he needed to understand not only how to create such a project but also to utilize his newly acquired skills in social media and public relations to create a diverse and marketable ePortfolio. In addition, the intention was to make sure this e-portfolio would take advantage of the social media medium in order to showcase the researcher's talents and capabilities.

Moreover, "When ePortfolio creation is motivated by students' desire to showcase their capabilities for potential employers, graduate school admission counselors, or some external audience, students respond much more enthusiastically" (Jones & Leverenz, 2017, p. 68). As a graduating student of a master's program searching for new job opportunities, the researcher took it upon himself to understand the importance of the ePortfolio in finding a better job.

"Researchers have outlined the benefit of a well-prepared portfolio during the employment process (Woodbury et al, as cited in Filiatrault & Leahy, 2009, p. 217). As pointed by said researchers, an ePortfolio seems to be important but the way this project was going to be created was still a question waiting to be answered. After all, the researcher had to make sure that this particular project was effective and useful when seeking new jobs. There was no point in creating an e-portfolio if it were not going be useful in landing a new job; the researcher needed something that would truly make a difference when securing employment. This meant the researcher needed to figure out what to include in the electronic portfolio as well as how to incorporate all of the learned material in it as well. An effective and sought-after e-portfolio would be one that showcases what the researcher has learned throughout his educational career and through the experience in the jobs he has held before. The point being to show prospective employers that they are hiring the best possible candidate for the job by including everything essential to the role.

Literature Review

According to Lauer and Cox (2018), several students from the University of Arkansas stated, "The need for quality portfolios in creative careers has increased in recent years and helps students get ahead of their competition when applying for jobs. Portfolio content is particularly important and must be of high quality" (Cox & Lauer, 2018, p. 40). Moreover, the work of designing a stellar portfolio has been described as something that will make use of not only all the skills and talents of the prospective employee but will also present his professional reputation to the prospective employer for further consideration (Scolere, 2019, p. 132). Since, understanding the importance of creating a meaningful portfolio becomes paramount for this e-portfolio as described by researchers, it is obvious this could become a "calling card" or a "reputation card" that could definetely set the researcher apart from other job applicants in future

applications. As Leahy and Filiatrault (2017) explain, "ePortfolios may be the hammer that nails down a successful interview" (p. 13). So, the question became: How does the researcher make sure this "calling card" becomes that hammer that will help him nail that said future interview with a prospective employer?

Hence, Jacobson (2020) suggests, "Personal branding is used to position oneself in the labour market by promoting one's skills, experience and personality- particularly when seeking employment" (p. 719). In other words, creating an ePortfolio becomes an endeavor that would showcase the researcher's talents and acquired skills, but it would also take advantage of the researcher's personal brand and reputation in order to make a positive impression on that future job. "Employers want to get an idea about the person behind the resume. They are saying that it is important for students to get their personalities across as part of the job application process" (Bhattacharya et al., 2007, p. 658). The objective was to make sure the personal brand of the researcher is passed along so that the prospective employers can see who this person is by the lenses of this ePortfolio. The researcher would be looking at the way he portrays himself through the particular job he is applying to; in other words, how, he is selling himself to this prospective employer in terms of demand and skills set acquired (Jacobson, 2020, p. 721). Creating a meaningful and effective ePortfolio was going to be all about knowing what to include and how it would play a relevant role in landing a new job. Furthermore, it was important too to know that the researcher absolutely had to make note of including important skills that the employer may be particularly interested in. After all, "Employers are looking for creativity, problem-solving abilities, and the capacity to learn..." (Bhattacharya et al., 2007, p. 659). Knowing exactly what the employer is looking for and taking time to include those relevant details in the e-portfolio was of the outmost importance. After all, if the prospective employer is looking for "crisis management skills" or "public speaking," the researcher would have to make sure to nod to those

particular set of skills in order to make a lasting impression on the expected audience. Creating a list of what to include and how to integrate such items in the e-portfolio became an extremely important part of this project.

Jenna Jacobson (2020) found that in this new world where the digital world seems to play an ever-expanding part in landing a new job, the prospective employee needs to make sure his personal brand becomes the highlight of this e-portfolio (p. 722). Creating the perfect ePortfolio for the researcher would consider the talents, acquired skills from the program, past job and educational experiences, the personal branding and also the social media channels that the researcher may or may not have. All this would then combine into a "perfect storm" to create an ePortfolio that the researcher could use to land a coveted job where they may be plenty of competition.

Connection Between Articles, Framework and Project

"In general portfolios can be used for learning, showcasing of skills and assessment..."

(Bhattacharya et al., 2007, p. 660). This ePortfolio was going to serve the purpose of helping in future job seeking endeavors but it would also help the researcher and the project committee evaluate or assess what the researcher learned throughout the program and how that content connects to real-life applications. Ultimately, creating an ePortfolio is an endeavor that was going to set the researcher apart from others. While taking into consideration everything mentioned before, the researcher set up to create a tool that would help the researcher find the best possible job opportunities. Finally, if one is to think about it, pursuing a master's degree is nothing else but a way to advance one's career or expand on prospective job opportunities; having the researcher create this e-portfolio with all of its considerations would then help cement the objective of having pursued the master's degree in the first place.

Project Methodology

For this project, the researcher collaborated with Dr. Cynthia Kimball Davis in order to identify what the project would be. The researcher determined that this project could serve as the culmination for all the areas the researcher studied in the graduate degree program.

The idea behind this project was to create a professional portfolio that could help the researcher market himself to different prospective employers and audiences. The fact of the matter is that there is a fierce competition in the job seeking landscape and if one is to make a lasting impression, then that someone needs to have an 'ace up their sleeve.' This professional portfolio project is the 'ace up the sleeve' that the researcher expects to have when looking for a new job. This will be the defining feature that will help the researcher land that new job.

The researcher mainly focused on the article: "Employers' Perceptions of the Benefits of Employment." In this article, it is explained that having a well-prepared professional portfolio can not only be an advantage over the other job applicants but also a reputation 'calling card' that will help the prospective employers get to know the future employee better than just by an interview or a physical resume (Filiatrault & Leahy, 2009, p. 217-225). The focus of this research and project was then determined to be on the contents of a successful professional electronic portfolio.

In addition to the main article that served as a guiding principle here, the researcher also used other articles by Leah Scolere and Jenna Jacobson. These two authors focus their own research on explaining how someone writing a portfolio should brand themselves.

Using the above-mentioned articles, the researcher guided his project by following the next steps.

Design

Before anything else, the researcher had to decide the means through which the project would be created. Deciding on a website host platform was the first step. There are plenty of websites that could host such electronic portfolios, so some extensive research took place. The researcher had to consider the pros and cons for several of these available platforms. The two main platforms that the researcher focused on were Wix and Google Sites. These two were fairly evaluated against the objectives of the project. After careful consideration, the researcher decided that Wix would be the most effective when presenting a professional electronic portfolio. This platform hosts a variety of features that could make a professional looking portfolio more accessible than through the use of Google Sites. Additionally, one of the main reasons why this was decided was because with Wix, the researcher could pay to have his own domain (i.e., own name or other name if necessary) whereas on Google Sites, while technically possible, it was more difficult and also more expensive to achieve.

Implementation

Once it was decided that the electronic portfolio would be hosted on Wix, it was time to determine the contents of this e-portfolio. Thus, the researcher extensively analyzed different professional portfolios; furthermore, he read countless articles and other samples in order to determine what he would need to include in his e-portfolio in order to make the lasting impression he was after. Based on the researcher's interests in future job goals and based on the graduate degree the researcher studied, it was determined that the following should be included and highlighted:

1. **About Section**: Presenting information about the researcher along with pictures (a face to the name) and a mini biography that highlights who the researcher is.

- 2. Entertainment Social Media Portfolio: A slideshow focusing on the social media samples the researcher has created for the entertainment industry (theme parks, haunted house attractions, museums, zoos, etc.).
- 3. Nonprofit and Education Social Media Portfolio: A slideshow focusing on the social media samples the researcher has created for nonprofit and education (schools, museums, school districts, online learning sites, etc.).
- 4. **Education Portfolio**: A slideshow focusing on the educational accomplishments of the researcher. The focus here was mainly on the teaching career the researcher had before studying his masters' degree. Classroom samples along with plenty of pictures from the educational background were provided.
- 5. <u>Professional Resume</u>: Resume highlighting the achievements of the researcher. In addition, it would include skills, additional experience, certifications, educational career (such as schools attended), volunteering and internship experiences.
- 6. Graduate Samples: These would be actual samples from the graduate degree that could be relevant to any of the possible future job opportunities the researcher could be interested in. The goal of these was going to make sure future employers can see the researcher in action.
- 7. <u>Instagram Linked Account</u>: This would showcase the researcher's talents on his personal Instagram account and how that could connect to social media management.
- 8. <u>LinkedIn Linked Account</u>: The focus here was to highlight the career accomplishments the researcher has achieved during his life.
- 9. <u>Contact Information</u>: Information on how to connect with the researcher should he be a fit for a future position.

Timeline

Once it was determined what platform to use to host the e-portfolio and which items should be included, it had to be decided as to how the project would be conducted. The researcher first had to set up the Wix website platform. After that, separate tabs were created for each of the contents of the e-portfolio. The researcher started to evaluate what he could include and the different ways he could approach those contents. It was decided to use the web tool 'Canva' to create the three different sub portfolios that would be included in the 'main' portfolio website.

Three different portfolios according to the different areas (such as education, nonprofit, entertainment, and teaching career) were created. While all three had similar formatting, all three of them also had unique characteristics that set them apart from each other. This would help by having future employers look at specific tabs and decide which portfolio is the one that they could focus on. Another benefit of this would be the fact that future employers could notice all the different skills the researcher has across different areas thus show how he has experience in interdisciplinary studies. Based on research from authors such as Filiatrault and Leahy (2009), it has been widely recognized that showing a prospective employer how in demand a potential employee can be in different areas can only help land a better position; employers are interested in hiring team players who can function in several different areas rather than in just one (p. 217-225). Considering the previous information, it was obvious that having experience and different portfolios readily available within the main website would definetely help the researcher have better options when looking for a job.

After spending a long time, nurturing, and curating the content for each of the sub portfolios, the researcher then focused on the design on the website itself and on a color palette that would work and make the e-portfolio look both professional and modern. In addition to that,

other colors and elements were considered in order to make sure that the e-portfolio was inviting and easy to navigate. Along with this, the researcher had to decide what pictures to use since while he wanted to show a professional tone, he also needed to show how casual social media and education can be as well. Therefore, several photos were selected, and new ones were taken in order to be included in both the sub portfolios and around the website as well. It was also decided that a video recording would help in the Instagram section to set the tone for the reason behind that section being there. In this video, the researcher decided to take a casual tone explaining why he decided to include that section and the importance of it.

Part of the process here was to identify the way the researcher had to market himself and how to make himself stand aside from other people who may be applying for the same job. Focus was paid to the way the researcher's brand would be portrayed through this e-portfolio.

According to Leah Scolere (2019), in order to create a successful and useful e-portfolio, it is not enough to be creative and make it or the applicant look nice, but one also has to make sure to include relevant information that will catch the eye of different prospective employers; this should also consider the culture and ethnic background of the applicant in order to take advantage of that (p. 1891-1909). Thinking of this, the researcher had to make sure to include details about his cultural and ethnical background into each of the individual sections of the e-portfolio. Not only that, but he had to make sure that these details were sprinkled throughout the website in a consistent and organic manner and not just for the sake of it. In other words, these background information details had to make sense in the e-portfolio as a part of the whole and as a way to market the researcher in a way that did not feel exploitative.

In addition to that, Jenna Jacobson (2019) suggests that the researcher's brand as pointed out before is extremely important for more than the reasons mentioned before; she explains that making the e-portfolio looking nice is one thing while paying attention to the background is also

important, but if this is a job related to social media management then the e-portfolio has to be focused on social media management itself (p. 715-27). In order to make the e-portfolio better, the researcher had to consider a variety of things. It has been explained that he had to market his brand, be creative with the visual aspect of the project, consider his cultural and ethnical background and use it as an advantage (being bilingual, understanding other cultures, etc.); but now, he also had to consider showing his social media management skills all throughout the e-portfolio itself. This meant showing that the researcher had to understand the way social media processes and strategies work in the different areas he was exploring in the three different sub sections of the e-portfolio.

Finally, it was also important to include a variety of elements in this electronic portfolio including videos and pictures. Having multimedia in the e-portfolio will make things run smoother and once again, show the future employer that you 'walk the talk.' In other words, showing a wide array of videos and pictures along with samples will show the employer that one has the skills listed on a physical resume and that is more important than just explaining them; after all, an employer will respond better to actual samples of one's works rather than just words explaining what one does (Filiatrault & Leahy, 2009, p. 217-225). This could be interpreted saying: "A picture is worth a thousand words..."

Resources/ Budget

For the most part, and as discussed before, the resources for this project were 'Canva' and 'Wix.' These two tools had the purpose of helping the researcher create the most successful version of the e-portfolio. The cost of Canva was 12 dollars a month and it was a necessary tool to make sure that the sub portfolios could be created in an inviting and professional manner.

Canva offered plenty of options when it came to deciding the design for the slideshow.

Furthermore, it provided different choices when it came to the color palette that could be used and the type of media that could be include therein. Meanwhile, the Wix web platform would cost approximately 18 dollars a month to make sure the researcher's domain name (first and last name) could be used as the actual web address and in turn make it easier to use and disseminate to future employers. In addition, Wix offered more flexibility when it came to the design of the website itself and the information that could be included therein as well as the different media that the researcher could use to illustrate his skills and talents.

Risk Management

The main issue the researcher ran into was to find samples from all of the social media positions he had in the past along with finding a worthwhile literature framework. Some of these samples along with the teaching portfolio contents were difficult to locate because they had been saved in another computer. After some research, all of these records were found. Meanwhile, the literature framework proved harder to master. Even though there are many articles regarding professional electronic portfolios, there are not many peer-reviewed articles one could use to connect to a project such as this. The researcher was able to find several articles that could be used as the literature framework for this project. In addition to that and using the 'work cited' part of these articles, the researcher found more articles that could be seen as peer-reviewed and could help with the creation of this project.

Aside from all of that, the only other inherent risks associated with the project were finding time and using time wisely. Time management and avoiding procrastination were the main concerns regarding risk management for this particular project. Considering the fact that it was always a focus to make sure that as pointed out by Filiatrault and Leahy (2009), one had to make sure that the contents of their professional e-portfolio are relevant to their future job seeking endeavors and reflective of what they know how to do (social media management,

teaching, etc.); all the while making sure that their portfolio represents the better version of themselves (p. 217-225). In other words, the researcher had to make sure that everything that would be included in the e-portfolio would be relevant no matter what. Any risks associated with the project were always balanced with the fact that the researcher was trying to achieve a modern and ambitious e-portfolio that could be the difference between landing a job or not.

Conclusion

With this project, the researcher had something to prove. He needed to utilize all he learned throughout both his educational career before and during SUU's tenure in order to show how he could be the most viable choice for a future job. Working on this project, while arduous and intensive, was exciting and rewarding too as the researcher knew that the project was not just an assignment but a tool that he could use in the future. This would be something that would definetely become an important tool for the researcher not only when looking for a job but also to showcase all he has learned throughout both his life and educational career.

Finding the time to work on this assignment was always a challenge but once the researcher actually started dedicating enough time to this project, it was easy to connect the literature and framework to the needs of it.

Creating an e-portfolio to use to the researcher's advantage, when it comes to looking for a job, became a task of love in order to make sure that this portfolio could be the best possible version of itself in order to make that positive lasting impression on a future job opening.

References

- Filiatrault, A., & Leahy, R. L. (2017). Employers' perceptions of the benefits of employment electronic portfolios. *International Journal of EPortfolio*, 7(217).
- Heinrich, E., Rayudu, R., & Bhattacharya, M. (2007, December). *Preparation for lifelong learning using ePortfolios*. Taylor & Francis. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03043790701520602.
- Jacobson, J. (2020). You are a brand: Social media managers' personal branding and "the future audience." *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 29(6), 715–727. https://doi.org/10.1108/jpbm-03-2019-2299
- Jones, B., & Leverenz, C. (2017). Building personal brands with digital storytelling ePortfolios. *International Journal of EPortfolio*, 7(67).
- Lauer, Z., & Cox, C. (2018). Importance of portfolio building for university students. *Discovery,*The Student Journal of Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food, and Life Sciences.

 University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.
- Scolere, L. (2019). Brand yourself, design your future: Portfolio-building in the social media age.

 New Media & Society, 21(9), 1891–1909. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819833066

Appendices

Appendix A

Statement of Purpose

Introduction

My name is Cesar Caballero. I am currently finishing my master's in interdisciplinary studies (MIS) degree at Southern Utah University (SUU). My three core areas of study are Social Media/ Public Relations, Non-Profit Management and Leadership.

I am an eager social media-oriented individual. I am a bilingual/ bi-cultural hard worker who is willing to go the extra mile to make sure things get done. I have been an educator for the last 12 years. My expertise is in the areas of English-Language Arts/ Reading and Spanish. I am fully certified to teach those subjects as well as Generalist in the grade levels of 4-8th and 8-12th in both the states of Texas and Nevada. I have had positive results as a teacher while serving as a peer and student role model as well. Furthermore, I have always been part of several Non-profit associations such as Big Brothers and Sisters, supporting our youth as a mentor.

For the last few years, I have managed different social media pages for different companies and business, recently including my own. I have served as part of haunted houses marketing/ social media management, schools, and other organizations. I find the online landscape to be absorbing and exciting and more than anything else, full of opportunities to explore and to connect to education and entertainment. It is in entertainment, where I am looking to cement my future as a Social Media Manager.

I have also served as presenter/consultant for different conferences, trainings, and institutions such as Big Brothers & Sisters, Big Thought, local Zoos, Six Flags, The Walt Disney Company, NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education), Model Schools of America, Harmony Science Academy, Job Corps of America, TAMIU (Texas A & M International University) ESL courses among others.

I am currently working as the Customer Care and Social Media Manager for an online school district called Texas Virtual Schools. In this position, I handle nine different social media channels for the company and its three unique schools. I also oversee the Customer Service Department supervising 3-4 employees and making sure the company meets the best standards when it comes to our students and their families. Finally, I also serve as the "face" for the company as I am the one who attends meetings and represents the company in public meetings. This is basically connected to all public relations.

I have a deep love for all things Halloween or scary but also for all things Disney. My friends and family often tell me my love for these two genres seems funny as they are so different from each other. I enjoy spending time with my two sons and my two cats. I also love traveling and writing. I am hoping one day I get one of my movie scripts sold and hopefully made into a movie.

Why MIS Degree

I chose the MIS degree for two main reasons: (1) it was offered 100% online and (2) it gave me the opportunity to work on a unique degree that did not focus on a single area, giving me the choice to work in three interconnected areas instead.

100% Online

With the MIS being online, unique, and flexible, I was able to learn at my own pace in a way. While I did not have to attend classes at specific times or in a specific physical campus, I was always able to learn new information. I had access to real professors who were willing to also work with me and go the extra mile to make sure I was successful in my learning. I have genuinely enjoyed this aspect of the program as it allows me to tend to my responsibilities in daily life while also allowing me to further my educational career.

Unique Degree

Another factor that helped decide on this degree was the fact that as stated before, it was unique. I loved the fact that I did not have to concentrate on one area. I was able to select three different areas that interconnected with each other. These areas complimented each other and when combined were able to make this unique degree. I enjoy learning about different areas and applying the information to my future career.

Disciplines Chosen and How They Culminate Together

The three disciplines I chose were: Social Media- Public Relations, Non-Profit Management and Leadership.

Social Media- Public Relations

In my current position, everything I learned through this area and its classes will help me directly. I am in charge of all of the social media channels for the company I work for and since I am also the Public Relations Representative, I am in a position that truly benefits from the knowledge from this area. I learned so much new information that I could directly and immediately apply it to my current position.

Non-Profit Management

Through this area, I was able to learn more concepts related to Grants and Fundraising. A lot of this information was not familiar to me and again, I was able to immediately apply such information to my current position.

Leadership

Initially, Leadership was not in my plan, but the area I wanted in professional communication was unavailable. Thus, I decided on the former because I figured it could help me develop my leadership skills more and not only apply them to my current position but also to my future job opportunities. I would also like to work in education in the future such as a

professor or principal for a school and leadership will definitely help me. In addition, at some point, I would love to run for office and once again, this will help me there too.

Culmination

The three concentrations I chose will culminate in the creation of a Professional Portfolio that I will complete for my capstone course. This portfolio will become an integral tool for my future job applications. I want to use this as a "calling card" in order to get better opportunities in the future. I think having Social Media-Public Relations as the main goal of the portfolio will help me get a better job more suited to what I want to do in my future. I would love to work in the entertainment industry, preferably with a company that focuses on either Disney or Halloween (scary movies). Leadership and Non-Profit Management will help in a way that I can also apply those two areas to show how I can handle Social Media for entertainment but also for other type of companies that specialize in different things such as education.

Plan for Success in the Program

In order to be successful, I took four classes every full semester. While at times, it was incredibly challenging, I always did my best to try and keep an open mind. I always tried to communicate with my professors and to ask questions when necessary. As a matter of fact, I may have asked too many questions, but I just wanted to make sure I understood everything. I did my best to balance my graduate degree with my full-time online job and family as well. Being a single dad of two, and having my father live with us, plus our pets (who technically are just three more kids I need to take care of) proved particularly difficult at times, but I am glad I was able to make it work, with their help of course. This is a challenging path, but I am happy I was able to work on this and get the help I needed to make sure I had everything in place to be successful.

Capstone Project

My capstone project will be the creation of an online Professional Portfolio. I am hoping I can apply all the three areas from my degree in this portfolio. I also want to make sure this tool helps in my future endeavors. I am hoping by creating this, I will have better job opportunities in the future.

How Your MIS Education will be Used Professionally

While I love my job, that allows me to put my knowledge in entertainment and in everything I learned from this degree into practice. I am hoping to dedicate my career endeavors entirely to Social Media and Public Relations in the entertainment industry. In my plans, I also foresee working with the government (possibly running for some office position) and as a professor for a community college or eventually a college (given I continue with my studies and pursue a doctorate). This would allow me to use what I learned in Non-Profit Management and Leadership to my future career paths.

Appendix B

Project Proposal

Executive Summary

For the Southern Utah University (SUU) Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (MIS) capstone project, I decided to focus on a professional portfolio that would aid me when applying for different jobs in the future. This portfolio would basically include what I need a future employer to know about me including my talents and skills. In a way, this could be similar to the project I created for the INDS 6000: Introduction to Interdisciplinary Research & Studies course, where I had to create a personal portfolio. This will just be more specific to what I wish to accomplish in my future job placement. Some of the contents of this portfolio will include the following:

- Social Media Samples- Samples from my previous assignments as Social Media
 Manager exclusive to the entertainment industry (i.e., haunted houses, theme parks, personal accounts, and other attractions).
- Leadership Examples- Samples from times when I have been faced with leadership
 opportunities and the way I have dealt with them. This will include testimonials and
 successes in different areas.
- Crisis Management Skills- Detailed accounts and testimonials of times when I have dealt with crisis in my jobs and how I approached them,
- Non-Profit Management Social Media Social Media samples from my job as Social
 Media Manager for my current job and previous assignments working for public schools.
- Links to Social Media Accounts- This will include links to my personal accounts as well as to my professional social media account: LinkedIn.

Capstone Description and Purpose

This project's idea is to basically create a portfolio that showcases samples of what I have done in the past at my jobs and what I can also create in the future as well. The portfolio will include samples from all aspects of my work life including social media and examples of when I have dealt with specific situations related to non-profit and crisis management.

The main reason why I decided to do this is because on certain occasions, I have faced the fact that a lot of companies require a portfolio. I have a portfolio now but one of my personal projects for this summer was going to be to create a more in-depth portfolio that could serve as my "calling card" and show prospective employers the skills and talents embedded within me. I expect that by creating this portfolio, I will be able to be set apart from other applicants and in turn probably have a better chance at getting a job in what I want to do. I genuinely want to work for the entertainment industry. It has been a dream of mine to work in a company such as HBO, Hulu, Netflix, or Disney. The plan would be to create a portfolio that sets me apart and helps me land a job in what I truly want to do for a living.

Timeline

I expect to complete different tasks related to my project every week as delineated by the modules in this course.

Resources & Budget

Other than paying for the domain name for my website, I did not foresee any other expenses.

Risk Management

The main risk faced with this project was the fact that I was concerned about not receiving the support from the professors contacted for the committee. Both professors accepted

the invitation. Other than that, the only other risk would be procrastination as it is a fast-paced course.

Project Closure

My project would be completed whenever the portfolio was ready. At that point, the plan was to evaluate all aspects of it to make sure that everything that was planned to be included was in fact included therein. Having some of my former supervisors was used as a tool to make sure the e-portfolio was effective in summarizing the skills and talents I was trying to showcase.

Project Contingency

If the portfolio does not result in the way I had anticipated, I would make sure to add details from education and only concentrate on the educational side of things. Hopefully, I would be able to include details from all aspects of my professional life and background.

Summary

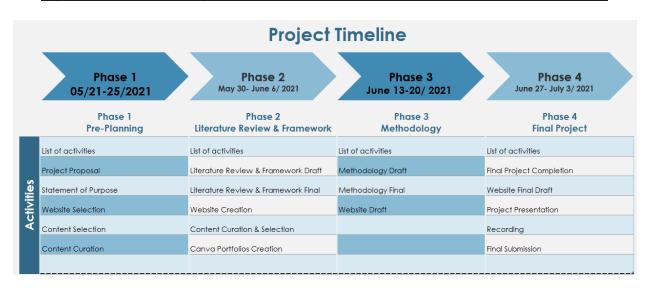
I wanted to concentrate on creating a professional portfolio that would serve as my "calling card" for prospective employees. I wanted this portfolio to help potential employers set me apart from other applicants. I wanted them to look at this portfolio and identify my skills and talents as related to their open position.

Appendix C

Timeline

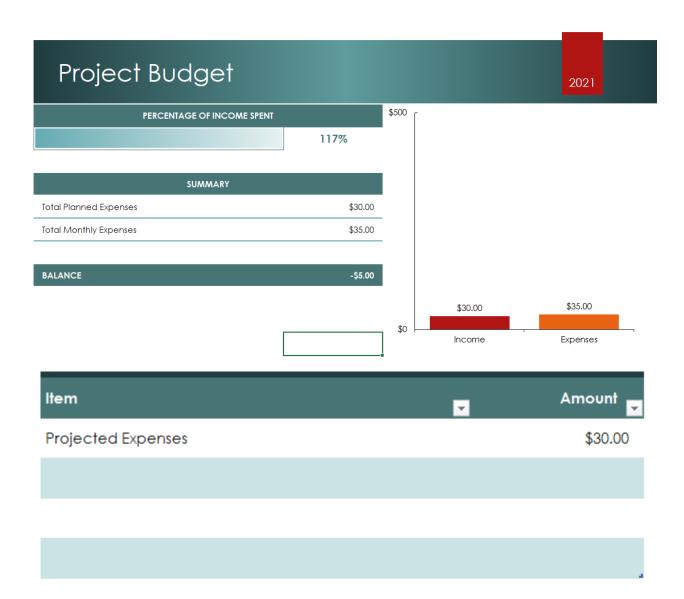
Infographic Chart Data

Date	Milestone Title
5/23/2021	Project Proposal
5/23/2021	Statement of Purpose
5/30/2021	Literature Review & Framework
6/6/2021	Literature Review & Framework Final
6/13/2021	Methodology
6/20/2021	Methodology Final
6/27/2021	Final Paper
6/30/2021	Presentation
7/3/2021	Final presentation Submission
7/3/2021	Final Project Report



Appendix D

Resources & Budget

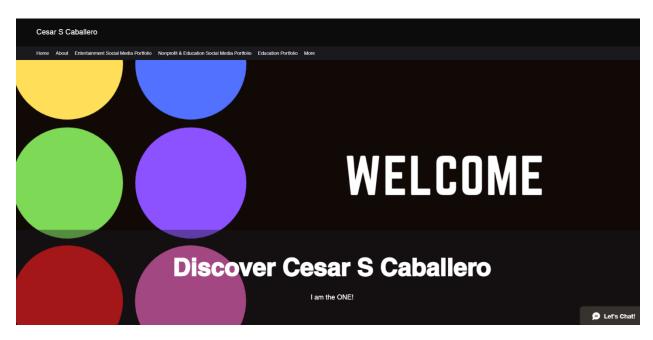


Website Premium Membership	\$20.00
Yearly Domain Name	\$15.00

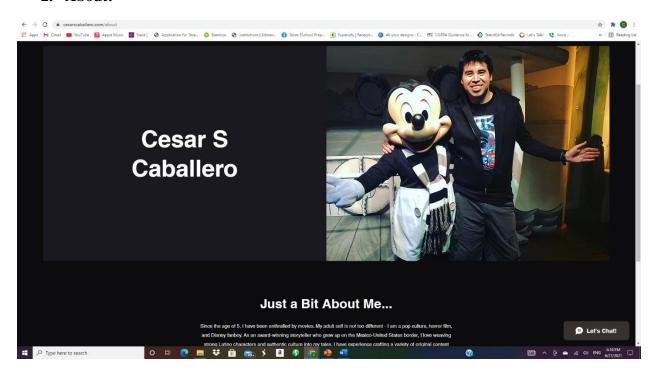
Appendix E

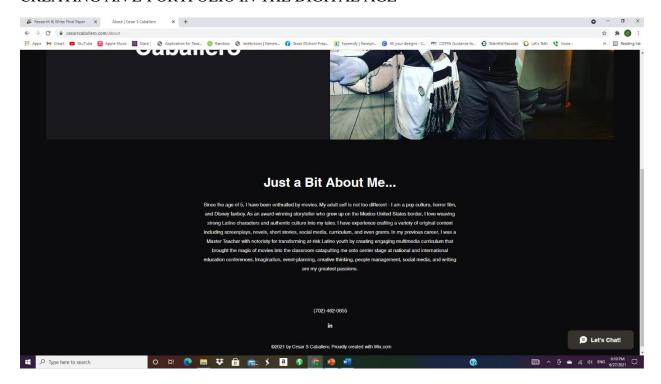
Website Structure

1. Home:



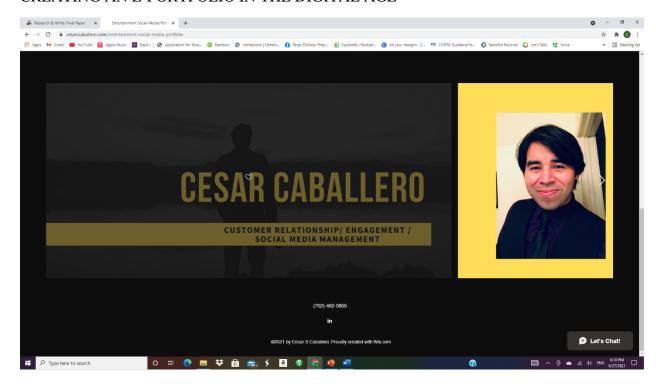
2. About:



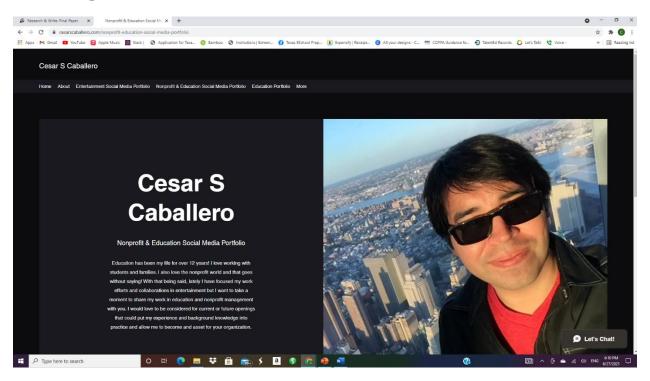


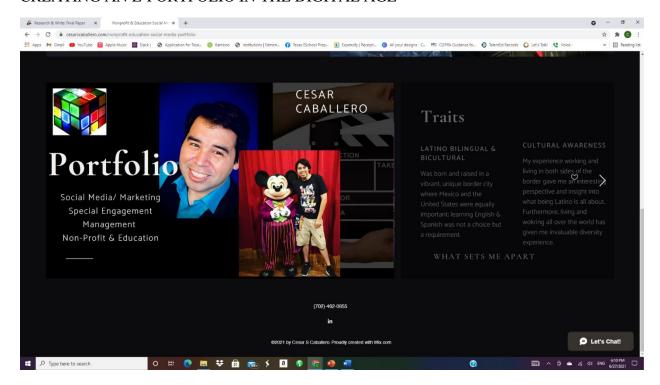
3. Entertainment Social Media Portfolio:



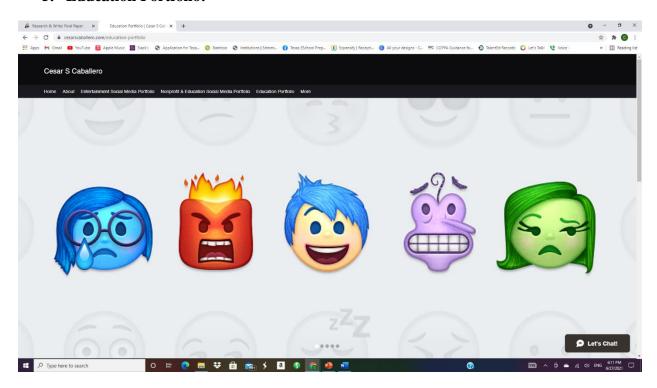


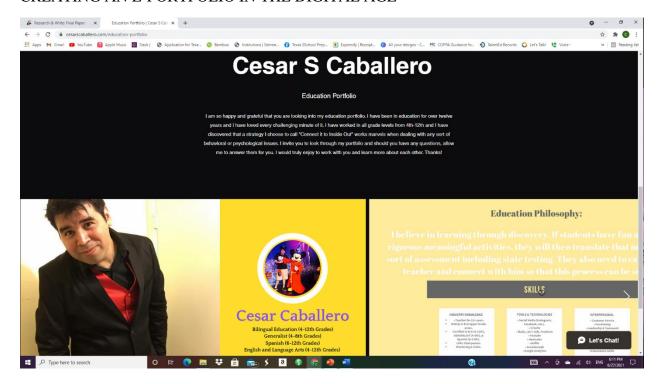
4. Nonprofit & Education Social Media Portfolio:



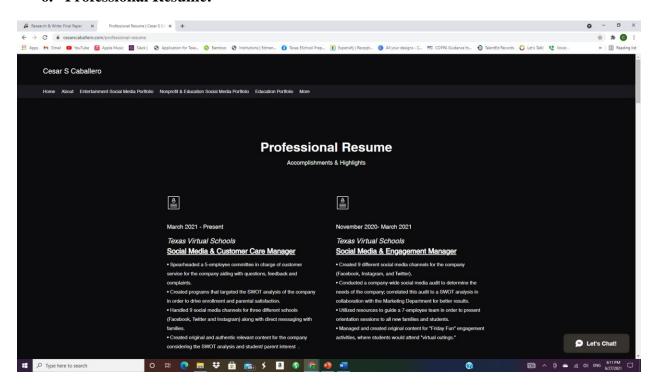


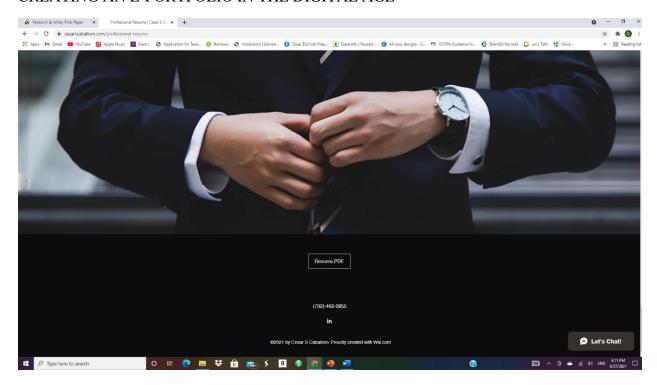
5. Education Portfolio:



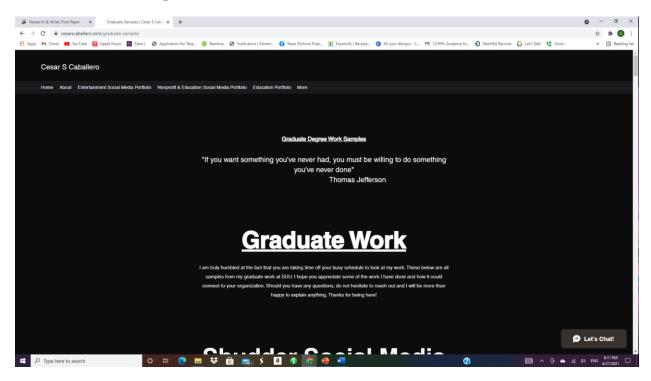


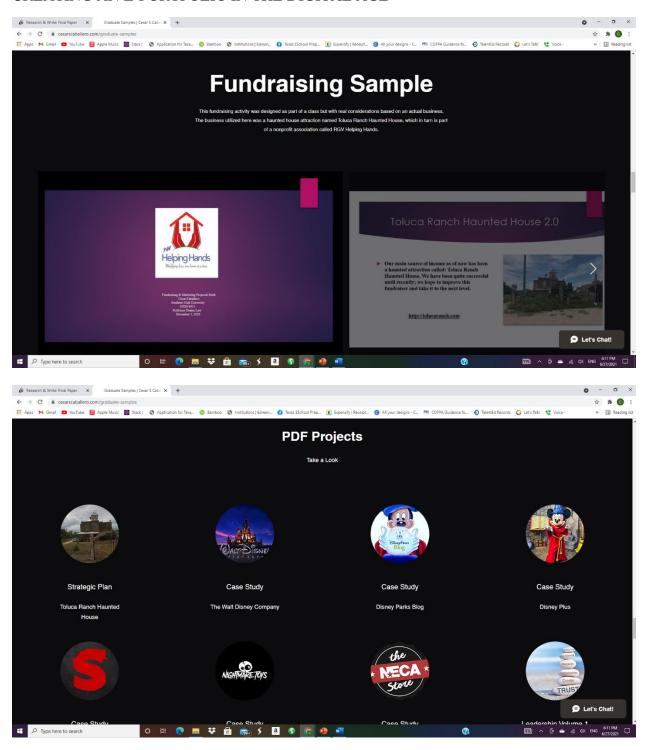
6. Professional Resume:



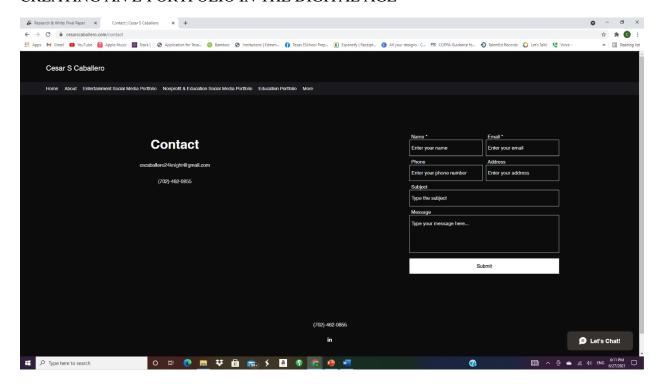


7. Graduate Samples:





8. Contact:



9. Instagram:

