RESUMES:
CHOOSING THE RIGHT FORMAT TO SEND YOUR RESUME

Takeaway Points

- The electronic resume is the essential first step in any job hunt.

- The paper resume is not *totally* obsolete.

- An employer might ask for a resume to be submitted in a particular format, so it helps to know the differences between Word, PDF, HTML, or plain

By: Team Pongo

Creating an up-to-date electronic resume is the essential first step in any job hunt. Whether you want to e-mail or fax your resume, paste it into a job board, or post it on the web, it all starts electronically. And once you create the resume, you'll need to decide which format to send it in: Word, PDF, HTML, or plain text. How do you know which one to use? There are pros and cons to each.

Why Electronic?

It's important to point out that printed resumes are not totally obsolete; you'll still need fancy paper copies for your face-to-face interviews, and for handing out at job fairs or networking events. But to run an effective job search, you'll need to create an electronic resume in a word-processing program or online resume builder.

Once you've done that, it's easy to edit the resume, tweaking the details to fit each position you apply for. You may wind up with five, 10, or even dozens of different versions.

There Are 4 Types of Electronic Resumes

An electronic resume can be saved and sent in at least four different formats, and there may be times when you'll need each of them:
1. Word (or similar)
2. PDF
3. HTML
4. Plain text

How do you know which one is right for any given situation? Sometimes the employer will ask specifically for a particular format, but it's not always so clear cut.

Here, the strengths and potential weaknesses of each format are detailed so you can make an informed decision and present your resume in the best possible format for your situation.

1. Word
Microsoft Word is currently the most popular format for submitting a resume as an e-mail attachment. Many job ads specifically say, "E-mail your resume in Word."

STRENGTHS
- Word is standard in most businesses.
- It retains formatting so the resume will look the same on the receiving end as it looked when you sent it.
- Word is easy for an e-mail recipient to open, print, and forward.

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POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES
- Some companies don't allow e-mail attachments because of virus risks.
- Compatibility issues (e.g., different versions of Word, PCs vs. Macs, etc.) can cause formatting glitches or prevent recipients from opening the attachment.

2.   PDF (Portable Document Format)
E-mailing a PDF resume gives you 100% assurance that the employer will see your resume exactly as you formatted it, no matter what program you used to create it.

STRENGTHS
- Eliminates virus risk.
- Compatible with both Macs and PCs.
- No one can change the resume once it's saved in PDF.

POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES
- The recipient must have Adobe Acrobat Reader (a free download) to open and view PDFs.
- Job seekers may not have the right software to convert documents to PDF.

3.   HTML (HyperText Markup Language)
HTML is the coding language for documents to be displayed on the web. An HTML resume can be sent as an e-mail attachment or posted on a web site.

STRENGTHS
- HTML retains formatting and layout when the resume is sent as an e-mail attachment.
- The recipient can view the resume right in the e-mail browser without downloading it.
- The resume can be posted to your web site (if you have one).

POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES
- You may require a separate software application to convert the document to HTML.
- Not all browsers support HTML documents.
- The resume file may be mistaken for SPAM, which is often sent in HTML.

4.   PLAIN TEXT
A text resume has no special effects such as bold, italics, or centering. It contains only plain (ASCII) text characters that can be created from the standard keyboard. It is often the required format for posting a resume on a job board or pasting it into an online application.

STRENGTHS
- A text resume can be sent within the body of an e-mail to companies that don't accept e-mail attachments.
- Text makes it easy for employers to place the resume into a searchable database, if they use one.

Did you know?

The Pongo ResumeBUILDER (www.PongoResume.com) provides you with all the tools you need to enhance your job search. You can build as many resumes as you like!

- Some creative effects can be added using keyboard characters. For instance:
  - ✓ ALL CAPS can emphasize headings;
  - ✓ Rows of hyphens (-----) or equal signs (=====) can simulate borders;
  - ✓ Asterisks (*), plus signs (+), or hyphens (-) can serve as bullets.

POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES
- Text strips out all graphics and special text effects such as centering, boldface, italics, and bullet lists, leaving a barebones resume that is not very visually appealing.

Whichever format you use, take one final step before you send a resume to an employer: Send the resume to yourself first in your chosen format to see how it will look. If you see some weird characters or it's missing some of the special text effects you had when you wrote the resume, make the appropriate adjustments so that the employer will have an easy-to-read copy.

www.pongoresume.com