

John DiMarco

Web Portfolio Design and Applications

—Reviewed by

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Index Terms—*Communication and information, marketing, multimedia, visual design, web portfolio.*

Practical. This word sums up John DiMarco's *Web Portfolio Design and Applications*. At first glance, the book resembles a typical textbook—the kind that consists of 300 pages but contains only 10 that you want to read. DiMarco, however, has been helping people and organizations succeed with communication, technology, digital design, media, and marketing for more than ten years. From the beginning of his book to the end, DiMarco mentors his readers in principles of designing a web portfolio, a multimedia vehicle that allows individuals and companies to show their work across geographical boundaries. DiMarco explains how the principles facilitate the user's experience. Using numerous case studies and interviews, DiMarco outlines a modular process for developing a web portfolio and explains common pitfalls that can interfere with the process.

Chapter 1, "Introduction to the Web Portfolio," provides a historical background of portfolio models. DiMarco defines the old model of an electronic portfolio: a tool for professional and personal identity and skill assessment. DiMarco then describes types of web portfolios, the processes required to design and review a web portfolio, such as brainstorming, information seeking, knowledge organization, classification, sketching, flowcharting, writing, visual design, and artistic engineering. All the background that DiMarco provides can be a bit overwhelming, but readers will benefit from his in-depth investigation.

DiMarco says his pedagogical objective in the classroom is to foster critical thinking by historical case examination, interactive discussions, open critique, and peer collaboration. His objective in teaching underlies Chapter 2, "Conceptualization."

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For DiMarco, conceptualization includes defining an audience, conducting needs assessment, formulating a concept statement, and specifying content.

In Chapters 3 and 4, "Information Design" and "Visual Design," respectively, DiMarco focuses on hierarchical structures of information and visual concerns, such as color and graphics. In Chapter 5, DiMarco discusses "Content, Collection, Development and Management," the "hunt and gathering" phase of web portfolio design and application. In this chapter, DiMarco explains how to create the content outline and set up the site's folder structure. This chapter also focuses on writing consistent, thoughtful project descriptions.

DiMarco begins to concentrate on the design and development of the portfolio by exploring webpage design, web authoring, and motion graphics and multimedia production in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. In Chapter 6, "Web Page Design," DiMarco helps readers choose digital tools. Webpages require Adobe Photoshop and Macromedia Dreamweaver; motion graphics and multimedia call for Adobe Audition and Macromedia Flash. While other tools exist, these products are the industry choices. DiMarco also discusses text, icons, and logos, and he shows how to manipulate image size and how to import and export images. In Chapter 7, DiMarco charts the functionality process for web portfolio design and application, and in Chapter 8, he gives readers a short course on hand-coded HTML, JavaScript languages, and Macromedia Fireworks, Dreamweaver, and Flash. These lessons cover important elements of webpage functionality, such as anchors, links, tags, jump menus, and cascading style sheets.

The implementation phase of the web portfolio appears in Chapter 9, "Uploading and Testing Your Web Portfolio Site." DiMarco defines this stage as "a portal to on-demand communication" (p. 193). He explains how to purchase a domain name, secure a host and web space, upload files using File Transfer Protocol (FTP), and set up a site in Dreamweaver so that editing and uploading files are easy. Also

in this chapter, readers learn how to evaluate the effectiveness of a Web portfolio. Especially beneficial is how DiMarco explains heuristic evaluation and its importance for usability.

In Chapter 10, "Launch and Promotion," DiMarco shows readers how to use marketing techniques to reach an audience. This chapter is particularly useful to new graduates who are searching for a

job. Chapters 11–13 cover a wide variety of issues: server-side technologies, cases and interviews, and the future of web portfolios.

In sum, DiMarco's book is a practical one; it succinctly yet thoroughly explains academic and professional web portfolios. I believe that is worth the time as well as the US\$74.95 price.