Creating a Portfolio Identity

I had a panic attack because I realized I didn’t know what I wanted to do or the kind of professional I wanted to be in technical communication—I panicked and my mind went blank. I now had to ask myself the very deep question: What do I really want to do? Norma

I learned that I am a loner who is willing to take risks. That was a big revelation, and it is likely the revelation that will shape my career and life after college. Miranda

INTRODUCTION
This chapter guides you through the process of creating an identity and professional persona for your portfolio. You will explore this notion through heuristics and personality tests that ask you to define your particular niche within the field, along with developing your own sense of style and direction. You will also work to define the rhetorical context for your portfolios as you assess your purposes, audiences, and strategies. Chapter 2 covers the following topics:
- Establishing a professional identity
- Researching and assessing personality
- Shaping a professional identity
- Understanding the rhetorical situation of your portfolio

ESTABLISHING A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

What does it mean to establish a professional identity? For many years you might have come to know yourself solely in the role of student. Your identity is wrapped around classroom assignments and professor and degree expectations. It is tied to your relationships with your classmates and the achievement of your degree. We recognize that as a student in a particular program, it is natural to tie your work to particular classes or people. This is not only true for students. As a working professional, you also might see yourself in terms of your current job rather than in terms of your career goals. You might have worked on your current job for many years but are now looking for a way to redefine yourself in the job market, or you might have acquired new skills and want to seek new challenges. Creating a portfolio helps you to articulate your goals and directions. It gives you the opportunity to control the professional identity you want to create for yourself in light of your needs, skills, and personal expectations. It also allows you to present yourself as a distinctive individual within a competitive job market. Almost everyone in communication fields has samples of writing and graphics skills, but your portfolio should also reflect who you are as an individual and demonstrate a sharp sense of audience awareness.
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RESEARCHING AND ASSESSING PERSONALITY

As the chapter-opening quotations show, your personality is an important element in determining your career direction. Before you can shape your professional identity, it makes sense to reflect on this dimension of the process. For example, start with the following questions:

- What do you like?
- What do you dislike?
- How do you see the world and how do you interact with other people?
- What do you prefer in terms of variety, security, risk, and job location?
- Do you prefer to work in teams or on your own?
- Do you like to travel or do you have needs that demand flexibility in terms of time on the job?

Some people are very happy as entrepreneurs because they see themselves as extroverts who are very comfortable with risk and cold calling on potential customers. Others enjoy the challenge and security of working through a national company because of its track record, benefits, and a steady paycheck. Still others like the idea of daily interaction with people, while others prefer working primarily on their own. Through our work, we have met all kinds of students and professionals who bring their individual personalities to their work choices.

Identity is constructed through how you see yourself and how you are seen by others. Much of what you know about your personality is gathered through your accumulated responses to life experiences. You can also gain valuable insight into your personality through the perceptions of others. A good way to start your thinking in this area is to list some of the traits you would use to describe yourself. Then, to complement this activity, you might ask a few people who are close to you (family members, friends, coworkers) to briefly describe your personality. Often these two perspectives will match, but in some cases you will see a disparity between your own description and the descriptions of those around you. It is not uncommon to find that, for example, you consider yourself unorganized but others see you as quite the opposite. It is important to compare these perceptions to get a clear idea of how you really feel and to understand which areas you want to emphasize or de-emphasize as you make career choices. Many people place themselves in situations that are the direct opposite of what they really want, setting themselves up for misery, failure, or both.

We asked our students to take a close look at their personalities to begin connecting them to their career choices. There are many online sites that can help you understand your personality. They generally take you through a series of questions and help you place your personality in different categories. As a starting point, you might try some of the more popular psychological personality type indicators such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (www.myersbriggs.org) or the Keirsey Temperament Sorter® (www.keirsey.com). These tests often break personality down into categories and show tendencies such as extroversion or introversion.

The Keirsey, like the Myers-Briggs, categorizes four temperaments and classifies people as “Rationals,” “Idealists,” “Artisans,” or “Guardians.” Each of these categories has characteristics related to planning, problem solving, and worldview. Other instruments assess values, attitudes, or your patterned responses to particular situations. Some tests draw upon your responses to images, and others focus on specific issues such as career choice, self-esteem, power, or communication. A simple Internet search using the term “personality tests” will present a range of choices to consider.

Look closely at the sites you discover; they will often refer you to other useful sites for analyzing your personal and professional identity. Although these assessment tools are not always reliable (some of them are not even serious), they still provide a starting point for productive reflection, allowing you to begin to locate yourself with the responses. Even if you feel that they miss the mark in terms of how you see yourself, you can shape a sense of identity as you respond in relation to or against their profiles.

SHAPING A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

We asked our students to use this kind of reflection and go to several online sites that helped them begin to understand their worldview and temperament. What follows is a series of examples that might help you conduct a similar personality analysis as a way of understanding your career and portfolio directions. We start with Miranda’s observations:

My results from the Keirsey Temperament test told me that I believe in basic principles—the dichotomy of good and evil and that I am willing to set on those beliefs. It also told me that I am extroverted and anxious to do what I learn with others. Further, the Career Interest Profiler told me that I’m willing to take risks, which played out over the semester and throughout the creation of my portfolio. The greatest indication of my willingness to take risks (which I never recognized before this class) is the career goals I discussed early on with my mentor—freelance work, mainly followed by graduate school and then teaching. All are risky choices fresh out of college.

As Miranda reflects on her relationship with risk—a personality trait—Tom focuses on how he likes to spend his time and how he relates to other people:

I like to write sometimes; I really have to be in the mood to enjoy it. The moods are coming more often, I definitely like learning new things. I am good at avoiding conflicts, usually. I think I can negotiate and compromise. I’m excellent at graphs, I’ll often make an executive decision to answer something no one else will. I probably don’t take criticism well, but who does? I do get upset when the framework changes, but I do comply with the changes. I always keep my time commitments.

Notice the way that these students begin to connect their personalities with particular career choices. Another student, Brian W., sees himself as a “warm person” who wants his work to have a personal dimension. Here he makes connections between his personality and his possible career choices:

I am a warm person who even in a professional setting tries to bring everything back to a personal level. I like to be where the action is and do not like to sit on the sidelines long. I am a doer, not one to stand by and watch. The test results also mentioned that my personality finds that doing something that isn’t fun or enjoyable isn’t worth doing. Today must be enjoyed because tomorrow may never come. I see myself as a professional who does work on an artistic level than one who is punching a clock, being handed work, told how it should be completed and then punching the clock again at the end of the day. I like the multimedia work, but I do it with my mind’s—my way.

His career choice of multimedia and video production will allow him to jump into the action and get off the sidelines. His statement that “Today must be enjoyed because tomorrow may never come” indicates a tolerance for ambiguity and a love of immediacy. In comparison, look at the way Amy’s focus on writing connects to her career choices. She states:

I am a hard worker who likes order. I like things presented in a straightforward manner with pure factual information to back it up. I keep a cool head in high-stress situations. There is very little that can upset me in the workplace. I am dedicated to my work. I like challenges. I am picky about how my work turns out—I like neatness and logical presentation of material. I am a stickler for details, I like simple, factual evidence. I am honest and straightforward, so I have no qualms about saying what I think about how a project is proceeding. Thoroughness. Amy likes to deal with facts and enjoys order. Notice the difference between this more highly structured person and Brian W., with his desire for autonomy and variety on the job. Amy stresses this connection even further as she gets specific about the kind of job she sees herself in after she graduates:

I see myself in an entry-level job when I first graduate, working my way up into a higher position as time passes. I want to work for a medium-sized company where I can get to know people yet still have the opportunity for upward movement.
Amy seems to desire job security with a stable company, clearly accepting the fact that she will have to work her way up and start with an entry-level job. She shapes her expectations in anticipation of this kind of career movement. She has decided that she wants a medium-sized company—one that is not so small that it is unstable but not so big that she gets lost in the corporate setting.

Miranda does a good job of connecting the knowledge gained from the personality tests to her professional identity. Using these tests, she starts to refine the career objectives she wants to demonstrate through her portfolios:

According to the Motivational Appraisal of Personal Potential, I am motivated to describe, explain, teach, illustrate, and interpret. This is a journalistic trait dedicated to informing people. I am a teacher at heart, but I don't need a lot of money or fame to be happy in my career. And, strangely, though I like sharing information, this test confirms that I do not necessarily need interaction in the workplace. The Keirsey Temperament Sorter tells me that I am inclined to seek out the truth and disclose that to others, making me tireless in conversing with others. Keirsey also tells me that for me, "nothing occurs which does not have some deep ethical significance." Surprisingly I learned from my Career Interest Profiler that I am willing to take risks in my professional life in order to ensure a professional life that offers variety.

These comments demonstrate Miranda's desire to teach and inform but also hit upon an important ethical dimension of her personality that might lead her to different career choices. She likes to talk, interact, and help others, and she has a strong desire for variety in the workplace. Wylie used the personality tests to come up with the following ideas about his professional personality:

- I am creative.
- I can make things better.
- I don't approach problems in the same way that others do, and that's a good thing.
- I like to think outside the lines and think outside the box.

Although he comes to understand these things about himself, Wylie explores his personality a bit more deeply to consider possible misunderstandings. This is important because there is more at stake than just assuming a professional personality. You need to reflect and consider contexts as you refine your desired image. The next quotations from Wylie's proposal show him working to complicate (in parentheses) these ideas to find an appropriate professional identity:

Possible Misunderstandings
- Jack of all trades (Gambling on me)
- The 3M slogan: I don't make things, I make things better (Won't make anything)
- Racing theme (Race through work and not do it right)
- Outside the box (People like it inside the box, it's safe in there)

We see him productively working through his ideas to get a better sense of how his audience might perceive him. Wylie summarizes some of his priorities. He says:

I will focus on getting a job in the technical communication industry that involves working with computers. People who work in video production and visual communication use computers frequently in their careers. I enjoy creating videos and unique websites. Boredom is my main fear factor and drives me to search for an exciting career in video production. I would always be working with something new.

Joy, as she refines her professional identity, begins to make important connections between the knowledge gained through the personality tests and her own career direction. After taking the personality tests, Joy has found that she was consistently classified as:

- Very detail-oriented
- A planner
- Organized

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A fact-based decision maker
A leader

Joy has also found something about her day-to-day work practices. She has come to understand that she had a high need for goal-oriented activities. She explains:

- I realized that all of my activity must be goal-oriented. I didn't realize this before, but sometimes I find it difficult to participate in leisure activity when I don't see an accomplishment at the end.

Although Joy recognizes her "admirable traits for a professional writer, editor, information designer, or leader in any corporation," she also reflects on how some of these same traits might be viewed as weaknesses:

On the one hand, I am so goal-oriented that I will make decisions based on fact rather than the feelings of others. I will readily discard personal interaction in pursuit of a goal. I also tend to be abrupt when I don't feel that the verbal exchange contributes positively to my agenda. This, though, may be a problem for me in the office politics realm.

Joy moves from more open-ended reflection to summarizing some of her results and includes a quotation from the profiles she deemed significant:

Realist, fact-based, analytical—"prefer that decisions be based on impersonal data, wants to work from well-thought-out plans."

Witty—"finds humor in almost every situation."

Creative—"talent for sketching and likes color, music, and literature; gets bored with repetitive tasks."

Efficient, organized, productive—"good at ordering priorities, generalizing, summarizing, and demonstrating ideas."

Skeptical—"plans in advance, keeps both short- and long-term objectives well in mind."

Next, she connects them to particular career interests:

- Educational/instructional: corporate trainer, vocational school instructor
- Research/analyst: archivist, journalist
- Writer: corporate communicator, journalist

She takes this one step further and begins to define areas of specialization:

- Experience in the printing industry
- Analysis
- Organization
- Graphic design
- Public speaking

Finally, she incorporates some of the goals and practical expectations she has for a potential job and lists the following:

- Job with benefits
- Outlet for creativity
- Flexibility
- Earnings sufficient for lifestyle
- Work until 55 years of age

Through this work, Joy comes up with the following statements and priorities:

- I have excellent organizational skills and pay attention to detail. I also love to read. These strengths are critical for editors or information designers. I have recently revealed a talent for drawing and want to somehow incorporate that into my career.
I don't wish to travel, relocate, or work longer than 8 hours per day.

I can see myself as an editor for a magazine, periodical, or publishing firm based in the South. My role would be mostly autonomous, requiring periodic group meetings and projects that would require reporting to an office setting on a periodic basis.

Another student and working professional, Wilda, used this reflection to reinforce her attraction to her current job (in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] communications department) and to help her consider potential directions to pursue. She says:

While in my professional life I am loyal and methodical, I don't work well in large groups; I prefer small groups or one-on-one situations. I don't like being in a supervisory role. I prefer to work alone and I am bad about delegating work because I believe that "if you want it done right, do it yourself." I am organized to a fault. I form personal bonds with people, not institutional bonds. I have a hard time accepting praise for my accomplishments, but I take pride in everything I do. I don't like to call attention to myself because it is part of my job to do the job correctly in the first place.

Wilda has done a good job of assessing her professional personality including her work ethic, interpersonal style, and work environment. Although she is very happy with her current job, she desires a position in which she could "do more research and develop procedure manuals for different areas." Through this exploration, she has discovered that her overall goal is to work in the area of knowledge management as a librarian. She explains:

Working as a librarian would fulfill most of my goals. I could work with books, which I love. I can research and document information and work quietly and undisturbed most of the time. Cataloging is good because it puts things in order. I always like to have everything in place.

Notice how this last statement shows Wilda pulling together her personality and skills to create a professional identity while at the same time moving to a tangible career choice that draws on both.

All of these elements must work together to create professional identity: personality, goals, context, skills and talents, and expectations.

EXERCISE 2.1 PERSONALITY RESEARCH/ASSESSMENT

This assignment asks you to take a close look at your personality through research and analysis of the results of online personality and career tests. You might start with the Keirsey Temperament Sorter http://keirsey.com/ and then go on to find other sites that address both your personal and professional personalities. The search terms "personality tests," "personality tests and career," and "career tests" will lead you toward these sorts of assessment instruments. Try to hit professional as well as personal sites. Briefly describe each site and what you learned from it (include full URL documentation). Work to connect the personal and the professional.

EXERCISE 2.2 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: NARRATIVE

In a single page of exploratory writing, describe your professional identity. Use the information you gathered through the assessment and heuristics. Describe your most compelling traits and skills in relation to your career direction. Work to be as specific as possible as you examine the different dimensions of professional identity (e.g., goals, skills, knowledge, career, personality traits, motivation, etc.). You will use this statement to begin shaping your portfolio.

UNDERSTANDING THE RHETORICAL SITUATION OF YOUR PORTFOLIO

As a communication student, you have come to understand that every written document, graphic, or multimedia piece comes from a particular "rhetorical situation." Although this term was used by ancient rhetorical theorists such as Plato and Aristotle, it was more recently coined by the contemporary writing theorist Lloyd Bitzer (1968) to refer to the ways we analyze context to create effective rhetorical discourse. The rhetorical situation is based upon the choices that we make as communicators in relation to our own purposes, audiences, and subjects. We do this naturally in our everyday lives as we change our language to speak to our families, friends, and employees or coworkers or for different purposes such as persuasion, humor, or information. For example, your rhetorical situation will shift both your purposes and your audience as you move from an academic to a professional setting. As communicators, our goal is to carefully assess each rhetorical situation and come up with the best language and approach for it. The same is true for your portfolios. Consider them as a form of communication that works within a particular rhetorical context. Before you design your portfolios, it is important to reflect on and articulate the following rhetorical elements.

Rhetorical element 1: purpose

This element deals with your intentions and purposes. You need to figure out what you want your portfolio to express. Your work on developing your professional identity should begin to shape your ideas about purpose. Purposes might include defining your personality traits, skills sets, or job structure. This might include communicating a particular niche or identifying a direction in which you would like to head. We asked our students to extend their work with the personality profiles to understand their purposes, drawing on their immediate and longer-term career objectives to help determine the purposes of their portfolios. For example, Tom states:

I want to put an emphasis on my graphic art skills. I will include my creative resume, a set of instructions, a brochure, a hardware manual sample, a magazine article, and other materials demonstrating an integration of illustration and graphic art skills.

This comment shows him emphasizing his skills and defining his particular talent for illustration. Tom, who collected materials (such as brochures, illustrations, and flyers) from former consulting jobs, also decided to...
include a section showcasing his talents. He has transformed this sense of his individual niche—graphic art—skills into artifacts he might include in his portfolio. These choices directly connect to his purposes, letting potential users/readers recognize his particular specialization.

Sometimes purposes involve personality and life circumstances. Miranda hits on both of these issues as she tries to balance her desire for freedom with the reality of her financial situation. She reflects:

> There is really only one way to describe my life situation—free. I have nothing holding me back from moving out of state, out of country. I am, however, operating without a safety net. I am not financially secure and have no one to turn to for financial help. So I will have to carefully consider any risk I decide to take.

There are many variables that establish purpose. Although we suggest that you shoot for the sky, we know it is unrealistic to think that all of us—or any of us, for that matter—can start at the top. When shaping your purposes, it is important to consider both the short term and the long term, along with your ideal and practical ideas about your career’s direction and focus.

**Rhetorical element 2: audience**

In many ways, it seems obvious that our language and methods of communication change as our audience changes. For example, we speak very differently to a four-year-old child than we do to his adult counterpart. By the same token, you might include many language and design changes when you move from an academic to a professional audience. You will need to determine the main audience for your portfolios. This might mean determining a particular niche or specialization or presenting yourself as a generalist with broad-based flexibility. If you are entering the design field, you might consider an audience that is open to creative presentation and subject matter. Some designers included “creative resumes” and original artwork to work under this particular audience. On the other hand, if you are hoping to enter a government agency or the medical field, you might prefer a more conservative approach. For example, Michel, who wanted to work for the CDC, a government agency, included documents with medical content and language that demonstrated her knowledge in this specialized area. She also used a conservative color scheme and design that would be considered “classical” or “serious” rather than “artsy.”

Another student, who wanted to use his communication skills in law enforcement, chose to stick with the documents in his field and also had to consider a design theme that respected its hierarchy. He chose the classic blue and gold along with other design features, but he was continually concerned that they might be misinterpreted by his audience (as lofty goals of achievement outside of rank). There are many issues that determine the audience. In fact, some students created more than one portfolio to present in different professional settings.

Before moving too far ahead in this process, you should carefully analyze your audience. The following comments reflect our students’ attempts to analyze their audiences to help them choose a direction for their portfolios. Some students saw their audience in terms of a particular job or professional niche. For example, Sarah, who wanted to shape her portfolio for a career in marketing, envisioned her audience as advertising, marketing, and public relations agencies. Brian W., as he suggested earlier, targeted an even narrower audience, focusing on multimedia productions with an audience in the film and video production industry. Other students, such as Amy, preferred to present themselves as generalists in which multiple audiences might find a fit within a more diverse range of materials. Rather than shaping her portfolio for a particular specialization, Amy included a little bit of everything so that she would be seen as flexible and versatile. Some students created multiple portfolios, depending on the kinds of jobs they planned to pursue. Your audience will change in relation to your area(s) of concentration.

In Miranda’s statement, we see her searching to find her audience as she talks about the general “users” of her portfolio:

> I also put a lot of emphasis on explaining to the users what they were seeing. Contextualizing each piece took a lot of consideration, and I worked on it throughout the last half of the semester. I considered organization, and in cases where my work was unbalanced, for example my journalism section. I struggled to find a way to how both the depth and breadth of my experience without overwhelming the users.

**CATEGORIZING REPRESENTATIVE SKILLS**

Although there are many skills you might want to represent, it is helpful to start categorizing them into the following major divisions. Although this list does not cover everything, it gives you another way to start dividing your work and defining your professional identity.

**Technology skills**

In today's competitive workplace, employers are looking for individuals with technical skills. Writing and communication, once viewed as central professional elements, are enhanced by integration with technology. This means everything from word processing skills to document design to knowledge of specific web publishing applications such as Flash or Dreamweaver. Technology is also an excellent way to present a particular skill from an academic minor area or concentration such as computer science or business. Think about what skills you bring to the table. Do not hesitate to include technical knowledge even if you feel it is obvious, as you never know what people need. It works in your favor to create the impression that you are familiar and comfortable with adapting to and learning new technologies. On the other hand, be realistic. Do not state that
you have mastered a complicated application such as Frame Maker when your program skills are minimal. Do not assume that you will have the time to learn. If you feel that there are gaps in your technical knowledge, learn the software before you include it in your portfolio. It is a good idea to use the creation of new portfolio pieces as a way to increase your knowledge of and comfort with a particular software application.

**Graphic and design skills**

Think about the graphic skills you have used in your work. You might start by reviewing your work and listing these skills. Do you know how to desktop publishing? How have you used colors and shapes and demonstrated design sensibility? Do you have photography skills you wish to show or original drawings and illustrations? This area also includes document design skills such as layout, font knowledge, and incorporation of visual images.

**Communication skills**

What do you want to say about your communication skills? First, break them down into the language skills involved: reading, writing, speaking, thinking, and listening. Whether or not you include them in a job description, these are the less tangible skills that impress others and help present you as a communicator. As a student of communication, you are expected to have all of these skills.

We will go through them briefly, one at a time.

**Written communication.** This is the most obvious skill, since you have probably written many assignments throughout your degree program or generated a variety of writing projects on the job. It includes everything from memos to annual reports, advertising copy, Web site content, and press releases. What skills are most important for writing? How might you show your ability to generate ideas, draft, revise, and edit?

**Analysis and research.** How do you go about analyzing a problem? Are there ways that your work demonstrates your ability to think and learn? Look for places where you might discuss your thinking processes. You might describe your research skills and show your reports, manuals, and proposals.

**Oral presentation and speaking skills.** In the workplace, you will often need to present your work. This begins with your individual presentation and the ability to speak articulately about your subjects. You will also be required to make formal presentations or speeches. Speaking obviously occurs in many different contexts, like conducting meetings and performance evaluations. Your spoken presence will be the first thing employers and clients notice as you interview for jobs or compete to get their business. You might also demonstrate your knowledge of presentation technology by using PowerPoint presentations and graphic charts.

**Organizational skills.** In the modern world of multitasking and through the extension of technology, generally the most organized people are the most successful. Employers appreciate a strong sense of organization because it is connected with trust. Your portfolios themselves will demonstrate organization, providing a collection of work pulled together neatly for viewing. Think about the way your whole portfolio is organized so that it is easy to read and has a definite progression of order. You can also show organization by including projects that you managed, preproduction sheets, and training manuals.

**Teamwork and interpersonal group skills.** Another desirable skill is the ability to work well with others. This might involve leadership, collaborative writing, understanding of interpersonal relationships, and the ability to manage collaborative projects. Companies or clients want to know that you will fit in and be an asset to their team. They also want to know that you have the skills to handle conflict, make sound decisions, and motivate others.

Table 2.1 summarizes the connections between skill sets, specific skills or traits, and examples of artifacts.

### Table 2.1: Connections between Skills and Artifacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Set</th>
<th>Specific Skills/Traits</th>
<th>Artifacts Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>Software applications, Web design, video production</td>
<td>Web sites, online design, PowerPoint presentations, multimedia films</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic</td>
<td>Design sensibility, color, document design</td>
<td>Brochures, Web sites, logos, marketing campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td>Clear style, editing, rhetorical awareness</td>
<td>Essays, articles, reviews, brochures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Analytical and interpretive</td>
<td>Research projects, data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Organization, spoken presence, awareness of technology</td>
<td>PowerPoint presentations, scripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork/Interpersonal</td>
<td>Leadership, compatibility, project management</td>
<td>Compiled portfolios, training manuals, project management reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rhetorical element 4: context**

Context refers to all of the outside variables that might affect the development of your portfolio. Think about what you need to know to create a portfolio that fits the current culture of your field and the job market as a whole. You will need to analyze what is considered state of the art in terms of philosophy, design, and technological applications. We also ask you to consider issues such as the economy and other trends and conventions that might influence the reading of your portfolio.

In order to determine context, you might read job announcements, talk to other professionals, or read journals or trade publications in your field. You can also look at market trends and analyze other external influences through the media.

### SUMMARY

As you think about the professional personality or the rhetorical situation, you should move toward shaping a professional identity for your portfolios. This reflective work should guide you through the rest of the process as you make decisions regarding design, context, and theme. It is important to understand yourself and your goals before communicating them to others. This conscious reflection will engage you in productive invention as you generate ideas and create a direction, focus, and identity for your portfolios.

### ASSIGNMENTS

**Assignment 1: Skills Inventory**

Conduct a skills inventory in which you list all the skills that you believe you have at this time. To go beyond your initial list, review your artifacts to remind yourself of what was involved in their creation. Broaden your scope as you include all the skills described in this chapter (writing, interpersonal skills, knowledge of technology, etc.). You might also categorize them by skill type, rank order, or preference.