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Job Searching: Technical

with J. Steven Niznik

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Preparing to Leave Your Job

Before you hand in your [letter of resignation](#), it's a good idea to make sure you've fully prepared to leave. You might get escorted off the premises on the day you quit, never to return again. (Same goes if you get [laid off](#) or fired.) That's typical at big companies, especially if you have access to confidential information or expensive equipment. Companies don't have to worry about last-minute theft, sabotage and corporate espionage. Resigning employees don't have to worry about guilt, resentment, and telling their resignation stories over and over again. But once you're out the door, you may not be able to get back in or access the computer network for security reasons.

So, if you know you're going to quit or think you might soon get fired or laid off,

- Take personal property home, so there's no question what belongs to you or the company on your last day.
- Remove personal items (software, emails, etc.) from your PC.
- Collect current contact information from your future [references](#), potential networking associates, and vendors and clients if appropriate.
- Get [letters of recommendation](#).
- Compile a [portfolio](#) of your work.

Naturally, you might have to do this on the q.t., with the right people and at the right time.

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On your last day, your soon-to-be ex-employer might even shadow you with a security guard or your manager, or conduct a security search as they escort you out the door. It might look just a *tad* suspicious to the security guard or manager hanging over you, if you try to delete even personal stuff from your office computer at the last minute. You might even get busted if you try to leave with your briefcase stuffed with materials for your portfolio. That's because the company most likely owns all of your work, and most definitely owns the office supplies and equipment you used to make copies.

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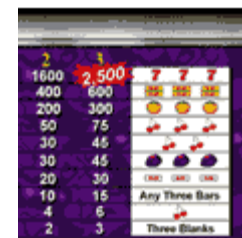
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JSN





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Portfolio Power

Is it Stealing?

When compiling your portfolio, whether or not you are stealing company property is sort of a gray area. Sure, it's your work. Naturally, the company knows that it's in your best interest to compile a job portfolio. But strictly speaking, the company owns 100% of what you produce unless you've made other arrangements. To be safe, ask permission or at least do your collecting on the q.t.

There's no question that the company owns the office supplies and reproduction equipment you might use to make copies of your work. If you don't have permission to use company supplies and equipment for such, keep the gray area gray by purchasing brands different than what your company uses, and keep the receipts. Make copies with non-company equipment whenever possible.

It's not a good idea to take company-confidential materials and trade secrets. If you get caught, it separates the gray area into its constituent colors of black and white: There is no doubt that you are taking stuff you shouldn't. You might even be subject to criminal prosecution.

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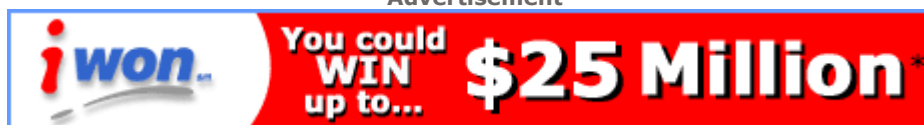
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About

Job portfolios are not reserved only for [creative workers](#) to showcase their works. A portfolio is a [powerful](#) interviewing tool for just about [any occupation](#). It supplements your [résumé](#) and presents tangible proof of your skills and abilities. Seeing is believing.

If you have written, developed, created or earned anything you can file, print, frame, photocopy, photograph or digitize, you have the stuff of which portfolios are made. Here are just a few ideas.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Articles | Merit reviews |
| Awards | Photographs |
| Brochures | Presentations |
| College transcripts and degrees | Product support plans |
| Drawings and designs | Programming examples |
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Consider creating a [Web version](#) of your résumé, with links to your [digitized portfolio](#). It's an excellent way to impress potential employers, display your work, and put the Internet to work for you. But even if you have a Web version, it's a good idea to hand carry your portfolio to interviews.

[Compile and organize](#) your portfolio as you complete projects and earn recognition, so you don't overlook anything. Collecting all along allows you to quickly replace old stuff with new, and choose what to include for specific job [interviews](#).

It's not a good idea to wait until the day you quit your job. You won't have time if you are escorted out the door shortly after you [give notice](#). Your soon-to-be ex-employer might even stand over you as you gather items from your office, or conduct a security search as you leave. So it's a better idea to [plan](#) to quit your job in advance, and you never know when you might get [laid off](#) or worse. It doesn't look too good to take company property, especially on your last day.

[Is it Stealing?](#)

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