



# SI 622 Research Report

## Surveying

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## Executive Summary

As part of a larger usability study for Foliotek, this report explores survey data with a focus on the company's Student Identity (ID) page. Our approach to this stage in the process aimed to determine how users present themselves professionally online. In order to better understand the overall usability of the ID page, our survey questions were carefully crafted to identify user attitudes and behaviors to the aforementioned as well as product strengths and weaknesses. Based on insights from our User Interviews and Comparative Analysis, we gleaned that there was a low level of awareness of Foliotek's products within the higher education community and our sample size at the University of Michigan. In order to improve reach alongside product usability, we decided it would be beneficial to survey a sample size fitting Foliotek's target demographic without limiting ourselves to only surveying users who have interacted with the product previously.

After we determined our sample size, we started our process with a brainstorming session where we set two overall research questions. We then assembled survey questions and developed a one day pilot test that we distributed to 3 participants. We analyzed the pilot test experience and incorporated this information and participant feedback in our final survey which was used to refine question structure and the flow in which questions were asked. Refinements included adding questions around technical proficiency to explore participant abilities, including "other" with a short answer option to multiple choice questions, and online professional development intentions to expand upon participant behaviors. Our final survey was live for one week which consisted of 14 questions with a combination of multiple choice and short answer options. We captured data from 26 students spanning multiple stages in their academic careers, degrees, and specializations. After analyzing all 26 collected survey responses, we developed the following key findings and recommendations:

Finding	Recommendation
Creating a CV/Resume is the most ambiguous part of professional development because users lack knowledge of appropriate content and formatting.	Integrate a web-based word processor into the Student ID page formatted for building industry approved CV/Resumes.
For current usage, a standard resume and LinkedIn were the most widely used for all levels of education —while website builders are not ranked highly for desired means of showcasing work.	The Foliotek system should utilize data entry and design elements that make the transition from the resume builder/LinkedIn method to Foliotek easy for users.
Interest in showcasing professional experience varies but can be categorized by self-promotion, securing jobs, and networking	Incorporate more customizable content into the Student ID Page as it relates to a users intended industry. Also, provide a way for users to establish personal connections.

Survey responses were beneficial in defining critical components to presenting oneself professionally online and why participants use certain technologies for networking to work showcasing. Upon analyzing collected responses, we were able to better understand audience behaviors towards professional development and used this intel to determine recommendations that we believe will improve the Student ID page.

## Introduction

Foliotek is an education technology company specializing in building web-based showcase tools for students. Currently there are over 100,000 active users, utilizing the platform to showcase their experiences. During our initial meeting with stakeholders, our client indicated their interest in learning how it can improve its Student ID page to assist users in displaying their work.

This goal of this study is to gather information from subsets of the intended market for Foliotek, to discover how students showcase their professional experience currently, and their future desires to do so. The students answering this survey were not Foliotek users currently. Coming from the comparative evaluation, we wanted to follow up on how the comparators evaluated were used by students currently, and what students would want to use in the future.

To discover this we used the following research questions:

1. How do students at different levels of education (and different lengths of time before graduating) showcase their professional experience currently?
2. Are students looking for new ways to show their professional experience, past what they are doing now?

With this survey, we will narrow down what students use currently, to know better what features from other similar services should be compared against Foliotek for their own feature set and usability. Heading into the heuristic evaluation, this data will help define what users expect from a mental model of similar services.

## Methods

In an effort to get a better idea of what current students do to showcase their work and experience to potential employers we sent out a survey to a large number of students to collect their thoughts, opinions, and current practices. We sent the survey out to undergraduates and graduates in hope of receiving feedback from perspectives with varying levels of educational background. This survey has provided us with an even better understanding of the different wants and needs people of different educational backgrounds have and how they might overlap with each other.

### Survey Audience

Our survey audience is comprised of people inside our target population (students currently working on either a undergraduate or graduate degree). We catered it to three distinct groups inside the audience - undergraduates, masters students, and doctoral students. We believed that catering to these three would allow us to get results that would give us a good look into the bigger picture of how students of many different backgrounds present themselves professionally.

### Sampling Method

Our method of finding survey participants was primarily based off of convenience and snowball sampling. Given that each member of our team are students who fit Foliotek's demographic, we had connections to larger groups of students who had their own acquaintances that were engaged in higher education at undergraduate and graduate levels. We each leveraged being part of a student community in order to get the greatest number of responses from each group of students. This sampling method enabled us to get enough responses from each distinct student group we were targeting.

### Piloting

This survey was sent to three students for piloting, which was super helpful in helping us refine the language to be more clear. We were able to collect comments from each student who piloted the survey and then make appropriate changes based on those comments.

### Respondent Profile

We had 26 total respondents with a wide range of programs, graduation years, and educational interests represented. Across three distinct categories we had 8 masters students, 12 bachelors students, and 6 doctoral students. Programs represented included information science, sports management, sociology, mechanical engineering, environmental science, dentistry, and more (a complete list can be found under Q2 in the appendix). Graduation years ranged from 2019 to 2022 and beyond. This profile of respondents matched with what we were hoping to see based upon what we already know about Foliotek's target demographic.

### Analysis Methods

We analyzed the data received using both Qualtrics' built in analysis tools and by downloading the raw data and doing some of our own analysis within Excel. In order to identify areas where recommendations would be appropriate, we all looked through the data and made note of anything that had the possibility of providing insight to Foliotek. We then worked to visualize our insights using tables and graphs in order to properly conceptualize our findings and generate data-driven recommendations.

## Findings and Recommendations

Our survey focused on understanding how users present themselves professionally online. Overall, the results suggest that the CV/Resume is the most common document shared within the landscape of professional development. However, some survey results revealed improvements to current Student ID page site elements as well as adding new features to better support user goals. Our findings are presented below from highest to lowest priority.

### Finding 1: Creating a CV/Resume is the most ambiguous part of professional development because users lack knowledge of appropriate content and formatting.

Each survey participant noted that they currently have a CV/Resume. When asked their preferred method of creating such documents, we discovered that 33% of participants favored word processors versus 22% favoring assistive software that builds or generates documents. Given this same question, 11% of respondents noted “other” (Figure 1). From this, we further analyzed that participants who selected the “other” option used this text field to state that they were “only aware of word processors” to create their CV/Resume. We decided to dive into this insight and contacted survey participants for further questions. Within follow up about their awareness of word processors, participants if this medium helped users achieve the appropriate formatting and content of a CV/Resume. Participants revealed that this was the most ambiguous part of their professional development process. This reveals a potential unique factor the Student ID page could harness which would differentiate itself from competitors.

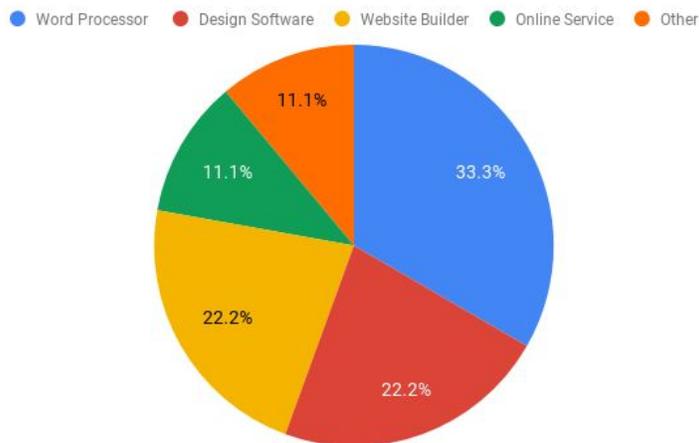


Figure 1

### Recommendation: Integrate a web-based word processor into the Student ID page formatted for building industry approved CV/Resumes.

To better align product with company goals of providing users with professional preparation and digital identity, we suggest that Foliotek integrate a web-based CV/Resume generator into its Student ID page. Given that 47% of survey participants reported using services such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs to create their CV/Resume, we suggest that this generator emulate the familiar aesthetic of a word processor

(Figure 2). In order to assist users in improving the knowledge gap gleaned from our survey findings, we recommend this function incorporate the following features:

- Best practices for CV/Resume content creation alongside sample industry-approved documents
- Pre-formatted templates
- Utilize Foliotek’s current file management structure for CV/Resumes version control which gives the user the flexibility to have a repository of saved documents
- Multiple export features including PDF and link sharing

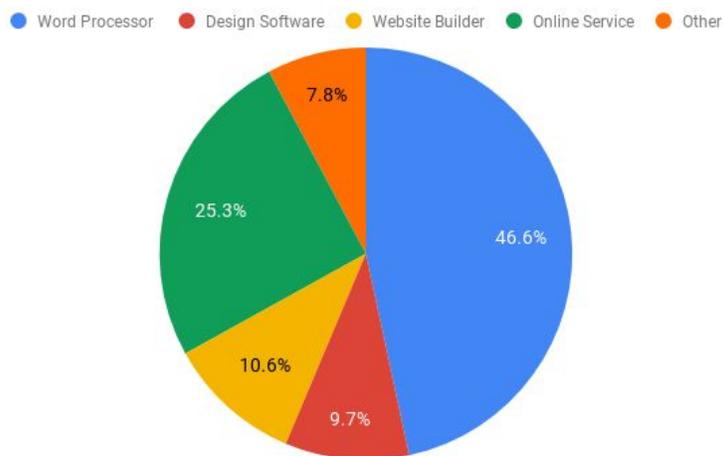


Figure 2

**Finding 2: For current usage, a standard resume and LinkedIn were the most widely used for all levels of education—while website builders are not ranked highly for desired means of showcasing work.**

Looking at how students working towards different levels of education approach their work experience showcase, we see some trends towards different approaches based on education levels, with some similarities between all levels. Over 90% of respondents had a resume currently, which was reported to have been created by either a word processor or online service. 80% had a LinkedIn currently, and those without a LinkedIn reported they were interested in making one if they did not have one already. See Table A-1 in the appendices for more details.

Looking at the website builder style of showcasing experience, around 27% of respondents had a website currently, with around 27% stating they were not interested and around 46% of respondents stating varying levels of interest for using a website builder. When looking at how respondents wanted to build their next means of showcase, word processors remained the top method, with design software and website builders tying for second place. In the website builders category, Masters students were the most likely to be interested in using a website builder (Figure 3).

		What degree are you pursuing?			Total
		Bachelors	Masters	Doctorate	
How would you prefer to create a resume/portfolio/cv/website in the future? (Select all that apply)	Word Processor (e.g. Microsoft Word)	7	5	3	15
	Online Service	1	3	1	5
	Design Software (e.g. Adobe Illustrator)	5	2	3	10
	Website Builder	3	5	2	10
	Other	3	1	1	5
	Total	12	8	6	26

Figure 3

**Recommendation: The Foliotek system should utilize data entry and design elements that make the transition from the resume builder/LinkedIn method to Foliotek easy for users.**

When compared to current methods of showcasing experience, website builders are not comparatively popular. As most users have familiarity with word processor based resume building and LinkedIn, leveraging this knowledge means working to include familiar elements for these users when moving into the Foliotek system. Having a system that feels radically different might lead users back into familiar territory for showcasing their work, so usability for the Foliotek system should be a priority to ease users into the added functionality that this system provides. Alternatively, Foliotek can work to take information from already created sources, such as a word document or a LinkedIn page to help information entry into the new system.

**Finding 3: Interest in showcasing professional experience varies but can be categorized by self-promotion, securing jobs, and networking.**

As a result of asking survey respondents about why they were interested in showcasing their professional experiences, we identified three categories related to self-promotion/standing out, securing jobs, and networking. The majority of responses were related to self-promotion and standing out to employers, with nine respondents saying things like: “to attract employers” or “It’s a way to set yourself apart from other. The way people get jobs is more competitive now.” The second category was more so related to securing jobs, with respondents saying things such as, “graduating this may and i'm looking for jobs in university administration or teaching jobs.” Networking also emerged as an important factor, with respondents saying things like, “To expand my network and find new opportunities.” Other categories for this questions included: dissatisfaction with indirect competitors (e.g. LinkedIn) and the belief that their interest was based on a “necessary evil.” It is important to note, that one survey respondent indicated that they were “not sure” why they were interested and eight participants did not respond to this question. See responses to question 12 in appendix for analysis.

## Recommendation: Incorporation of personalized content and social connections.

Knowing the motivations and interests for the target market is important when evaluating the current Foliotek Student ID page. Based on the themes that emerged from our findings: self-promotion/standing out, securing jobs, and networking Foliotek should look to prioritize features in these areas. Respondents are interested in standing out and Foliotek can support this by offering more personalized or customizable components to the student ID page to support users desire for individuality. One way to achieve this could be through incorporating a way to personalize the Student ID page based on the industry users are looking to go into. A networking or social component could also be useful to users of the Foliotek platform as it is something that they are interested in. Currently, Foliotek has a communities feature, but it appears that this feature doesn't allow users to actively search out people they know or connect with new people. By incorporating features that are related to the motivations and interests of their target users, Foliotek can provide a tool that would be more useful.

## Discussion

In conjunction with other common survey issues such as generalization or validity of collected responses, our team identified other areas specific to our study below.

### Sample Size

We received 26 responses from current Bachelors, Masters, and Ph.D candidates with some graduating as early as 2019 and as late as 2024. Our sample also spanned a wide variety of degree programs. However, because Foliotek currently has over 100,000 active users our sample size is relatively small. Including more participants in the future including active Foliotek users and those who have recently graduated will also allow us to further support our current findings.

### Non-responses

For some questions included in our survey we did not receive a response from survey participants. For example, two respondents did not respond to the demographics question about their current degree program. There does not appear to be a correlation between the type of question (multiple choice or open-ended) and whether a response was given. Non-responses to our survey questions can create a bias between the data, with those choosing not to respond skewing the results of our analysis.

## Conclusion

Through this investigative survey, our team was able to gain a better understanding as to how target users of the Foliotek Student ID page present themselves online in a professional manner. Based off the responses to our survey questions, it seems that users are overall competent in their ability to use technology to assist in professional development. Given this behavior, there are certain ID page features that could benefit from improvement as well as new functionality to be integrated. For example, integrating a web-based resume generation tool, prioritizing personalized content and networking, and adding more familiar design aesthetic are scalable solutions that could be executed with the Foliotek team's current resources. We recommend Foliotek look into improving the structure, use cases, and usability of the aforementioned features in order to improve their audience's overall user experience. For the next phase of our ongoing usability assessment, we will conduct a heuristic evaluation of the Foliotek Student ID page in order to create further well-informed recommendations for our client.

# Appendices

## Pilot Test

1. What degree are you pursuing?
  - Bachelors
  - Masters
  - PhD
2. When are you graduating (Expected)?
  - 2019
  - 2020
  - 2021
  - 2022
  - Later
3. What is your major?
  - Open Ended
4. What industry do you want to work in after graduation?
  - Open Ended
5. Do you currently use LinkedIn?
  - Yes
  - No
6. If you answered yes to question 5, please explain why you use LinkedIn. If no, move to next question.
  - Open Ended
7. If you answered no to question 5, please explain why you do not use LinkedIn.
  - Open Ended
8. Which forms of showing your professional experience do you use currently? (MULTI OPTION)
  - Resume
  - Portfolio
  - CV
  - Website
  - LinkedIn
9. How did you create it/them?
  - Open Ended
10. Indicate your interest in showcasing your experience for the following:
  - Resume (1-7)
  - Portfolio (1-7)
  - CV (1-7)
  - LinkedIn (1-7)
  - Website (1-7)
11. How would you prefer to create a resume/portfolio/cv/website in the future?
  - Word Processor
  - Online Service
  - Design Software
  - Website Builder

12. Are you interested in a new method of showcasing your professional experience?

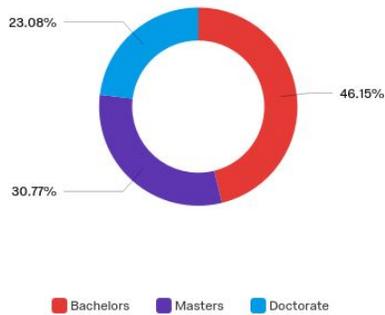
- Yes
- No

13. Why are you/aren't you interested in showcasing your professional experience?

- Open Ended

## Final Survey

### Q1:What degree are you pursuing?

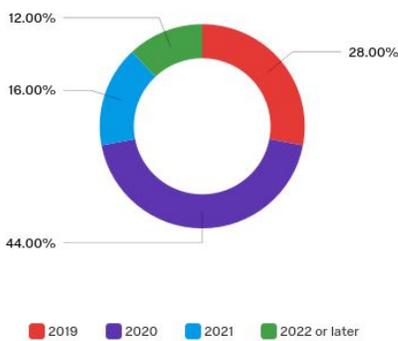


### Q2:What program(s) are you enrolled in?

Education (2)
Public Policy
Psychology
Sociology
Epidemiology
Mcdb
MPD2
Doctor of Medical Dentistry
Clinical Psychology
Global and International Studies and Nonprofit Leadership
Developmental Psychology
School for Environment and Sustainability (seas)
Social Work
Environmental Science

Mechanical Engineering
Global Security Studies
BSI
Information (2)
Undeclared
Sport Management
MHI
MSI

**Q3:When do you graduate?**

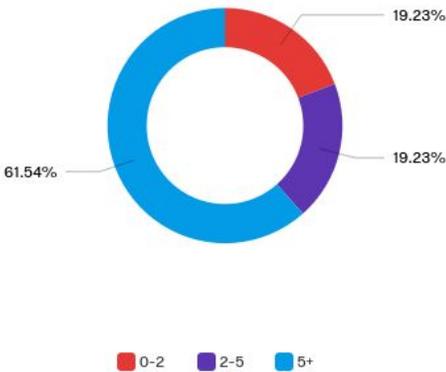


**Q4:Which industry are you interested in going into after graduation?**

Music Tech
tech
sport and entertainment
Digital Consulting
User Experience Design
HCI
Web developing
Government
Manufacturing
Education
Events/Marketing

Nonprofit (2)
Academia (3)
Humanitarian Work
Clinical Psychology
Dentistry
Industrial Design
Administration
Healthcare (2)
Law
policy
higher ed

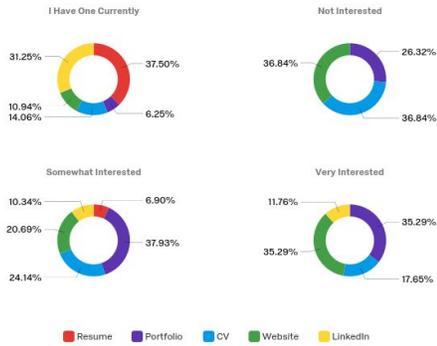
**Q5: On a daily basis, how many hours do you spend on the internet?**



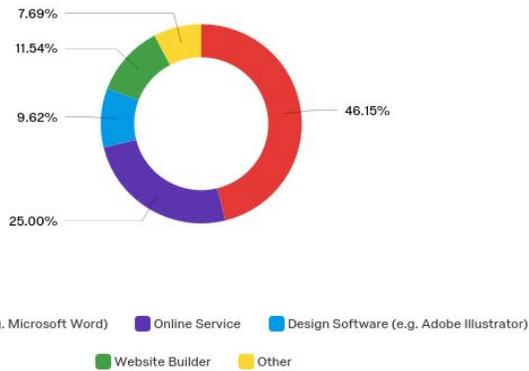
**Q6: How confident are you in your technical ability to use software to do the following? (1 being not confident, 5 being very confident)?**

#	AWA.FIELD	1	2	3	4	5	SIMPLETABLEWIDGET.TOTAL
1	Create a Resume	0.00% 0	3.85% 1	3.85% 1	30.77% 8	61.54% 16	26
2	Make a LinkedIn	0.00% 0	7.69% 2	11.54% 3	26.92% 7	53.85% 14	26
3	Use a Website Builder (e.g. Squarespace)	7.69% 2	7.69% 2	26.92% 7	26.92% 7	30.77% 8	26

**Q7: Indicate your interest in showcasing your experience via the following?**



**Q8: How did you create the ones that you selected "I have one currently" on? (Select all that apply)**



**\*Other: LinkedIn & LaTeX**

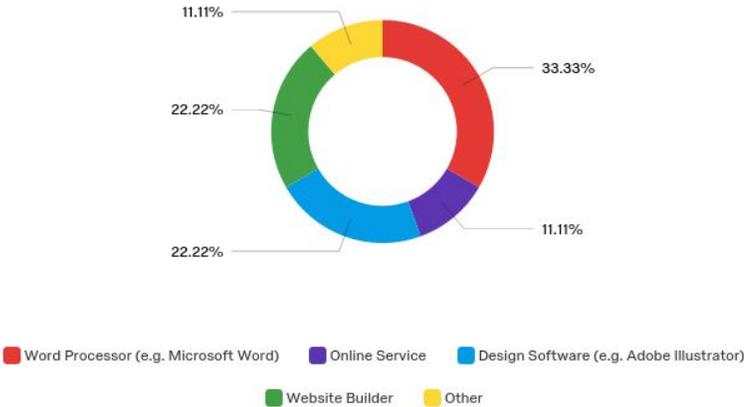
**Q9: How do you distribute the ones that you selected "I have one currently" on to other people, potential employers, etc?**

Resume, Job Site
on resume
Email (13)
In person (4)
LinkedIn, job applications
Have on social media
pdf
Hard copy
physically
Applications/Application portals (5)

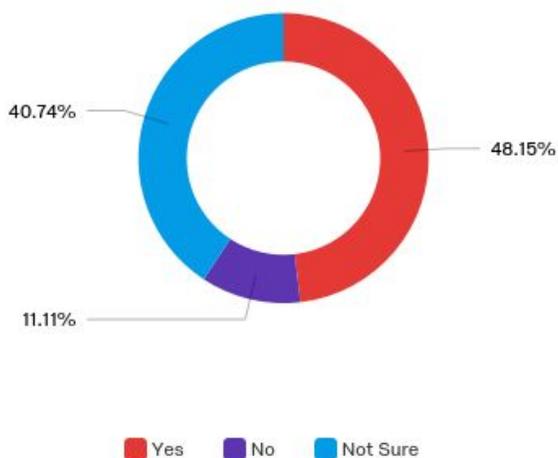
Through website
Social media
online
Print copy and business cards
Depends. I have hard/web copies of resume. Usually send a hard copy resume with links to portfolio/website and linkedin
I currently don't
Uploaded to forms
linkedin uses it's own networking system. when i apply to jobs, i just upload my resume within the applcation of the job i am applying to.

**\*some respondents put more than one response**

**Q10: How would you prefer to create a resume/portfolio/cv/website in the future? (Select all that apply)**



**Q11: Are you interested in a new method of showcasing your professional experience?**



**Q12: Why are you interested in showcasing your work?**

<b>Secure Jobs</b>
To get a job
For Jobs
graduating this may and i'm looking for jobs in university administration or teaching jobs.
jobs, repository of my published work
To help get good and fulfilling employment
<b>Networking</b>
hard to find higher ed professionals on linkedin. linkedin seems more corporate. linkedin for higher education industry would be cool.
It makes it easier to find other professionals interested in the same concentration.
To expand my network and find new opportunities.
<b>Self-Promotion/Stand out</b>
To justify my skill set to employers
So that employers can more easily see me as a candidate before they can consider others
It's a way to set yourself apart from others. The way people get jobs is more competitive now.
to attract employers
The job market is very competitive and I need to stand out.
Present a fuller picture of who I am
Looks more professional

Good to feel mobile in professional life. Not looking to switch jobs but nice to know my barrier to apply is relatively low. Also hoping to start freelance design work, self-promotion is important

more professional

**dissatisfaction with existing tools**

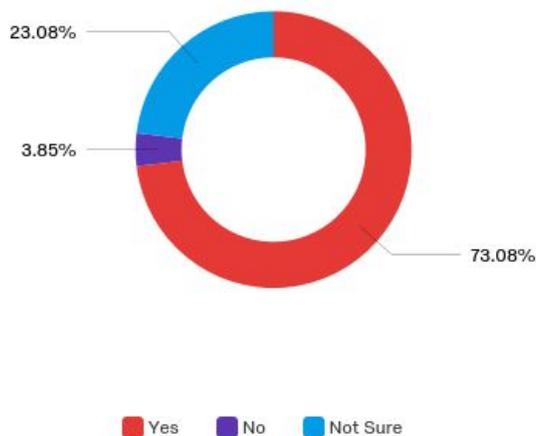
linkedin is bad

**other**

not sure

necessary evil

**Q13: If you aren't interested now, do you anticipate being interested in a new method of showcasing your professional experience in the next 2 years?**



**Table A-1**

		What degree are you pursuing?			Total
		Bachelors	Masters	Doctorate	
Indicate your interest in showcasing your experience via the following. - Resume	I Have One Currently	11	8	5	24
	Not Interested	0	0	0	0
	Somewhat Interested	1	0	1	2
	Very Interested	0	0	0	0
	Total	12	8	6	26
Indicate your interest in showcasing your experience via the following. - Portfolio	I Have One Currently	2	2	0	4
	Not Interested	1	1	3	5
	Somewhat Interested	6	3	2	11
	Very Interested	3	2	1	6
	Total	12	8	6	26
Indicate your interest in showcasing your experience via the following. - CV	I Have One Currently	3	4	2	9
	Not Interested	3	2	2	7
	Somewhat Interested	6	0	1	7
	Very Interested	0	2	1	3
	Total	12	8	6	26
Indicate your interest in showcasing your experience via the following. - Website	I Have One Currently	3	4	0	7
	Not Interested	2	3	2	7
	Somewhat Interested	4	0	2	6
	Very Interested	3	1	2	6
	Total	12	8	6	26
Indicate your interest in showcasing your experience via the following. - LinkedIn	I Have One Currently	8	8	4	20
	Not Interested	0	0	0	0
	Somewhat Interested	2	0	1	3
	Very Interested	2	0	0	2
	Total	12	8	5	25