waldron

CONVERTING RESUMES TO PLAIN TEXT FOR ONLINE APPLICATIONS

Many online job boards and company application sites will only read plain-text formats like ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) that do not recognize fancy formatting like bullet points, fonts, margins, or bold or italicized text. Furthermore, cutting and pasting your resume from a Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF document into an e-mail will result in a mess of disjointed lines and passages that don't make sense without the bold or italics, tabs and bullet points meant to set them apart.

Just changing the extension of your resume file doesn't change its format and make it magically ready for plain text. The document must be recast to adjust for the elements that relied on design to communicate. Below are the steps necessary to transform your resume into a plain-text file.

Saving your Word resume as ASCII text

1. Open a simple text editing program such as Notepad (on the PC, under Start > Programs > Accessories > Notepad) or SimpleText on the Mac.

2. Start Word or whatever word-processing program you use.

3. Open the resume file. Double-check spelling and grammar, particularly if you've made any changes.

4. Highlight all the text in the document.

5. Copy the highlighted text into your Clipboard.

6. Switch to the Notepad or SimpleText editor.

7. Paste the copy of the resume file into a new editor window.

7. Save the document as plain text with line breaks.

8. Set the document page at 60 characters per line.

9. Omit bolding, italics and underlining from document.

10. Check for any symbols that were inadvertently changed during the conversion process (e.g. a bullet point will become an asterisk*).

11. Remove tabs, columns and bullets and again save the document with line space breaks.

12. Use spaces rather than tabs to line up text in the document.

13. To make text stand out, use white spaces and/or full capitalization, or frame section titles with characters such as equal signs (=), the underscore key (__) or asterisks (*):

*****EXPERIENCE*****