

ESQ RESUME LLC

Is Your Legal Resume Online Ready?

By Karen Anderson

In general, job seekers tend to think that the legal resume they use online is the same document they created to print out and mail to prospective employers. That would be wrong. While you do not need a different resume for online use per se, the format of your legal resume has to be changed to accommodate online use and make it easy for you to post, copy, paste, or email it to employers.

When creating your legal resume, you need to have it available in two formats:

- A Print Version (Word or PDF)
- A Plain Text Version (ASCII Text)

A Print Version of your legal resume will be designed with bulleted lists, italicized or bold text, and other font and formatting highlights, ready to print and mail or hand to potential contacts and interviewers.

A Plain Text Version of your legal resume is a plain text file ready to copy and paste into online forms or post in online resume databases. This might also be referred to as a Text-Only copy or ASCII Text.

There are 3 popular online resume formats used widely today. These online resume formats include ASCII Text, PDF, and HTML.

- ASCII Text is basic text that you would use in an email message or online resume database.
- The PDF format is Adobe's format for presenting documents that are embedded within pages and cannot be edited by common word processing editors. PDF's are formatted more like a graphical picture, with improved formatting for viewing text images. To edit these documents you need either Adobe Acrobat® or other specialized software.
- HTML is a markup language to build web pages; it is mainly used when creating a website or blog to post your legal resume.

Using Plain Text or ASCII For Your Legal Resume

You should use a Plain Text or ASCII version of your legal resume to copy and paste into online forms or post in online resume databases. ASCII Text resumes are the most widely used format for posting a resume to an online job board or sending it through an email. If you are going to submit your legal resume to online job boards, you need to make sure that your legal resume is properly formatted in ASCII Text.

Tips for Converting Resumes to ASCII Text:

- Eliminate all bullets and replace them with an (* or -)

- Make sure that all information is left justified
- Avoid centering information on the document
- Make sure that there are no extra tabs or character returns in the document
- Add spaces between headings

You will notice that your newly formatted ASCII Text legal resume will no longer have any of the formatting that gives it its unique look. That's because it is now plain text. All special formats, like bolding and italicizing, will have been removed, as will any graphics or other non-text elements. In other words, your legal resume will be as "plain" as they come. That's just the way ASCII text looks. While your legal resume will no longer be pretty, it will be database and email ready.

Using PDF For Your Legal Resume

When sending your legal resume as an attachment either in an email or online, it is recommended you submit it in .pdf format to protect the integrity of your document. The .pdf format is the extension used by Adobe Acrobat®. This format is becoming very popular as an alternative format to HTML. The benefit of the PDF format is that the document is "embedded." Therefore, it is not browser dependent and will look the same regardless of the user's browser. In short, if you are submitting your legal resume electronically, send it as a PDF file whenever possible.

Sending your legal resume in .pdf format does require the viewer to have Adobe Acrobat viewer installed on their machine, but this is becoming more common as new computers generally come with Acrobat Reader pre-loaded. Converting a document to PDF format requires Adobe Acrobat or third party software that can convert various document formats to PDF (such as plug ins for Microsoft Word®). Finally, there are online websites that can convert document formats by simply uploading your document and emailing the converted product to you.

Using HTML For Your Legal Resume

Increasingly, job seekers are creating websites and blogs for the purpose of making their legal resume available to employers online. This resume posting method comes with several drawbacks. There are two main issues to consider when posting your legal resume online: where to post it and how public you want it to be. One of the risks you run in posting your legal resume on your own website or blog is to be viewed as a resume spammer. If your legal resume comes up too often in search results, recruiters and employers will be less likely to consider you for their job openings. Also, once your legal resume is online for the world to see, you will no longer have any control over who views it, including your current employer. As a result, we generally do not recommend this type of online posting for legal professionals. That said, since this is becoming a popular posting method, we wanted to address the basic concepts of using HTML format for resumes.

HTML is the markup language used by web browsers to display web content. HTML controls the format, fonts, margins, layouts, colors, tables, links and several other items on the web page. While HTML is a relatively simple and common language

used by programmers, it can be difficult to learn on your own. Moreover, HTML is not standardized, and therefore depending on the type of browser used to view the web page, the content will be displayed differently. In other words, HTML online resumes can look different, depending on the user's browser settings. Therefore, unless you have the time and money to invest in learning HTML, or have access to a blog or website program that does not require you to have HTML skills, this can turn out to be a difficult and risky process.

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