Building a Digital Textile Portfolio: A Proposed Taxonomy

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Keywords: digital textile printing, portfolio, textile design

Introduction. Web-based portfolios have currently become more popular than paper-based portfolios and are often distributed through a personal or community website. The web-based portfolio enhances student motivation while still delivering quality content equal to that in a paper-based portfolio (Driessen, Muijtjens, Van Tartqijk, and Van Der Vleuten, 2007); however, there are still questions for students and academics appropriate content for professional portfolios. Generally students in apparel and merchandising programs focus on an overview of class projects in their portfolios, without considering the advantages of developing a specialty portfolio to demonstrate depth of knowledge in one area of design or product development. Specialty portfolios can range from a focus on a product category, specific skills, construction techniques, or textile design as examples. The purpose of this abstract is to introduce a taxonomy of components needed in a digital textile portfolio, clearly documenting the entire textile design process. The authors have focused on digital textile printing, as it cutting-edge technology that is complex, allows students skills develop unique skills and is an area of expertise at the authors' home institution. However, we view this taxonomy as adaptable to for other types of specialty portfolios in the apparel and textile industries.

Background on Digital Textile Printing. Digital textile printing is a form of ink jet printing for textiles that has benefited the textile industry in numerous ways. Digital printing has the ability to print short-runs, print on demand, and use thousands of colors. Digital textile printing occurs in the textile industry, but is often found at universities as well (Ryall, 2010). In some universities, digital textile printers are used for student textile design projects including spot prints, repeat prints, border prints, engineered printed garments or I combination with other surface or structural textile design techniques for creation of ready-to-wear garments, fiber art or wearable art. Student access to digital textile printers in academic programs range from giving print files to an operator to print and finish to full student involvement in pre and post printing procedures, allowing students to explore textile design career paths. Developing a comprehensive web based portfolio focused on digital textile printing provides students with an opportunity to showcase a set of unique skills.

Proposed Components of a Digital Textile Design Portfolio. Many times apparel students do not have a plan when creating web-based portfolios, since they have limited background as web designers. One of the authors has extensive web design experience and has found that using a well-defined taxonomy to organize content and usability of the website containing a student's portfolio. The proposed *Taxonomy for Digital a Textile Printing Portfolio Components* maybe used for showcase a single project or provide an overview of digital textile printing skills (Figure 1). The components of the taxonomy in its entirety or selectively as determined by the student. The authors suggest three main components or levels of the portfolio: (a) Ideation, (b) Process

and (c) Products. Included in each main component are suggestions for second level content, sub-categories, and possible objects to include in each sub-category.

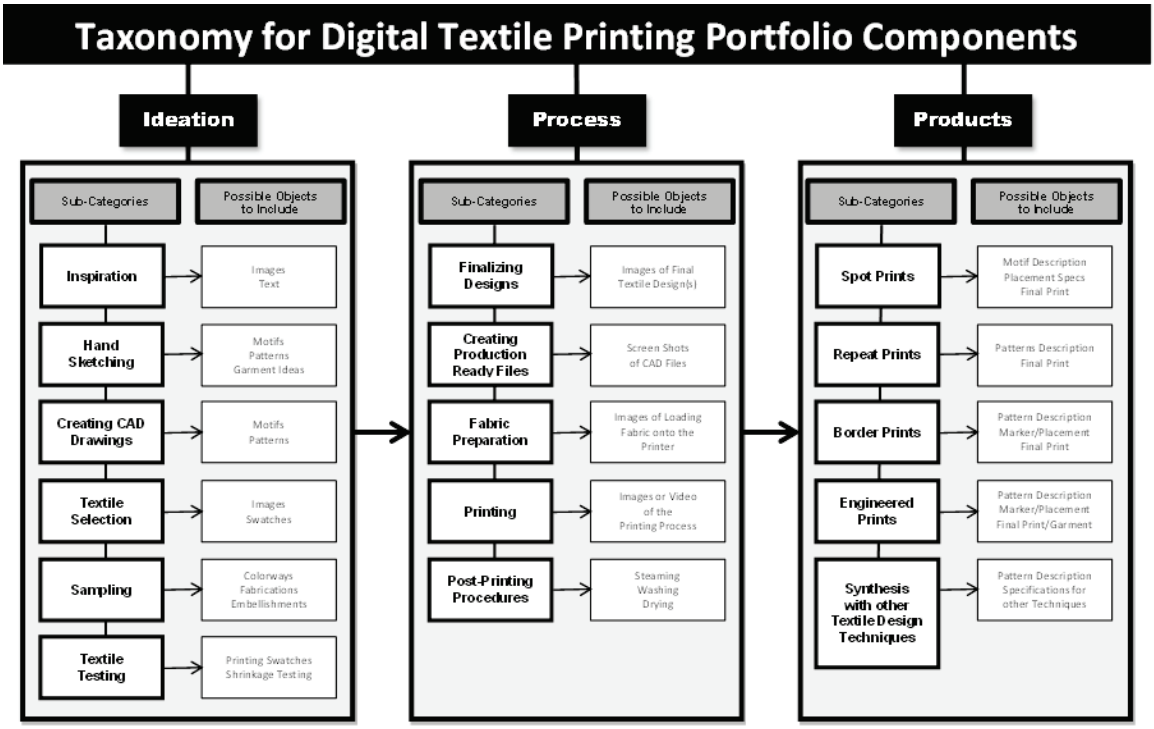

Figure 1. Proposed Taxonomy for Digital Textile Printing Portfolio Components.

Significance and Implications. Creating a web-based digital textile portfolio can help students secure a position in a textile design related field by instantaneously providing easy access of their work to potential employers. Thoroughly explaining each step of the process accompanied by images and videos can help employers understand a student's thought process and capabilities. Our presentation will include an example of a digital textile printing portfolios developed through use of the taxonomy and evaluations of a portfolio via web-distributed surveys to industry professionals.

References

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