

Writing a Technical Resume

The technical resume is used in cases where *mentioning particular skills or knowledge of a technical nature* is particularly important, as is the case for the IT Industry. The technical resume should be very much like the chronological resume, except it should include a *summary of skills*, preferably near the beginning of the resume. Every technical resume should focus on *two key sections*: the *Skills section*, and the *Professional Experience section* as much as possible. Below are recommendations and tips on writing these sections.

SKILLS SECTION

First of all, make sure you *have* a **Skills** section within your resume. In this section, you should list all languages, platforms, products and tools you have had experience with. For each item, mention a degree of knowledge or the context in which you learned/used it.

For example, say:

- Proficiency with C++, Lisp, and Corba.
- Some experience using PHP for the development of secure web-applications.
- Advanced Perl and Regex knowledge.

Be sure to include all **buzzwords** and variants of such words within your Skills section. This is important because some firms use automated software that scans your resume for particular skills or keywords that their clients specify. For example, a company looking to hire a web developer may search a database of 5,000 resumes for the keyword **HTML**. It is to your advantage, therefore, to include as many such keywords as relevant.

For example, instead of saying:

Experience in web-development and the use of Structure Query Language with Databases.

Say something like:

Web-Development experience with HTML, ASP, and JSP. Proficiency with SQL, MySQL, Oracle, and SQLAnywhere.

When preparing the summary of skills section, try and group items together with sub-headings so that it is easier to follow. That would make it easier for the reader to find the specific details he/she is looking for. Be brief and use bullet form whenever possible.

Just remember that jargon and technical language should be used carefully throughout the resume. Often the first person that reads the resume is not a technical person, but a Recruitment Officer, you don't want to write yourself off by submitting a resume that they cannot understand, however the summary of skills allows you to use more specific technological language.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE SECTION

This is the section in which you list your previous work experience. Label this section "Professional Experience" -- not "Jobs", "Job Experience", "Work Experience", or anything else.

List your jobs in reverse chronological order -- starting with your current or latest position.

Through the positions you list in this section, you should try to display a gradual progression in your career -- for example try to illustrate how, as your career has progressed, you have shifted into positions with more responsibility and more impact. Mention any promotions. Elaborate on the jobs and projects that are most relevant to the position you are currently seeking.

If possible, include specific numbers or figures that quantify the impact of your jobs.

For example:

- Managed accounts that generated over \$25M annually.
- Decreased site load-time by 30%.

Note: If you are a new or recent college graduate, or have little Professional Experience, you may wish to list your Education/Degrees first. Be sure to focus on listing all relevant course work, projects, and technologies that you have worked with.

Resume Writing Tips

1. **List your technical knowledge first in an itemized fashion.** Use as many buzzwords as you can which reflect your work and school experience. List all operating systems, programming languages, platforms, etc. with which you're experienced. List all software you've thoroughly used. This will satisfy the visual curiosities of hiring managers and OCR scanners conducting key word searches .
2. **List your qualifications in order of relevance, from most to least.** Only list your degree and educational qualifications first if they are truly relevant to the job for which you are applying. If you've already done what you want to do in a new job, by all means, list it first, even if it wasn't your most recent job.
3. **Quantify your experience wherever possible.** Cite numerical figures, such as monetary budgets/funds saved, time periods/efficiency improved, lines of code written/debugged, numbers of machines administered/fixes, etc. which demonstrate progress or accomplishments due directly to your work.
4. **Begin sentences with action verbs.** Portray yourself as someone who is active, uses their brain, and gets things done. Stick with the past tense, even for descriptions of currently held positions, to avoid confusion.
5. **Don't sell yourself short.** This is by far the biggest mistake of all resumes, technical and otherwise. Your experiences are worthy for review by hiring managers. Treat your resume as an advertisement for you. Be sure to thoroughly "sell" yourself by highlighting all of your strengths. If you've got a valuable asset that doesn't seem to fit into any existing components of your resume, list it anyways as its own resume segment.
6. **Be concise.** As a rule of thumb, resumes reflecting five years or less experience should fit on one page. More extensive experience can justify usage of a second page. Avoid lengthy descriptions of whole projects of which you were only a part. Consolidate action verbs where one task or responsibility encompasses other tasks and duties. Minimize usage of articles (the, an, a) and never use "I" or other pronouns to identify yourself.
7. **Omit needless items.** Leave all these things off your resume: social security number, marital status, health, citizenship, age, irrelevant awards, irrelevant associations and memberships, irrelevant publications, irrelevant recreational activities, references, reference of references ("available upon request"), travel history, previous pay rates, previous supervisor names, reasons for leaving previous jobs, and components of your name which you really never use (i.e. middle names).
8. **Have a trusted friend review your resume.** Be sure to pick someone who is attentive to details, can effectively critique your writing, and will give an honest and objective opinion. Seriously consider their advice. Get a third and fourth opinion if you can.
9. **Proofread, proofread, and proofread.** Be sure to catch all spelling errors, grammatical weaknesses, unusual punctuation, and inconsistent capitalizations. Proofread it numerous times over at least two days to allow a fresh eye to catch any hidden mistakes.

10. **Laser print it on plain, white paper.** Stick with laser prints. Your resume will be photocopied, faxed, and scanned numerous times, defeating any special paper efforts.
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Sample Resumes

Technical Resume Sample 1

Chris Smith
123 Elm Street
DeKalb, Illinois 60115
(555) 100-5000
chrissmith@msn.com
website: www.bestcode.com

JOB OBJECTIVE

Programmer or Programmer/Analyst

EDUCATION

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL
Bachelor of Science in **Computer Science**, December 2003
Emphasis in Applied Data Processing

COMPUTER ENVIRONMENT

Languages, Development Tools: C, C++, Java 2.0, SilverStream 3.7.1, WebSphere 4.0, VisualAge 4.0, Visual Basic 5.0, Crystal Reports 5.0, SQL DB2, HTML, COBOL, JCL, ASP, Fortran, IBM Assembler, JavaScript, Cold Fusion SilverStream EPortal 2.2, JSP, XML, WML,
Operating Systems: Windows 95/98/NT, Unix, MVS, MS-DOS
Database Management: Access 97, DB2, ORACLE 8I, Microsoft SQL Server 7.0

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Programmer/Analyst (Internship), APS Payment Systems, Oak Brook, IL, Summer 2003

- Wrote production status program modifications using COBOL and Assembler; controlled CICS applications.
- Developed and maintained JCL procedures and VSAM files of inter/intra office clients.
- Created monthly transaction cost tables and graphs.

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Computer Science Department, Northern Illinois University, January 2002 – Present

- Assisted with delivery of introductory COBOL course.
- Conducted individual help sessions with graduate and undergraduate students to resolve debugging, programming, and logic problems.
- Graded examinations and evaluated students' programs.

Contract Programmer, Jimmy's Restaurant, Rochelle, IL, August 2001 – December 2002

- Developed 32-bit Windows software for computer-aided restaurant management system.
- Utilized Graphical User Interface (GUI) design, database design, report design, coding, testing, maintaining, and documentation.
- Managed all phases of software development life cycle. Software system coded by using Visual C++ and MS Access Database under Windows NT/95 environment.

Computer Lab Attendant, Academic Computing Services, Northern Illinois University, August 2000- December 2001

- Assisted users in the operation of MVS batch system.
- Answered questions concerning PC network and software including NetScape, Microsoft Windows 95, Microsoft Word, UNIX, and MVS.
- Maintained terminals and printers.

CITIZENSHIP STATUS

U.S. Permanent Resident

Technical Resume Sample 2

CONNIE A. TECHWIZARD

9999 CIS Lane, Edmonds, WA 98036 . 555-111-1111 . ctechwiz@hotmail.com

SKILLS SUMMARY

Database

Oracle Administration

OCP Certification

PI/SQL 2000

Access 2000

Vision 2000

Database Theory and Design

Software/OS

DOS

Windows 95/98/2000

Office 2000

Web Development

HTML

Visual Basic 6.0
Quick Books

Networking

CCNA Certification

CISCO Networking

LAN Administration

Basic UNIX

Troubleshooting

Hardware upgrades
Installation of Software

TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE

Computer Lab Assistant, Academic Computer Services
Edmonds Community College

2000-date

- Provided hardware/software support for 125 computers and workstations
- Installed and networked computers in classrooms (30+ computers)
- Provided technical support for students using Access, Excel, Word, VB
- Tested software

EDUCATION

Associate of Technical Arts, Computer Information Systems, August 2001
Edmonds Community College, Lynnwood, WA

- Working in teams, planned and executed several database systems and hardware requirements from the beginning to the SDLC to the final stages
- Setup, configured, and maintained a networked environment containing five routers and switches
- Team leader on the basic design of LAN – designed LAN for two campus buildings

- Team member for a Help Desk Staff of five students – provided technical support for 40+ computers and users, simulating real-world operational problems
- Designed, implemented and tested a database in Access 2000
- Served on a six-person team that created a prototype database for the Point Defiance Zoo
- VB Projects: Mortgage Loan Calculator, “Craps” Dice Game, GPA Calculator, Check Register
- Designed a Web site with 22 pages for an online PC Software Support class

WORK HISTORY

Teller/Customer Service Representative
Bank of America, Seattle, WA 1994-1999

- Greeted customer and took care of financial transactions
- Sold financial services to customers
- Balanced cash and transactions daily
- Handled upset and angry customers with patience and poise

Reservations Agent
Alaska Airlines, Seattle, WA 1989-1994

- As part of a customer services team, responded to incoming phone requests for airline reservations
 - Responded to customer requests for information
 - Resolved customer problems tactfully
 - Handled large volume to incoming calls (more than 30 per hour)
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Technical Resume Sample 3

Elizabeth McWellen

College address:
442 E. Roanoke St., Apt J
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(555) 961-3395
emcwellen@vt.edu

Permanent address:
5683 Alice Drive
Richmond, VA 23060
(555) 364-3395

Education	Bachelor of Science in Biology , May 2003 Minor in Chemistry, emphases in Microbiology and Entomology <i>Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Virginia</i> GPA: 2.9/4.0	
Coursework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biological Statistics ▪ Microbial Genetics ▪ Food Microbiology ▪ Pathogenic Bacteriology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Immunology ▪ Insect Biology ▪ Medical and Veterinarian Entomology ▪ Insect Pest Management
Lab Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gram Stain Procedure ▪ Cultured Bacterial and Fungal Colonies ▪ Media Preparation ▪ pH Calibration ▪ Potentiometric Calibration ▪ Calorimetry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Techniques for Bacterial Identification ▪ Tests for Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria ▪ Dilutions ▪ Aseptic Technique ▪ Methods for Nematode Staining ▪ Maintenance of Laboratory Notebooks
Computer Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Windows 95, 98, NT ▪ Mathematica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Microsoft Excel ▪ Microsoft Word
Research Experience	<p>Lab Support Technician <i>International Research and Development, Virginia Tech</i> June 2002 – present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct research on spores of <i>Metarhizium anisopliae</i> for the control of locusts in Sub-Saharan Africa. ▪ Evaluate production processes utilizing hemacytometer and CFU counts. ▪ Work on methods to decrease water activity as to enhance germination at lower humidities. ▪ Assist in bioassays to determine the insects' mortality and virulence of the insect pathogen. <p>Laboratory Assistant <i>Entomology Department, Virginia Tech</i> May – August 2001</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Researched the development and fecundity of <i>Steinernema carpocapsae</i> nematodes when exposed to the bacterium <i>Xenorhabdus nematophilus</i> using in vitro techniques. ▪ Assisted in an experiment to determine the response of plant pathogenic nematodes to <i>X. nematophilus</i>. ▪ Applied predatory nematodes for the control of the Tomato Root Knot nematode. ▪ Aided in a pesticide trial for the control of Japanese beetle grubs. <p>Undergraduate Research <i>Entomology Department, Virginia Tech</i> January – May 2001</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Worked to develop a biopesticide for the control of a plant pathogenic nematode using the bacteria <i>Xenorhabdus bovienii</i>. ▪ Responsible for general set-up and management of experiments as well as collection and analysis of data. 	
Activities	Alpha Chi Omega Women's Fraternity, 2000-present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Senior Class Representative to the Chapter Relations and Standards Board Virginia Tech Tae Kwon Do Club	

Features of this resume:

- Lab skills – relevant to objective.
- Upper level courses (don't list basic courses obviously taken because of your major).
- Table used to format – **set borders invisible on actual resume!**
- Font = Times New Roman
- Margins = .7