PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A FREELANCE-BASED ECONOMY: A EUROPEAN+ PROJECT

Anna Romagnuolo, Melissa Elefante

Università della Tuscia (ITALY)

Abstract

The Internet abounds with statistics on the rise in freelance jobs and the growth of the gig economy, especially after the acceleration in digital transformations brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, Website Planet estimated 1.1 billion freelancers worldwide; in the same year, DDIY reported that 35% of the 3.5 billion total global workforce consisted of freelancers. Taking into account an eight-year period (2014-2022), Statista reported an increase of 13 million working freelance in the USA. Upwork reported almost 20% year-on-year growth rates in gross freelancer revenues and the Online Labour Index indicates yearly growth rates of over 10% (Kassi at al. 2021). Despite these numbers and foreseeable increasing trends, university courses and career services have generally given little attention to preparing students for freelance job-hunting and, with the exception of few Business Administration masters' programs, they have failed to integrate activities that can develop entrepreneurial, digital and soft skills needed to succeed as independent workers.

The objective of the paper is to illustrate a European+ Project, Digital Freelancing for Higher Education Students and Recent Graduates, coordinated by the first author and her University, which aims to disseminate information about freelancing opportunities and develop tools to help undergraduate students, recent graduates, and young professionals grasp them. The paper will also show how the development of self-employed skills and freelancing abilities cannot be separated from the development of English language skills for non-native speakers.

Keywords: Digital Freelancing, DigComp, EntreComp, content repository, Moodle course design, ESP (English for special purposes).

1 INTRODUCTION

In the last century, technological breakthroughs altered many forms of work and promoted the creation and replacement of many others. Today, factors impacting work anatomy are not only advances in computer science, software automation and digital technology but also socio, political, economic, demographic, and environmental factors such as globalization, population ageing and fertility rate reduction, climate change, habitat destruction and pollution, and natural resources depletion. These have been compounded, recently, by Covid-19 and post-covid prompts to old (outsourcing and offshoring) and new recruiting strategies (subcontracting, on-demand staffing, crowdsourcing, and remote contract via labour platform providers), which have accelerated the de-standardization of employment relations and increased a tendency towards self-employment and entrepreneurship. If the development in digital communication has made performing and transacting work remotely easier and cheaper, Covid-19 lockdowns have made it a necessity. This is even more so, since the pandemic has produced changes in spending habits and lifestyle that have transformed the marketplace and favoured the so-called stay-at-home and gig economies, with a surge of startups that can meet new consumer needs releasing products and services rapidly and with an increase in both independent professionals' preference for freelance jobs and employers' reliance on freelancers.

According to the Census Bureau, in the USA the number of applications for starting a business rose by 95% in 2020, compared to 2019; the national Statistical Offices respectively in France and the UK recorded a 20% and a 30% increase in the same period [1-2]. As to online freelancing, recent research estimates that there are approximately 163 million freelancers' profiles registered on online labour platforms in the world [3] with a 39% increase in overall freelancer sign-ups, and a 63% increase in the period 2020-2021 in job categories once considered 'established'[4]. These numbers, however, may be larger since remote work is often a source of supplementary income that online workers and platform companies may not report and labour force surveys may not be able to capture. As a matter of fact, the web abounds with statistics on the rise in freelancing. According to the OECD's annual report on jobs and employment in its member countries, nearly 40% of employees worked online during the pandemic [5] with a yearly growth

rate of over 10% according to the Online Labour Index[1]. Huge numbers have also been recorded in the USA with an increase of 13 million workers in freelance jobs according to Statista, which foresees a marketplace for 86.5 million freelancers in the United States in 2027, and their making up 50.9% of the total U.S. workforce in 2027[6].

Despite the scope of this phenomenon which renowned economists have defined "telemigration"[7], university courses and career services have generally given little attention to preparing students for freelance job-hunting and, with the exception of few Business Administration masters' programs, they have failed to integrate activities that can develop entrepreneurial, digital and soft skills needed to succeed as independent workers[2] and that can illustrate the risks connected to (solo) self-employment and extra-organizational career path.

Freelancers do not work full time for a single employer: they usually serve multiple clients at the same time, working remotely or in co-working spaces and earning money on a per-task or per-job basis. Freelancing offers several advantages both to freelancers and their contractors, which are the main motivations for choosing it. It grants independence and flexibility to the freelancer, giving them, at least in principle, the ability to choose when to work, where and for whom, which lures into it not only freelances "by choice" but also attracts those who are restricted in their access to any permanent job opportunities because of living in rural and remote areas or having disabilities or chronic illnesses. It also guarantees companies' access to specific skills and talent when needed, even in moments of peak activity.

However, the potential availability for a contractor of a global talent pool also has side effects such as the risk of a decrease in pay, due to excess supply, and blurred boundaries between amateurism and professionalism, subordination and autonomy, job security and informal work. This is why information about the pros and cons of becoming a freelancer is much needed by college students and recent graduates.

2 THE PROJECT

Digital Freelancing for Higher Education students and Recent Graduates (hereinafter DIFREE) is an EU funded initiative, under the Erasmus plus program (KA220-HED-A64B84B2), lasting three years (2022-2025), which aims to provide undergraduates and recent graduates with useful tools and information for dealing successfully with the world of self-employment, which is becoming increasingly digital, even when conducted in hybrid modality, and more and more reliant on web-based labor platforms.

The project involves four University institutions - University of Tuscia in Viterbo, Italy; Universidad de Cadiz in Spain, Panteion University in Greece, the Accounting and Business School of Polytechnic Institute of Porto in Portugal, and an Italian Research and Study Center, CRS Laghi in Milan, which is a spin-off of the Carolina Albasio University of Castellanza in Italy.

Prompted by a survey[3] conducted by the Consortium members on target students and recent graduates about their interest in starting a freelancing career, which revealed that the interviewees had never been shown the possibility of such an option during University job orientation and training programs, the project aims to fill this information gap by creating a manual that provides information on freelancing professions that require digital skills, an open-source educational material, such as a collector of digital CV and E-portfolio models, and physical and virtual places where freelancers-to be can find a meeting place to share and produce knowledge. Hence, it mainly targets HE students and recent graduates who might be attracted by job relationships that are not based on direct employment contracts, by coworking, and portfolio careers where flexibility, creativity and digitalization are core competencies. It also targets teachers and instructors, who might help develop these competences, and firms, companies and public institutions resorting to freelance work, which might find in the virtual hubs (one of the expected outputs of the project) a place where they can instantly match supply and demand.

[1] The Online Labor Index (OLI) was launched in 2016 to measure the global utilization of online freelance work at scale by tracking the number of projects and tasks posted on major English-language platforms. Since 2020, it has also been tracking labor supply on Spanish and Russian platforms. It categorizes online labor into six different occupations: clerical and data entry, professional services, software development and technology, creative and multimedia, sales and marketing support, and writing and translation. Data, downloadable from the site www.onlinelabourobservatory.org, reveal that countries like India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan are popular digital outsourcing locations because of their workforces' strong English language and tech skills, and 43% of all freelancers' project demand stems from the field of software development and technology.

[2] Only recently have prestigious universities started offering single courses on the topic, which can be taken within and outside a degree program. Harvard University, for example, has a four-week online course on Entrepreurship essentials, a four-course certificate on Innovation and Entrepreurship and a three-year course program at the Harvard Business School. MIT has an Entrepreneurship Development Program. UCL offers a free three-hour workshop on Entrepreneurial skills, and a free Entrepreneurial training program (SPERO) specifically designed for MRes, doctoral students and early career researchers. A few more courses can be found on MOOC providers such as Coursera.

[3] The survey is available at the link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AZ4vfbXudXmXUCg-SFqEDAwGcov83aRgUNGnHuRusy8/edit?ts=636cce63. If you are a student or teach students, please take a moment to fill it out or distribute it.

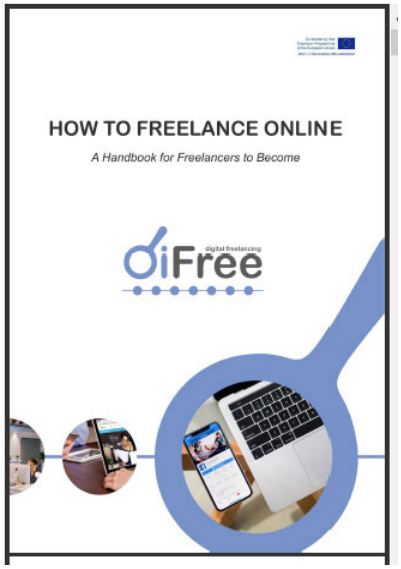


Figure 1. Toolbox: How to Freelance Online.

3 EXPECTED RESULTS

More specifically, DIFREE's goals are a number of tangible outputs, some of which have already been completed or are in production:

- A multilingual E-book "How to freelance online'' with practical information about the skills and tools necessary to pursue a career as a digital freelancer. It can be useful to students, graduates and teachers who want to provide their students with relevant information on the topic (Fig. 1).
- An OER (Open Educational resource) in the form of a multilingual repository of freely downloadable cvs/Resumes/ Portfolios and Video-cvs.
- A mentorship program to support aspiring freelancers. (Fig 2)
- A platform for self-evaluation and self-vocational professional assessment (Fig 3)
- Freelancer hubs - virtual and physical places where aspiring/young freelancers can find accurate and reliable information on freelancing jobs, opportunities for life-long training, upskilling, and reskilling also in transversal competencies and soft skills.
- An open-source Transferability Manual, describing and commenting on the project outcomes, which will help educational institutions include activities to develop digital and entrepreneurial skills in their teaching curriculum.



Figure 2. Freelancers' mentorship program.

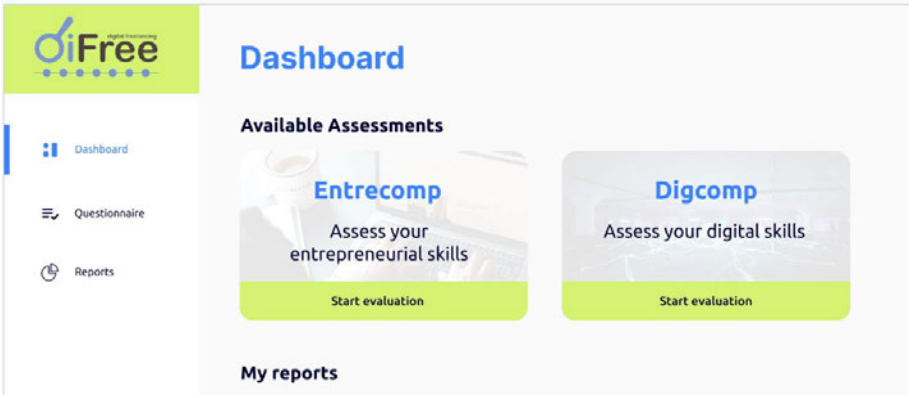


Figure 3. A self-assessment tool.

3.1 Necessary Steps for Building a CV/Résumé Repository.

One of the most challenging outputs of the DIFREE project is the creation of a repository of "easily accessible, interactive, modifiable CV templates and resume models suitable to entry-level positions in different sectors of the freelance job market"[4].

A repository or digital library or digital collection is an online database in which digital objects, which can include images, audios, videos, text-based documents, or other digital media formats (and related metadata), are stored together with basic functions, relating mainly (but not only) to their insertion, organization, management, and retrieval both by individual users and via application programming interfaces. The creation of an open access repository of multilingual digital CVs/Resumes/E-portfolio templates, with reusable models for students, graduates and young professionals who might want to apply to freelance jobs, has raised several operational questions concerning both the structure and the content of the DIFREE Repository. As regards its physical configuration, this digital archive poses several problems: the need to combine the required feature of accessibility for the general public with its being an institutional repository permanently hosted by the coordinating partner university, UNITUS; the choice of a virtual space for the storage of its data (a university server or a cloud); the definition of its architecture with appropriate graphic interface and search functions, which should comply with the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) reference model[5] and the FAIR principle of data objects (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) while guaranteeing their sustainability (or stewardship) [7]. As to its contents, a survey of similar collectors available on the web and a quick assessment of online job providers, freelance community platforms and Internet numerous guidelines on how to write effective job applications have convinced the project coordinator of the need to add video-CVs to the collection, since they seem to be preferred by younger generations keen on media management, and to provide simplified CV/Resume models for professions that can be performed online by non-native English language speakers. Compliance with the TRUST (Transparency, Responsibility, User focus, Sustainability and Technology) principle requirement for digital repositories [7] and respect for the copyrights of Internet free samples used as source models have required adaptation, editing and/or complete rewriting of the collected samples.

3.2 An Overview of Internet Writing Websites and of the DIFREE Repository.

Most freelance job websites, whether they are meant for recruiters or for job seekers, offer career advice and guidelines on how to write an effective CV. They also show models of job descriptions, cover letters and resumes that, however, are only customizable at a cost or after payment of a monthly subscription to their site. *Jobvertise*, for example, offers job hunting advice, allows the upload of one's resume after registering to the site and illustrates how to write a follow-up letter, but the option "Feature your CV" comes at a price. *Flexjobs* allows registered users to receive via email a series of guides, among which: a *Guide*

[4] DIFREE Grant proposal, p. 59. On the same page, the repository is also illustrated as a collector of "portfolios", and of "a list of glossaries usable for the description of key personality traits, qualifications, work experiences, voluntary and leisure time activities to help applicants create attractive and functional CVs/resumes". The rationale for these requirements is to provide students and recent graduates with useful tools to cope with a job market where new instruments for personal branding, such as interactive and multimedia CVs, are on the rise.

[5] The model provides recommendations on setting up archives ensuring long-term preservation of and access to information (in particular, digital information). Cfr. Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems. *Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS). Recommended Practice* CCSDS 650.0-M-2. Magenta Book, 2012. Retrieved from https://public.ccsds.org/Pubs/650x0m2.pdf. Also quoted in [8].

to resume, cover letter and interview, and a *Complete Guide to find remote work*. It also provides resume, cover and follow-up letter models, which are freely downloadable, but the feature "Resume review" is available at a cost. *Template.net* offers several customizable portfolio models for a 2euro monthly subscription; *My perfect resume* declares providing a collection of more than 250 models of cover letters, more than 800 resumes and more than 300 CV templates. It has an integrated CV builder (a format with slots to choose and fill in) but, once the user has created his/her own document inserting personal information in the slots, it can be downloaded only after subscribing to the site. Other websites offer pre-generated phrases and keywords based on the type of job chosen among possible templates (Fig. 4), but once the model has been filled in to fit the user's profile, it can be downloaded after paying a subscription or it can be only partly downloaded (usually only one page with a pre-defined layout). The rest is available upon subscription (Fig. 5).

As for Europass, a multilingual set of digital tools and information made available by the EU at the site https://europa.eu/europass/en to help jobs seekers manage their learning and career, among which a digital library with Diploma Supplement examples, European Certificates Supplement and Europass Mobility templates, and interactive templates to create an online CV, it must be said that these need to be filled with personal information inserted (and stored) online, and therefore retrievable for future uses to create different or updated versions of the Europass CV; however, no samples or completed models are available as source of inspiration.

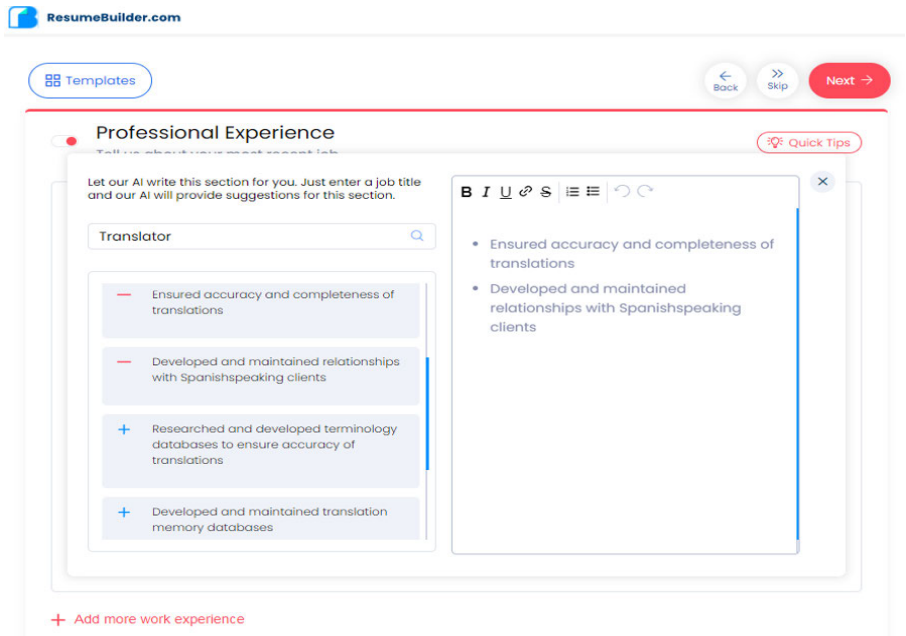


Figure 4. An example of AI guided assistance in writing a Translator's CV.

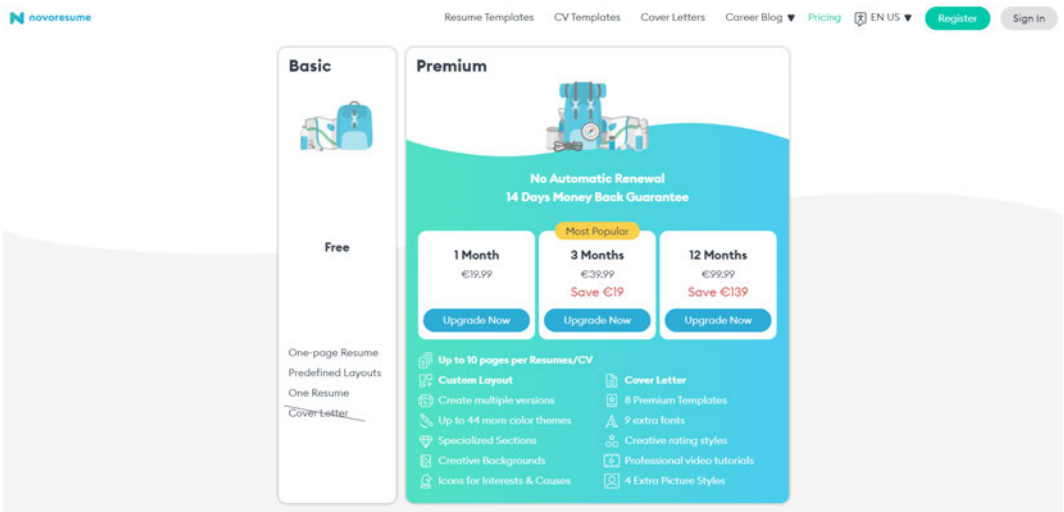


Figure 5. An example of an online Resume Builder with subscription options.

A common feature of the models available online is the complexity of the information provided, with lists of qualifications and work experiences that can suit a mid-career if not a senior professional rather than a young person with limited or no work experience. They could hardly be used by an undergraduate student or a recent graduate who lives in a poor or rural area with limited job opportunities or in a country where students' jobs are not common or only available in the form of an internship or training program during the last year of study or more frequently after graduation. As to the portfolio models available online, when freely downloadable, they are usually templates filled with random pictures or images displaying accomplished projects, which leaves no space for the insertion of additional personal information unless the user has the graphic skills and the necessary software, and which, again, may be not suitable for a young graduate who has scant or no work experience. When a text is inserted in the portfolio free model, it is generally a placeholder text (lorem ipsum), without any instruction on what to insert (Fig. 6).

That is why the creation of the DIFREE repository has required intensive adaptation and linguistic simplification of the sources available. A non-native English speaker, even if fluent, would find it difficult to adjust the online samples to make the most of his/her Mc(office)jobs. Unless trained in CV writing and in the discourse practices upon which that specific profession is based, s/he would hardly have the necessary language skills to replace the abundant qualifications of the model in Fig. 7 with an appropriate and correct description of his/her educational background and entry-level work experiences.

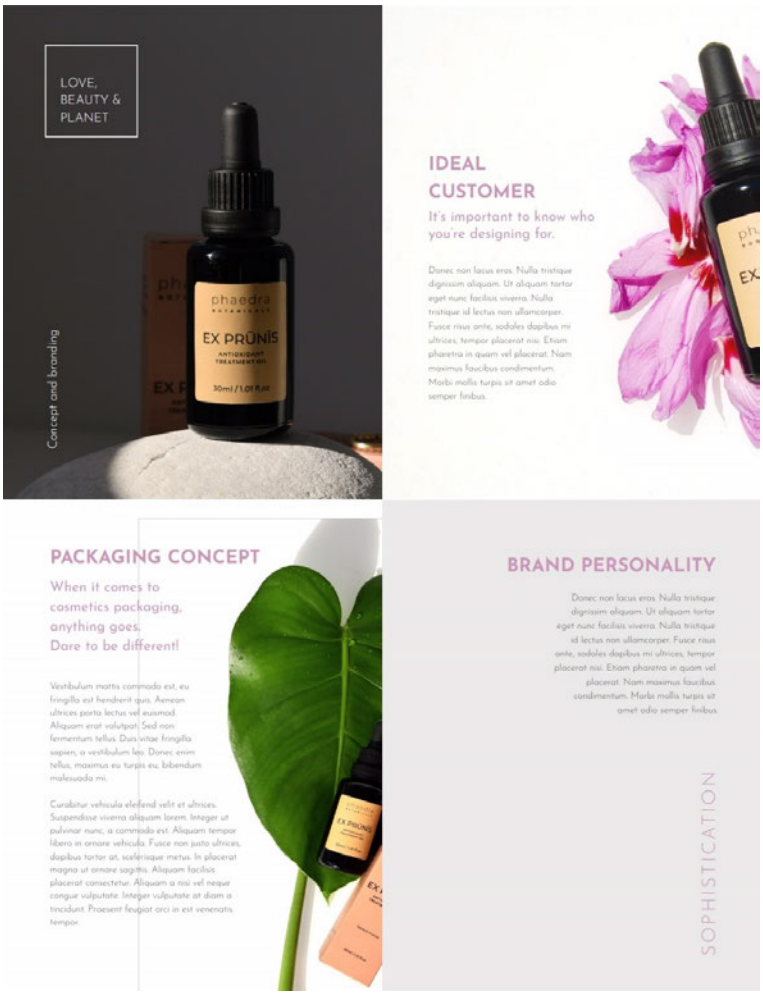
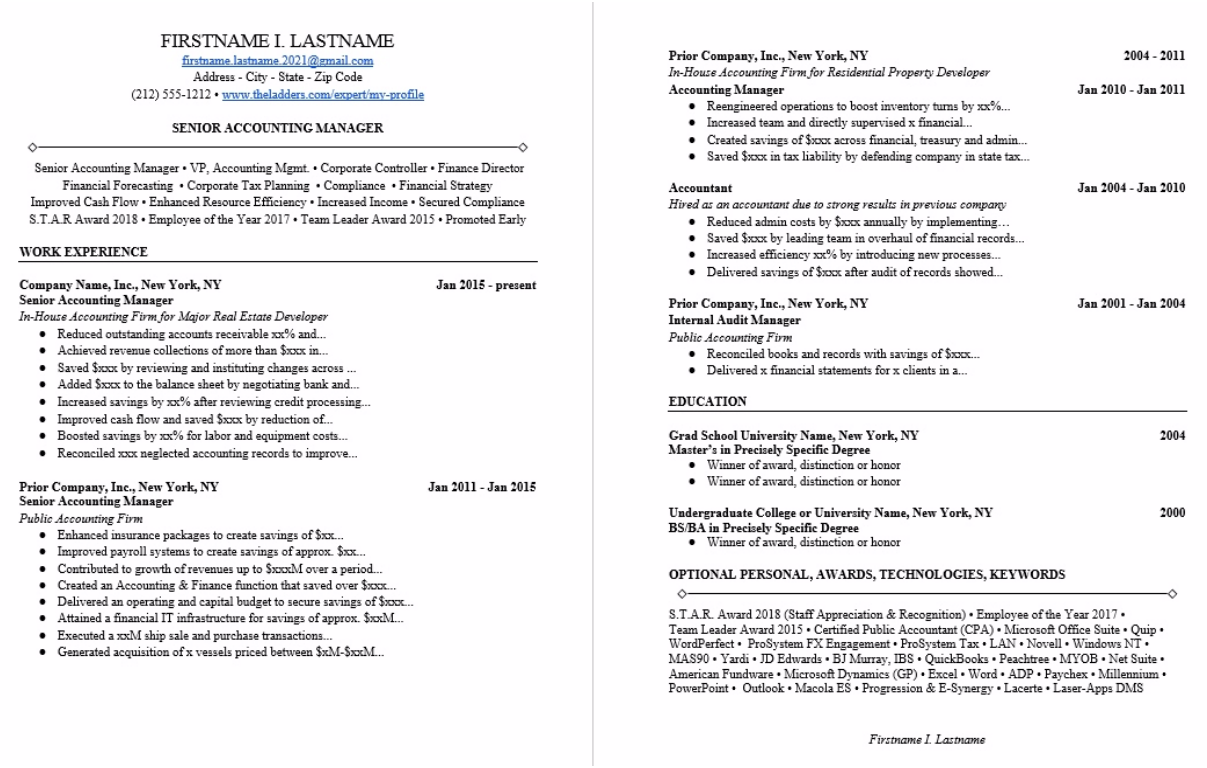


Figure 6. Beauty products online seller's portfolio template from Flipsnack.com

The DIFREE Repository is not completed yet. At the moment, it comprises 48 resume samples (like the one illustrated in Fig. 8) with 4 models for different levels of professionalism (from entry level to mid-career experiences) for 12 jobs that can be done remotely (accountant, architect, copywriter, editor, graphic designer, IT specialist, journalist, photographer, psychologist, teacher, translator, virtual assistant), a vocabulary list with phrases describing appropriate skills, competences and qualifications for each of the selected professions[6], 22 portfolio templates, which will soon match the number of the CVs, and 41 video-CVs (to be increased to match the professions listed). The textual documents will also be provided in a translated version in the languages of the project partners (Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish) and made available in the form of a digital library hosted on the coordinating University Job Placement webpage and linked to the DIFREE Project site (https://www.DIFREE-project.it/) so as to be permanently accessible to the general public and outlive the conclusion of the project. Moreover, in order to provide users with a learning experience not limited to the re-use of ready-made samples, it will also offer access for the duration of the project to interactive Moodle reading and guided writing exercises related to CV/Resume creation, soft and hard skills definitions and descriptions of DigCom, EntreCom and the European Qualification Framework (EQF)[7]. This will help the DIFREE Consortium reach the expected results of increasing HE students' and graduates' self-awareness in pursuing a digital freelancer career and assuring the uniformity and comparability of CVs, Resumes or Portfolios used to land a job in the European labour market.



FIRSTNAME I. LASTNAME
firstname.lastname.2021@gmail.com
Address - City - State - Zip Code
(212) 555-1212 • www.theladders.com/expert/my-profile

SENIOR ACCOUNTING MANAGER

Senior Accounting Manager • VP, Accounting Mgmt. • Corporate Controller • Finance Director
Financial Forecasting • Corporate Tax Planning • Compliance • Financial Strategy
Improved Cash Flow • Enhanced Resource Efficiency • Increased Income • Secured Compliance
S.T.A.R Award 2018 • Employee of the Year 2017 • Team Leader Award 2015 • Promoted Early

WORK EXPERIENCE

Company Name, Inc., New York, NY — **Jan 2015 - present**
Senior Accounting Manager
In-House Accounting Firm for Major Real Estate Developer
- Reduced outstanding accounts receivable xx% and...
- Achieved revenue collections of more than $xxx in...
- Saved $xxx by reviewing and instituting changes across ...
- Added $xxx to the balance sheet by negotiating bank and...
- Increased savings by xx% after reviewing credit processing...
- Improved cash flow and saved $xxx by reduction of...
- Boosted savings by xx% for labor and equipment costs...
- Reconciled xxx neglected accounting records to improve...

Prior Company, Inc., New York, NY — **Jan 2011 - Jan 2015**
Senior Accounting Manager
Public Accounting Firm
- Enhanced insurance packages to create savings of $xx...
- Improved payroll systems to create savings of approx. $xx...
- Contributed to growth of revenues up to $xxxM over a period...
- Created an Accounting & Finance function that saved over $xxx...
- Delivered an operating and capital budget to secure savings of $xxx...
- Attained a financial IT infrastructure for savings of approx. $xxM...
- Executed a xxM ship sale and purchase transactions...
- Generated acquisition of x vessels priced between $xM-$xxM...

Prior Company, Inc., New York, NY — **2004 - 2011**
In-House Accounting Firm for Residential Property Developer
Accounting Manager — **Jan 2010 - Jan 2011**
- Reengineered operations to boost inventory turns by xx%...
- Increased team and directly supervised x financial...
- Created savings of $xxx across financial, treasury and admin...
- Saved $xxx in tax liability by defending company in state tax...

Accountant — **Jan 2004 - Jan 2010**
Hired as an accountant due to strong results in previous company
- Reduced admin costs by $xxx annually by implementing…
- Saved $xxx by leading team in overhaul of financial records...
- Increased efficiency xx% by introducing new processes...
- Delivered savings of $xxx after audit of records showed...

Prior Company, Inc., New York, NY — **Jan 2001 - Jan 2004**
Internal Audit Manager
Public Accounting Firm
- Reconciled books and records with savings of $xxx...
- Delivered x financial statements for x clients in a...

EDUCATION

Grad School University Name, New York, NY — **2004**
Master's in Precisely Specific Degree
- Winner of award, distinction or honor
- Winner of award, distinction or honor

Undergraduate College or University Name, New York, NY — **2000**
BS/BA in Precisely Specific Degree
- Winner of award, distinction or honor

OPTIONAL PERSONAL, AWARDS, TECHNOLOGIES, KEYWORDS

S.T.A.R. Award 2018 (Staff Appreciation & Recognition) • Employee of the Year 2017 • Team Leader Award 2015 • Certified Public Accountant (CPA) • Microsoft Office Suite • Quip • WordPerfect • ProSystem FX Engagement • ProSystem Tax • LAN • Novell • Windows NT • MAS90 • Yardi • JD Edwards • BJ Murray, IBS • QuickBooks • Peachtree • MYOB • Net Suite • American Fundware • Microsoft Dynamics (GP) • Excel • Word • ADP • Paychex • Millennium • PowerPoint • Outlook • Macola ES • Progression & E-Synergy • Lacerte • Laser-Apps DMS

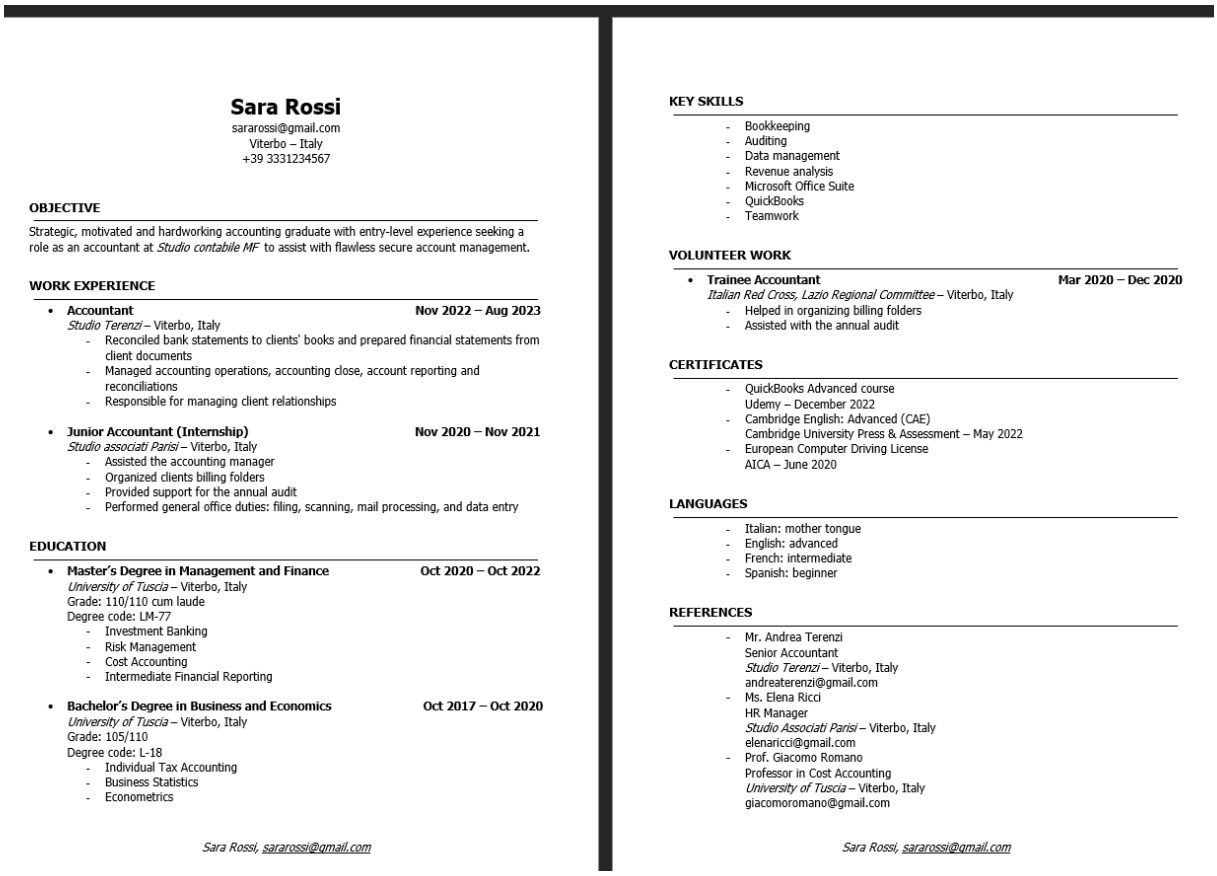
Firstname I. Lastname

Figure 7. A complex online CV model.

[6] The vocabulary and phraseology lists have been compiled by taking into account ESCO, the multilingual classifications of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (it works as a dictionary providing descriptions of 3008 occupations and 13.890 skills. For more info see https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/about-esco/what-esco) and the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, revised fourth edition, as supplied electronically by the US Dept. of Labor at the site https://occupationalinfo.org/

[7] DigComp is The European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission in 2013, then updated to DigComp 2.0 in 2016, to serve as a reference for the identification and development of the key areas of digital competence in Europe and its Member States. Cfr. [9]. EntreComp is The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, launched in 2016 as part of the New Skills Agenda for Europe, describes entrepreneurship as a lifelong learning competence, identifying its elements and establishing a common reference for initiatives dealing with its development.

The EQF, set up in 2008 and later revised in 2017, is an 8-level, learning outcomes-based framework for all types of qualifications that serves as a reference and translation tool for EU member states' different national qualifications to allow their transparency comparability, and portability. For more info see the publications available at the site https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/european-qualifications-framework-eqf#group-downloads.



Sara Rossi
sararossi@gmail.com
Viterbo – Italy
+39 3331234567

OBJECTIVE

Strategic, motivated and hardworking accounting graduate with entry-level experience seeking a role as an accountant at *Studio contabile MF* to assist with flawless secure account management.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- **Accountant** **Nov 2022 – Aug 2023**
  Studio Terenzi – Viterbo, Italy
  - Reconciled bank statements to clients' books and prepared financial statements from client documents
  - Managed accounting operations, accounting close, account reporting and reconciliations
  - Responsible for managing client relationships
- **Junior Accountant (Internship)** **Nov 2020 – Nov 2021**
  Studio associati Parisi – Viterbo, Italy
  - Assisted the accounting manager
  - Organized clients billing folders
  - Provided support for the annual audit
  - Performed general office duties: filing, scanning, mail processing, and data entry

EDUCATION

- **Master's Degree in Management and Finance** **Oct 2020 – Oct 2022**
  University of Tuscia – Viterbo, Italy
  Grade: 110/110 cum laude
  Degree code: LM-77
  - Investment Banking
  - Risk Management
  - Cost Accounting
  - Intermediate Financial Reporting
- **Bachelor's Degree in Business and Economics** **Oct 2017 – Oct 2020**
  University of Tuscia – Viterbo, Italy
  Grade: 105/110
  Degree code: L-18
  - Individual Tax Accounting
  - Business Statistics
  - Econometrics

Sara Rossi, sararossi@gmail.com

KEY SKILLS

- Bookkeeping
- Auditing
- Data management
- Revenue analysis
- Microsoft Office Suite
- QuickBooks
- Teamwork

VOLUNTEER WORK

- **Trainee Accountant** **Mar 2020 – Dec 2020**
  Italian Red Cross, Lazio Regional Committee – Viterbo, Italy
  - Helped in organizing billing folders
  - Assisted with the annual audit

CERTIFICATES

- QuickBooks Advanced course
  Udemy – December 2022
- Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE)
  Cambridge University Press & Assessment – May 2022
- European Computer Driving License
  AICA – June 2020

LANGUAGES

- Italian: mother tongue
- English: advanced
- French: intermediate
- Spanish: beginner

REFERENCES

- Mr. Andrea Terenzi
  Senior Accountant
  Studio Terenzi – Viterbo, Italy
  andreaterenzi@gmail.com
- Ms. Elena Ricci
  HR Manager
  Studio Associati Parisi – Viterbo, Italy
  elenaricci@gmail.com
- Prof. Giacomo Romano
  Professor in Cost Accounting
  University of Tuscia – Viterbo, Italy
  giacomoromano@gmail.com

Sara Rossi, sararossi@gmail.com

Figure 8. A simplified CV.

4 CONCLUSIONS

DIFREE is an ambitious project that aims to disseminate information about self-employment and digital freelance job opportunities while developing knowledge and skills relevant to a changing labour market characterized on the one side by a shrinking workforce, due to aging and declining birth rates, and on the other by a continuous rise in flexible, remote, app-mediated, platform-facilitated, on-demand work. The activities geared towards the realization of the expected project results take into account all the competences envisaged in the EU frameworks as lifelong competences except for CEFR, the Common European Framework of Reference for language skills. Besides providing a proficiency level scale, self-assessment grids and spoken performance qualitative aspect definitions, CEFR clearly indicates sociolinguistic competence and appropriateness and pragmatic competence as being part of the communicative language competences[8], with the former being an important component of intercultural communication competence. These contribute to develop awareness of the existence of a professional community with shared knowledge and values, culturally-influenced discoursal conventions and specific peer-to-peer and superior-subordinate communication modalities whose adoption can help an aspiring member of the community to negotiate his/her professional identity [10]. In a labour market where speaking a foreign language (and above all English as a *lingua franca*) is a necessary skill to stand out and grab recruiters' attention, and where (freelance) job offers are increasingly advertised internationally, knowing the specialized vocabulary, textual genres and discursive practices of the professional community to which the job seeker aspires to belong is crucial. It needs to be displayed in the CV, resume, portfolio, and any other personal branding tool the applicant intends to use. The DIFREE Repository has been designed to help users achieve such a goal.

[8] For an overview of the levels, descriptors and updates see the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2020, available at www.coe.int/lang-cefr.

REFERENCES

[1] Y. B. Altun, “Pandemic fuels global growth of entrepreneurship and startup frenzy”, Forbes, 9 April 2021. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/04/09/pandemic-fuels-global-growth-of-entrepreneurship-and-startup-frenzy/

[2] J. Tai, “Startup surge: pandemic causes new businesses to double”, Forbes, 20 January 2022. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2021/01/20/startup-surge-pandemic-causes-new-businesses-to-double/

[3] O. Kässi, V. Lehdonvirta and F. Stephany, “How many online workers are there in the world? A data-driven assessment”. Open Research Europe, 2021, vol. 1, no. 53. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.13639.3

[4] Malt & BCB, Freelancing in Europe 2022. Focus on France, Spain and Germany. Retrieved from http://landing.malt.com/freelancing-in-europe-en.

[5] OECD, OECD Employment Outlook 2020: Worker Security and the COVID-19 Crisis, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1787/1686c758-en.

[6] Statista. Numbers of freelancers in the U.S. 2017-2028. 20 September 2022. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/921593/gig-economy-number-of-freelancers-us.

[7] R. Baldwin and J. I. Dingel, “Telemigration and development: On the offshorability of teleworkable jobs”. *NBER Working Paper No. 29387* October 2021 JEL No. F1, J2.

[8] D. Lin, “The TRUST principle for digital repositories”, Scientific Data, 2020, vol.7, no.144, 2020. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-020-0486-7.

[9] R. Vuorikari, Y. Punie, S. Carretero Gomez and G. Van den Brande, *DigComp 2.0: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens. Update Phase 1: The Conceptual Reference Model*. Luxembourg Publication Office of the European Union, 2016. doi:10.2791/11517.

[10] C. Orna-Montesinos, *Constructing Professional Discourse: A Multiperspective Approach to Domain-Specific Discourses*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.