

Become journalist of the year with a winning portfolio and earn a \$1000 scholarship

Matthew Smith, journalism teacher at Fond du lac high school, spoke at the 2023 NEWSPA conference to high school students from Northeast, Wisconsin about what it takes to craft the perfect, winning portfolio.

Smith, a former journalist, described a portfolio as a journalist's way of telling a story about themselves. Each year the Wisconsin Journalism Education Association holds a contest to determine the state's high school journalist of the year based on portfolios that the students submit. The judges consider the layout of the portfolio, the content within it, and its overall aesthetic.

Smith said that a portfolio is a journalist's best practice for selling themselves, “Your portfolio should be a reflection on what you’ve learned and who you are” ... “You should only add things that will make your story stronger.”

The contest gets students to create something that is relevant to them. A portfolio is something these students can use in future instances to show people who they are and what they're capable of doing.

It's important that students cast a wide net when they consider what to include in their portfolio. A worthwhile portfolio will have many different categories of strong work examples.

“The judges look for diverse and descriptive portfolios,” Smith said, “You can even use screenshots or photos of interactions and decisions you’ve made when necessary”

Smith said there are few rules in creating a portfolio. The layout of the portfolio should not mimic that of other students and should be true to you and your life.

“Make it as concise or overly-detailed as you want,” Smith said, “It's about telling your story, so don't worry about other people's stories.”