

A more professional recruitment process with structured CV data?

Why WebCruiter advises against the use of unstructured CV data



A crossroads for employers and technology providers

In recent years, employers have had to consider an apparently banal question: should we ask job seekers to register all relevant CV data in our database, or should we just request a CV as an attached file?

Many employers that are implementing a recruitment solution for the first time choose the second solution. Why ask applicants to spend their time registering CV data when it is easier for them just to load an attached file?

In contrast, experienced users of recruitment solutions ask candidates to register CV data in their CV database. Why?

What is structured CV data?

Structured data is data that lies in fixed fields in a register or in a file. Spreadsheets and databases are examples of structured data. Even if XML files do not lie in a fixed field as in traditional databases, they are still structured because the data can be identified using "tags".

With structured CV data, computers that exchange or search data can identify which data they are processing:

- Is "12.12.1990" in a CV a date of birth, the date of starting a university course, or the date of starting the current job?
- Is "C++" (a programming language) in a CV part of an academic degree, work experience, an element of the current position, a focus area of a company the candidate has worked for, or the subject of a project the candidate is involved in?

On the other hand, unstructured data is data that does not lie in fixed fields, and that cannot be identified using tags, such as free text in an e-mail, or in Word or PDF documents.

This means that if you search for the "accounting" competence, for example, the competence can be found as a hobby, "education", "interest", or even "experience", if the candidate handled the accounting for the school newspaper.

A CV submitted as an attachment to a job application typically only contains unstructured data.

In brief

- New technology (databases, Internet and XML) means that the structured CV is of greater value than the traditional unstructured CV (for example a CV as an attached file), for both employer and candidate.
- With solutions that support structured CV data employers can:
 - Leverage the value of the company's CV database;
 - Make better selection decisions
 - Facilitate cooperation on selection;
 - Find and compare candidates faster and more easily;
 - Avoid problems with attached files, including the security problem;
 - Work with strategic recruiting;
 - Increase internal mobility
 - Easily transfer CV-data to internal solutions such as competency, onboarding, payroll, archiving, etc.
- With solutions that support structured CV data job seekers can:
 - Efficiently reuse CV data;
 - Be contacted about other relevant positions;
 - Be assessed correctly, with a good level of comparability;
 - Avoid having to wait a long time for a response;
 - Maintain just one single CV as an employee;
 - Make use of guidelines for creating a CV.
- Structured CV data therefore makes it easier for both employers and candidates to act professionally in meeting today's requirements of a professional recruitment process.
- Unstructured CV data quickly becomes time-consuming and imprecise. Structured CV data therefore stands for the future, and marks a crossroads for employers and technology providers.

1482 THE FIRST CV



DA VINCI WROTE HIS CV WITH PEN AND INK. THIS PRACTICE CONTINUED FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS.

1960 THE TYPEWRITER

THE FIRST EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT - USING CARBON COPIES.



1980 THE COMPUTER



CV IN WORDPERFECT, PRINTED, AND FOR BEST EFFECT SENT BY TELEFAX.

1990 E-MAIL

THE INTERNET CHANGES EVERYTHING. CVS ARE SENT AS E-MAIL ATTACHMENTS.



2000 ON-LINE FORMS



COMPLETE THE FORM. REPEAT.

2010 REUSE

TOWARDS HR-XML BASED CV DATA EXCHANGE.



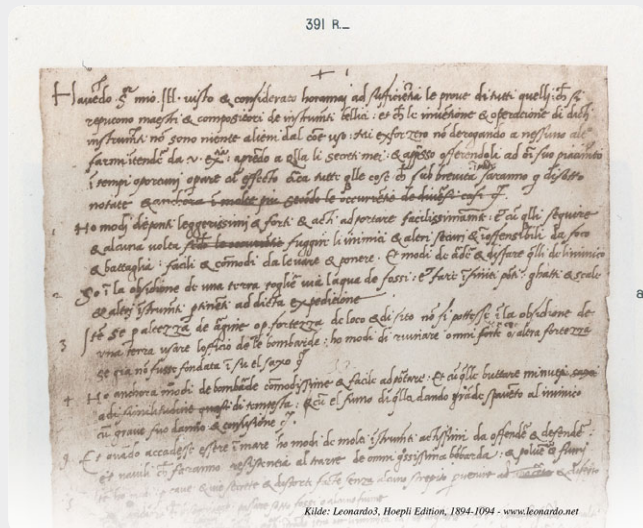
2012 SIMPLICITY



CANDIDATES EXPECT SIMPLICITY THROUGH DESIGN.

The CV in a historical perspective

Leonardo Da Vinci is known for writing what can be called the first CV, in 1482. Da Vinci's CV is a general summary of what he can do for a future employer - and the list is long!



The CV as we know it today did not appear until after the First World War, and after the Second World War the CV became a normal element of the recruitment process. The CV was normally typed out and sent in as a letter or delivered by hand.



In the 1980s it became common to use a PC word-processing program such as WordPerfect, and then print out the CV. Towards the end of the 1980s, CVs could also be sent by telefax.

Then came the database ...

In the 1980s it also became common to use database technology to manage customers and products, as well as candidates and their applications. For obvious reasons, isolated databases to which the recruiter had to enter data manually were of limited value.



... the Internet...

The Internet appeared in the early 1990s, and it gradually became possible to ask candidates to apply online. This was a giant leap for employers — but a challenge and a source of frustration for candidates, who had to spend a lot of time and effort on repeated registration and updating of CV data in the databases of both commercial job portals and different employers.

It also became common to upload a CV or submit it as an attachment (often a Microsoft Word or PDF file) by e-mail.

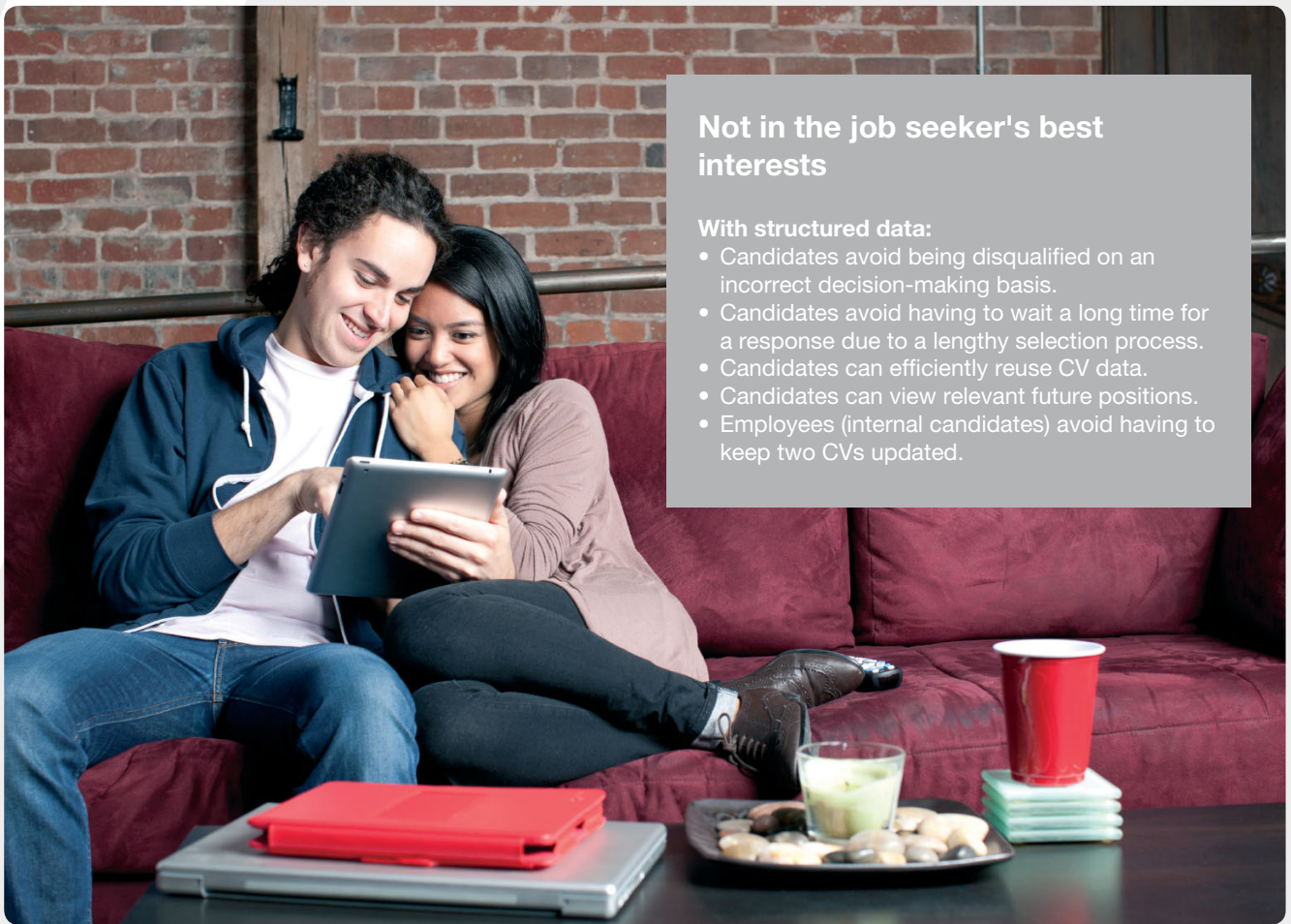
This created a dilemma for employers and technology providers: should they insist on detailed CV data and impose an extra task on the candidate — or accept a CV as an e-mail attachment, or in web-based job search solutions as part of the registration process, and hereby accept reduced efficiency and quality in the selection process?

... and now XML

The XML standard was born in 1998. The XML standard is a language that enables computers to communicate with each other via the Internet. By structuring and marking relevant fields, the XML standard enables a computer to know what another computer is saying, so they can exchange data without any people involved in the transaction.

The HR-XML Consortium emerged before the new millennium. Their HR-XML CV standard made it possible for computers to exchange CV data without involving anyone in the transaction.

XML made it theoretically possible for a candidate to register her CV at one place, and only once — and then let computers do the job of sharing this information correctly with others.



Not in the job seeker's best interests

With structured data:

- Candidates avoid being disqualified on an incorrect decision-making basis.
- Candidates avoid having to wait a long time for a response due to a lengthy selection process.
- Candidates can efficiently reuse CV data.
- Candidates can view relevant future positions.
- Employees (internal candidates) avoid having to keep two CVs updated.

The first institution to use the HR XML CV standard was the European Union (CEDEFOP), which in 2004 launched the Europass CV – a standard CV format based on the HR XML CV standard.

So far, a number of CV formats based on the HR-XML standard have appeared:

- Europass CV
- German Standard CV
- Portable CV

The many different types of CV may seem confusing, but the important aspect is that they all save time for the candidate by allowing technology providers that work with CV data to automate the work of porting CV data between their many different systems.

There are also other XML CVs that are not based on the HR-XML standard, including LinkedIn CV. These do not support the HR XML CV standard, but instead the alternative hResume standard, for example. They have an application interface that can communicate key data to providers that work with the HR XML standard.

Two important trends have thus emerged during the last decades:

- XML enables computers to exchange CV data without requiring people to repeatedly spend time or energy on this.
- XML-based standards compete to make it more and more simple for technology providers to allow computers to communicate with each other.

These emerging trends make more and more requirements of technology providers, and job seekers face an easier future.

Within a short time candidates will find that it is customary to:

- Transfer structured CV data from one solution to another with just one click.
- Update several CV profiles across several different technological solutions.

This opens up a number of new opportunities:

- With CV profiles accessible across several recruitment solutions, candidates can literally apply for a job with just one click of the mouse.
- This is especially relevant for mobile device users.

There is no doubt that the future lies in structured CV data. But is it acceptable for employers and technology providers to accept unstructured CV data today?

The future with just one click

Job seekers require the same focus on user experience, simplicity and efficiency as other users of electronic solutions. Not least because the largest segment of active job seekers, young graduates, will always make the highest demands of digital communication.

Job seekers want to stay updated on a company by following it on Twitter or LinkedIn — with just one click. They expect to be able to buy a Blu-Ray from Amazon — with just one click. To pay for Wi-Fi access at the airport with Skype Credits — and just one click. To start a new application by logging in via Facebook — with just one click. To set up a video call with a friend in Australia with Facetime — and just one click. To process an e-invoice — with just one click.

So there is no reason that applying for a job should take more than one click — although the need to type in an application text or adjust the CV can, and should, sometimes make the process more time-consuming.

One-click processes are possible because the service providers in the background individually, or together with others, decide to make things simple for the end-user. This is becoming a fact of life for the recruitment process — leaving no room for unstructured data.



Why structured data?

Structured CV data contributes to professional and effective recruitment and selection

- Structured CV data makes it possible to leverage the value of the company's CV database.
 - Precise search criteria make it easier to search for relevant candidates.
 - This makes it possible to leverage the value of open applications... and to revisit candidates from previous processes.
 - It is also possible to monitor for relevant notifications to the recruiter/line manager when relevant CVs are registered.
 - Searches are both faster and more precise.
- Structured CV data makes it easier to compare candidates.
 - It is possible to scroll between comparable CV data.
 - The recruiter/line manager does not have to locate, open/close, print and assess attached CV data.
 - Greater comparability leads to a higher quality of decision-making.
 - With structured CV data applicants are often assessed more correctly, and with focus on relevant skills and expertise/competence in accordance with the requirements specified, and to a lesser extent on the basis of CV design and presentation. CVs can be compared smoothly and quickly.
- Structured CV data can enable employers to avoid discrimination by separating personal data from CV data.
- Structured CV data makes it easier to cooperate on selecting the right candidate.
 - Employers do not have to distribute information, entailing numerous printouts and comments/assessments on a number of isolated documents.
- With structured CV data, employers avoid a number of problems with attachments.
 - Employers receive CVs in several different formats (Word, PDF, HTML, ZIP, etc.) and must be able to open and process these efficiently.
 - These formats often represent a security challenge by running macros, scripts and executable files on the employees' computers.
- Structured CV data makes it easier to take a strategic approach to recruitment.
 - It is possible to analyse available candidates. Based on the available candidate pool, a precise recruitment requirement can be identified as the basis for the recruitment plan.
 - Structured data makes it possible to identify candidate segments – and thereby also target communication at the respective segments.
 - The candidate pool can also be analysed in terms of its breakdown by age, background, field and level of education, geography, and so on.

- Structured CV data facilitates the seamless porting of CV data between competence database and CV database. This integrates the competence solution and the internal recruitment/mobility solution, and the company can achieve higher internal mobility and lower staff turnover.
- Structured CV data also makes it easier to transfer information to internal solutions, such as onboarding, payroll, case/archives, etc.

Structured CV data leads to an overall better candidate experience

It may be easier for candidates to submit their CVs as attached files, but the few minutes they save can have an unacceptably high price:

- Without structured data candidates can be disqualified due to an incorrect basis for decision.
 - The candidate is likely to be compared with other candidates without directly comparable criteria for assessment.
 - Candidates are also often assessed incorrectly due to the design of their CVs, with unstructured CV data.
- Without structured data candidates often have to wait longer, due to a normally longer selection process. It takes longer to read each new CV with a different structure, format, font and layout.
- Without structured data candidates cannot efficiently reuse CV data.
 - Different employers require different formats (PDF, Word, HTML, etc.) and candidates therefore often have to keep their CVs updated in several different formats.
 - They still need to type in different new data in different solutions. Even when structured CV data is not required, data of some kind is still needed, as applicants still have to provide a lot of information that may be irrelevant to the selection process.
- Without structured data candidates miss out on the opportunity to be contacted on relevant future new positions.
 - Job seekers miss out on job opportunities based on CV database searches.
 - Job seekers miss out on relevant information based on search/segmentation of the CV database. Examples are information on job fairs, or employers' future requirements.
- Without structured CV data it is not possible to transfer CV data seamlessly between competence database and CV database. Employees (internal candidates) therefore have to update two CVs - one in the recruitment solution and one in the competence solution.

A mandatory requirement on employers

With structured data:

- It is possible to leverage the company's CV database.
- Errors in the selection process due to a weak/incorrect basis for comparison are reduced.
- It is easy to cooperate in the selection process.
- It takes less time to find and compare candidates.
- Problems with attached files are avoided, including security issues.
- The company can take a strategic approach to recruitment.
- Data can be shared between the company's recruitment solution and competence solution.
- It is easier to transfer data to other HR and administrative solutions.

Unstructured data belongs to the past

Recruitment technology is changing rapidly, and choosing the right standards and architecture is vital for providers that want to contribute to future solutions.

It will be increasingly expected that CV data can be transferred seamlessly between different solutions, and that the solutions are so simple and intuitive that the mobile phone is a natural part of the entire job application process.

Employers will see how some technologies are future proof — while others are not. It is tempting to opt for the easy solution and accept that some candidates still prefer to submit their CVs as attached files,

But we have come to a crossroads, after which neither employers nor candidates will benefit from doing things the same way as they have always done, since there are better alternatives.

In terms of unstructured CV data, such as CVs as attached files, at WebCruiter we see this crossroads from our rear view mirror, since it belongs to the past. We can see how some players adapted to the status quo, while we made the right choice, for the benefit of our customers today — and in the future.

Nordic job seekers take the lead when it comes to using new technology. WebCruiter and WebCruiter's customers can see how we live in new times where technology providers that offer open solutions with structured data are well-positioned to exploit the many upcoming exciting new opportunities for employers and candidates.

Take recruitment seriously

New technology means that, for both employers and job candidates, the structured CV functions better than the traditional unstructured CV. Without structured CV data it is harder for both employers and job seekers to act professionally in meeting today's requirements of a professional recruitment process.

Structured CV data therefore marks a crossroads for employers and technology providers.

What characterises a recruitment solution that efficiently supports structured CV data?

- CV data as structured data when possible.
- Reporting and monitoring functionality that makes it possible to leverage the value of the structured data.
- Integration-friendly towards related solutions, including HR and competence solutions.
- Boolean (and/or) search in structured data in the CV database.
- Possible to scroll between highly comparable CVs.
- Supports cooperation without printing documents.
- Standard CV design to ensure that CVs are not compared solely on the basis of design.
- Supports the HR XML standard.
- Supports import/export of CV data based on HR-XML.
- Web Services-oriented architecture that supports the exchange of CV data based on such formats as PortableCV, Europass CV, LinkedIn, and so on.
- Reuse of candidates' CVs.
- Focus on the user's experience without compromising on data quality.



Three myths about CVs as attached files

1. If you require structured CV data you lose good candidates

Motivated and relevant candidates will usually take the time to complete the information you request if you communicate clearly who you are looking for and what you have to offer. This also applies to passive candidates.

Employers must nonetheless expect a world in which candidates will increasingly apply for jobs with just one click, thanks to the opportunity to port structured CV data between solutions. With far higher applicant numbers, structured data will be more important than ever before in ensuring a fair and efficient screening and ranking process.

As a recruiter you stand at a crossroads, yet no matter how you analyse the situation, structured data is the answer — now and in the future.

2. New search technology makes structured data superfluous

On the contrary, a clear divide is forming between horizontal search engines that search unstructured data and the many vertical providers of structured data searches, such as classified ads, travel, social networks and, not least, CVs and job vacancies.

For the vertical providers, the use of structured data and its "graph" often represents added a key value proposition.

3. Parsing technology makes attachments an acceptable alternative

Parsing technology reads a CV as free text and translates it into structured data. Even though this technology facilitates conversion of a free-text CV to structured data, it is not an efficient way to do this, compared to XML-based approaches. This is also a technology that requires manual review to ensure the required quality — as the level of efficiency and accuracy is far less than structured CV data will offer.



A leading provider of recruitment solutions

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