ePortfolio panel discussion overview

This panel discussion considers the benefits and challenges of developing electronic portfolios for teaching, student learning, and professional development. Our goal is to provide an overview, clarify some terms, and describe basics of the systems we have used, as well as strengths, and advantages of different alternatives.

1. **What is an ePortfolio or digital portfolio?**
    a. **An ePortfolio or digital portfolio** is an organizing framework that allows a coherent presentation of a professional or academic self. It organizes and provides access to resources that illustrate a person's professional and academic accomplishments, skills, and networks. It is an illustrated and manifested version of a resume or CV.
    b. **A successful digital portfolio** organizes the attention and interest in a professional's work, removes barriers to understanding the scope and nature of that work, and facilitates the ongoing development of that work.
2. **What are the purposes of ePortfolios?**
    a. Presentation portfolios are created to expand the reach, improve the coherence, and facilitate the development of a professional career by making a professional self maximally available to professional attention.
    b. Assessment portfolios are organizing frameworks, instituted as requirements of particular courses that allow students to develop a temporally and substantively restricted presentation of self, with a focus on facilitating the learning progression and the capacity to reflect on the trajectory of that development.
3. **How do ePortfolios contribute to student learning and career success?**
    a. They inspire self reflection and a sense of audience. The creation of a digital portfolio involves authorship and self-reflexive articulation of the self, as well as a recognition of the potential presence of a critical and discerning audience.
    b. They motivate investment in intellectual and professional capital. Similar to the moment students first develop a resume, the creation of a digital portfolio can make students keenly aware of how they need to augment their current capital with valued accomplishments. Digital portfolios allow students to demonstrate skills to employers in a format that is more creative, dynamic, and illustrative than a simple resume.
    c. They develop a narrative of development and progress. It is easy for students to get lost in the minutia of courses, or to forget how far they have developed. The experience of adding to a portfolio can provide a real world basis for increased self confidence in academics or a profession. Additionally, a portfolio that requires the representation of project process steps can enable students to reflect on its development and audiences to understand how the student or professional approaches growing a project from inception to completion. These portfolios can be used as a springboard from student to professional.

4. **Do our students actually need help with ePortfolios?** Aren't they the "Digital Natives?"
    a. Yes, they do need help, and no, most of our students are not "digital natives.
        i. Recent article in Chronicle of Higher education describes a course on "managing your online reputation" something that as an institution, OU needs to embrace and help our students excel.
    b. We also need to help each other, because we are not digital natives. We should develop learning communities around learning and using digital tools and skills in teaching, advising and research.

Systems for building digital portfolios

Systems

1. Free and subscription based blogging services (Wordpress, Blogger, foursquare others)
    a. Blog organization
    b. Variety of styles and levels of support and modernization ??
    c. foursquare offers full integration with mobile devices
        i. (paid service)
2. Speciality pay services marketed to academics (foliotech)
    a. Blog organization
    b. Assessment tools
    c. Paid support
3. Composite systems of free and paid web services and sites (Google docs, google sites, google+, Wix, Weebly, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc)
    a. These can take minimal investment (like posting a google doc, or can be quite extensive and organized, depending on the needs and capacities of the author).
    b. Web services offer a choice of website templates designed for a variety of purposes.

Composite digital portfolio systems:

Dr. Howard T. Welser (Ted): I use both assessment and presentation eportfolios in my teaching. I also maintain an active ePortfolio for my own work. For assessment within courses, I create private editable web pages that are shared individually with each student, and which allow students to summarize and link to their work and accomplishments in the course. For career and professional presentation ePortfolios I also use shared editable web pages (google docs) to allow students to share brief professional profiles and to link to profiles and their other permanent electronic portfolios. Based on fundamental principles of search engine optimization and social media development I encourage all students to maintain a set of interconnected professional presentations of their digital self.

I maintain four primary professional self presentations in distinct namespaces, and several more specialized or limited self presentations. I encourage all students to consider creating (3) and (4) below, and students who are planning careers in academia, to also create (1) and (5a) once they have at least two publications. In my courses I have students create class specific mini-profiles that they can link to their other professional profiles and presentation portfolios.

1. Primary digital portfolio: Google Sites; free web page.
    a. Wiki style formatting allows efficient presentation of advising, research, and teaching dimensions of my professional self.
    b. Alternative solutions
        i. Square space, annual fee, professional quality, e commerce integration
        ii. Wordpress, free or paid web hosting and basic blog design
2. Ohio University Sociology and Anthropology departmental profile
    a. Minimal new content, but acts as referring link to primary portfolio
    b. Slow updating and limited content are downsides, also, non transportable.
3. LinkedIn profile
    a. Necessary for connecting with students and alums
    b. Facilitates professional networking and learning about jobs for students
4. Google+ profile
    a. Easy to make, ties in with Youtube, video conferencing, and other google utilities
    b. Raises visibility of other pages related to your portfolio
    c. Connects to distinct readership community
5. Specialized sites
    a. Google scholar author profile
    b. Blogs related to courses, writing projects and other interests
    c. Class specific professional and research interest summaries
        i. Research Methods fall 2013
        ii. Capstone spring 2014
            1. Zachery Williams
                a. Instagram
                b. Twitter-----Linked together giving golf tips and experiences
            2. Kerry Barrett
                a. webpage
                b. LinkedIn
            3. Samantha Szenay
                a. Resume
            4. Chris Hecht
                a. LinkedIn
            5. Brian Bilinovich
                a. Linkedin
    d. Twitter, though I mainly use it for reading rather than writing

Various Web Platforms: Wordpress, Weebly, Wix, Google Sites
Dr. Albert Rouzie, English

In my graduate seminar, New Media Composition in English Studies, I asked my 16 students to create a new media web portfolio in either a blog-based site (Wordpress, Blogger) or through a website provider (Googlesites, Weebly, Wix). The portfolios present their major course projects, including process elements such as proposals, sketches, storyboards, and substantial reflection essays on their work. I encouraged them to approach their portfolio as both a coursework space and as a draft for a future professional employment and/or teaching portfolio. I use the portfolios for assessment of their work and learning, both about the course content and processes and about the rhetorical and technological options for self-presentation in web portfolios. As English composition instructors, their experience creating a course eportfolio can help them consider the uses of web-based course portfolios in the composition courses they teach. Professional eportfolios are particularly relevant to students in our junior level Writing in the Professions course (ENG 3840J) since many of them are seniors preparing to apply for jobs and internships.

Graduate students at the MA level can use eportfolios as a job search resource or as supplemental presentation of materials for application to doctoral programs. This use is especially critical for the kinds of multimodal, new media projects composed by my students in the spring seminar. Doctoral students can use these venues similarly to construct a professional persona for job searches. One second year M.A. student, Stephanie Cheslock is building for her final course project a business site advertising herself as a freelance writing tutor and English composition instructor.

Why Web platforms rather than Foliotek?
Humanities fields cannot effectively evaluate writing through the assessment rubrics of an eportfolio system such as Foliotek. We read and view and write or speak comments more than apply analytic rubrics. This is why I chose the more open web-based options that allow and require the student to make choices about how they will use the available tools to represent themselves and their work and that gives them experience in the affordances and constraints of such venues, preparing them for the choices they might make in the future development of an eportfolio. One aspect of assessment and presentation in our portfolios is a selection of the process work that went into conceiving and composing each project.

I emphasize the inclusion of process work for several reasons: 1) This creates a complete picture of all the steps taken to develop the work for assessment purposes; 2) Many professions consider the steps taken to complete a project as essential elements of a portfolio that informs readers about how the author works in ways that only a finished product cannot; 3) The process elements provide the authors themselves multiple dimensions for reflection. Reflection on process and product is an important element of writing and design and I consider it crucial for assessment of multimodal projects. If an author can set project goals and then articulate in writing how they achieved these goals, how the goals may have developed through the process,

and justify the rhetorical strategies they chose to employ, then they are learning not only how to compose in new media for diverse audiences but also how to talk about such work. This encourages the development of metaknowledge, which is crucial for the ability to transfer learning from one area, experience, or course to another such situation. Since this is an important goal of learning in the seminar (and in undergraduate composition courses), evidence of it informs how I evaluate and grade major projects. Because the student authors are "on the hook" to perform an effective reflection essay, I give them broad agency in project conception. This unleashes creativity at the same time that it anchors it in rhetorical realities (and the reality of assessment).

A Weebly portfolio by doctoral student, Cactus May, is a multi-purpose portfolio containing C.V. and Teaching Philosophy pages as well as current course projects with some process components.

Here is an example of a video project page from his portfolio:
http://heycactus.weebly.com/video-work.html

Here you find 1) a header called Process under which is a brief introduction to the basic concept of the piece and its process 2) a sub-header called Sketch that describes his first attempt using one tool and then abandoning it for another and that includes an image of an early conceptual sketch.

Below that is the header, Final Video Composition: Vectors, under which the video is embedded and the reflection essay is available for downloading.