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.