

Creating a Digital Portfolio

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Why a Portfolio?

Portfolios are excellent assessment tools, both for teachers and students. They allow us to collect the best examples of our progress, our work, and our creativity. Portfolios are real-world in ways that test score data is not. Portfolios allow us to showcase our best efforts at what we do.

Why Digital?

A digital portfolio is one that is compact in size. It can incorporate a wider selection of materials. A digital (electronic, virtual) portfolio can easily be duplicated, shared, and augmented. A digital portfolio is created using technology skills that can extend beyond the portfolio, and into other areas of our work and life. To build a digital portfolio is to develop and hone skills that take command of technology's potential in the classroom.

How? What format? Which programs?

There are a variety of tools that can be used to create a digital portfolio. Examples, as of this writing, include Apple's Keynote, Microsoft's PowerPoint, web pages, weblogs, Quicktime movies, iMovie, Photoshop, scanners, digital cameras, Inspiration (and inspiration), Adobe's Acrobat, Macromedia Flash, Hyperstudio, and the list goes on.

Realistically, you'll use the tools and software programs that are easiest for you to use, and the one's with which you have some experience. For some formats and tools, there are definite advantages. Creating a portfolio based in HTML is good, because any computer now-a-days can read and interpret that code, and it isn't likely to go away anytime soon. On the other hand, learning HTML is a challenge for some, and is not likely to be something done quickly.

No matter which tools you eventually settle on, here are some ideas in helping you plan your portfolio:

How should it look?	Will the portfolio offer the viewer choices, and therefore be interactive? Or will it simply present information, in the order and sequence I choose?
Where should it work?	If I press (or “burn”) it to CD, should it be cross-platform compatible? Will updating the portfolio in the future require specialized software? Is special software required to view, or “run” my portfolio?
What do I want to include?	Paper-based items can easily be scanned and presented as graphics. Other items you may have in the physical world can be photographed. But the digital portfolio opens up new possibilities. What other kinds of items can I include?
How should I organize the portfolio?	For students, a chronological sequence makes a lot of sense. But does it for the teacher? What kinds of categories can I include? Are different items in the portfolio linked to one another? Will clicking on an item in my resume link to something in my collection of “things”?
Make it easy.	What can I do in the planning stages to ensure that creating a digital portfolio is not overwhelming? How difficult will maintaining, and updating, my portfolio be?

Planning and Preparing

Creating a digital portfolio is a long-term project. It requires planning and time. Alongside all of that, it takes someone who’s willing to venture and try something new, and to be willing to learn as you progress. Digital portfolios are not hard, but the rewards are not always guaranteed.

What do I want to include?	
What software do I already have a “handle” on that I might use?	
How will I organize the artifacts I include?	
What “new” items might I create to include (examples: sound bites, movies, digital pictures, scans, etc?)	
What am I going to need to be successful in creating a digital portfolio?	

Applications for Your Digital Portfolio

We will cover the following applications in our meetings for use with your digital portfolio:

- Apple iMovie
- Apple iPhoto
- Microsoft Power Point

Tips for iMovie

- Use a collection of digital pictures to create a short movie; add a soundtrack discussing what is going on in the pictures
- Use short clips of digital video of special projects and lessons
- Consider being interviewed, and include a short video interview in your portfolio to personalize the digital portfolio
- Export all your movies to Quicktime format, with these settings for small, yet high-quality movies:
 - Sorensen 3 Video Codec
 - High Quality, Millions of Colors
 - 12 frames per second
 - Keyframes every 60 frames
 - Size: 320x240 pixels
 - Sound: Qualcomm PureVoice, 22 kHz, 16-bit mono
- Include the .mov extension on your movie files

Tips for iPhoto

- Use iPhoto to crop your photos
- Give your pictures titles; if you include them to make a web gallery, the titles will be used instead of the camera filenames
- If you use a lot of photos, organize them into photo albums; they'll be easier to find and manipulate
- If you want a simple "slide show" type presentation, Export selected photos to a Quicktime movie. If you keep music in your iTunes library, you can import "background" music for your movie.

Tips for Power Point

- Use PPT to bring together all the elements of your portfolio
- Remember: some information, such as the type of information on your resume, is best presented as text.
- Avoid the use of Clip Art, it will give your portfolio a generic look
- Keep each slide simple; create more slides, instead of cramming each one to the tilt
- Consider building a menu with hyperlinks, and design the presentation to be viewed in "Kiosk" mode, with navigation buttons

Portfolio Timeline

During our first meeting we will learn about some of the tools that can help you organize a portfolio, and practice using them. Between now and the next session's meeting time, you will need to collect artifacts that you wish to include in your portfolio. These might be documents, pictures (digital or traditional), or simply ideas that are organized.

Our second session will be focused on bringing together all of the components and producing an interactive presentation in PowerPoint. This presentation can then be exported in a variety of formats for distribution.

While we will be building a portfolio for you, you are encouraged to build portfolios with your students along the same lines.

Sites of Interest

Electric Teacher Online Portfolios	http://www.electricteacher.com/onlineportfolio/
Oswego Student Portfolios	http://www.oswego.org/ocsd-web/kidpower/portfolios.asp
Creating and Using Portfolios	http://www.ash.udel.edu/ash/teacher/portfolio.html
Jim's Online Portfolio	http://muskingum.edu/%7Ejjohnson/edportfolio/index.html
Stephanie's Online Portfolio	http://coe.ilstu.edu/portfolios/students/slselve/index.html
Carolyn's Online Portfolio	http://ags.sga.uci.edu/~cfaustin/
Electronic Portfolios Page for Teachers	http://electronicportfolios.com/teachers/
URI PowerPoint Tutorial	http://homepage.cs.uri.edu/tutorials/csc101/powerpoint/ppt.html
Oregon State PowerPoint Tutorials	http://oregonstate.edu/instruction/ed596/ppoint/pphome.htm
Electric Teacher PowerPoint Tutorials	http://www.electricteacher.com/tutorial3.htm
SCCOE iMovie Tutorial	http://etc.sccoe.k12.ca.us/i2000/00mod/l_mm/imov.html
Bryn Mawr iMovie Tutorial	http://www.brynmawr.edu/llc/help/imovie/
Evan's iPhoto Tutorial	http://homepage.mac.com/hohmug/0402/iphoto1.html
Holly Robertson's iPhoto Tutorial	http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/technology/tutorials/graphics/iPhoto/section2.html
Leslie Fisher's Word and the Internet	http://www.leslifisher.com/presenting/handouts/wordandnet.html

Homework!: Visit some of the sites above, and view my PowerPoint QT movies before our next session! Also remember to bring "content."