

ePortfolios in the Classroom

What is it?

Eportfolios are electronic portfolios, digital collections of items that represent completed work or work that is in progress. As with print portfolios, they can be used for assessment, documentation of acquired skills, or professional achievement. In the classroom, ePortfolios can be used to assess the work of one project or of the entire course. Typical components of ePortfolios are samplings of written work (or any work that can be presented electronically), reflections on that work, and a discussion of plans for development. In some institutions, ePortfolios are cumulative and follow students throughout their studies, building with each course to reflect a student's educational progress.

What does it look like in practice?

Students save copies of all artifacts of work during a course or single project, collecting them to a portfolio shell, arrange items in an order that shows progression, and write introductions to and reflections on that work. Instructors prescribe the types of self-evaluation students will write. Resulting portfolios may be shared with classmates as presentations and for end of semester/project discussions, as long as the portfolios are written in a reflective manner that suggests development in the field and not discussions of grading. Students would be well advised to strip from the text of their material any faculty comments or grading marks.

How does such a tool fit into my course?

- Course ePortfolios can be considered a writing project if sufficient writing is expected to introduce and reflect on material from the course.
- A group ePortfolio can be one component of a group project that gives the group members an opportunity to evaluate their work as a team.
- In an art, design, or creative writing field, an ePortfolio displaying acquired skills can be a capstone project for a degree, as well as for a job search, having been built throughout a student's course of study. Each course would contribute artifacts and evaluation to the final version.

Further Reading:

ePortfolio at San Francisco State: http://at.sfsu.edu/eportfolio/student_land A nice overview of the purpose and components of ePortfolios.

"Demonstrating and Assessing Student Learning with E-Portfolios" (PDF):

<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI3003.pdf> 2005 review of ePortfolio case studies from the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI).

WordPress.com: <http://wordpress.com/> A freely-hosted resource for creating sites that can be used as ePortfolios. My sample portfolio, displaying a multi-page format: <http://pittmanportfolio.wordpress.com>