ePortfolio: Past, Present and Future
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The ePortfolio as a Story of Deep Learning
Digital Storytelling as part of a Reflective Portfolio

Past
- 1991-1996
  - Dedicated desktop applications (Scholastic, Grady Profile) - K-12
- 1997-2001
  - Internet-compatible formats (PDF, HTML) - Higher Ed
  - Small-scale implementation
  - Classrooms, Courses, Individuals

The Power of Portfolios
what children can teach us about learning and assessment
Author: Elizabeth Hebert
Publisher: Jossey-Bass
Picture courtesy of Amazon.com

From the Preface (1)

"Portfolios have been with us for a very long time. Those of us who grew up in the 1950s or earlier recognize portfolios as reincarnations of the large memory boxes or drawers where our parents collected starred spelling tests, lacy valentines, science fair posters, early attempts at poetry, and (of course) the obligatory set of plaster hands. Each item was selected by our parents because it represented our acquisition of a new skill or our feelings of accomplishment. Perhaps an entry was accompanied by a special notation of praise from a teacher or maybe it was placed in the box just because we did it."
From the Preface (2)

“We formed part of our identity from the contents of these memory boxes. We recognized each piece and its association with a particular time or experience. We shared these collections with grandparents to reinforce feelings of pride and we reexamined them on rainy days when friends were unavailable for play. Reflecting on the collection allowed us to attribute importance to these artifacts, and by extension to ourselves, as they gave witness to the story of our early school experiences.”

From the Preface (3)

“Our parents couldn’t possibly envision that these memory boxes would be the inspiration for an innovative way of thinking about children’s learning. These collections, lovingly stored away on our behalf, are the genuine exemplar for documenting children’s learning over time. But now these memory boxes have a different meaning. It’s not purely private or personal, although the personal is what gives power to what they can mean.”

Let’s get personal…
Think for a minute about:
Something about your COLLECTIONS:
Suggested topics:
- If you are a parent, what you saved for your children
- What your parents saved for you
- What you collect...
- Why you collect...

Some issues to consider
- What do your collections say about what you value?
- Is there a difference between what you purposefully save and what you can’t throw away?
- How can we use our collection experiences to help learners as they develop their portfolios?

What is a Portfolio in Education?
A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student’s efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas [over time].

What is a Portfolio in Education? (2)
The collection must include:
- student participation in selecting contents
- the criteria for selection
- the criteria for judging merit
- evidence of student self-reflection

(Northwest Evaluation Association, 1990)
Purpose & Goals for the portfolio
(Determine Content)

- Multiple purposes:
  - Learning/Process
  - Assessment
  - Marketing/Showcase

Metaphors!

- Mirror, Map, Sonnet
- C.V.
- Test
- Story

http://electronicportfolios.org/metaphors.html

Constructed Meaning

"The portfolio is a laboratory where students construct meaning from their accumulated experience."
(Paulson & Paulson, 1991, p.5)

Portfolio tells a Story

"A portfolio tells a story. It is the story of knowing. Knowing about things... Knowing oneself... Knowing an audience... Portfolios are students' own stories of what they know, why they believe they know it, and why others should be of the same opinion."
(Paulson & Paulson, 1991, p.2)

Portfolios tell a Story

“A portfolio is opinion backed by fact... Students prove what they know with samples of their work.”
(Paulson & Paulson, 1991, p.2)

Linking Two Dynamic Processes to Promote Deep Learning

Portfolio Development Process
Digital Storytelling
ePortfolio as Storytelling

Portfolio Development Process

Portfolio Processes

Traditional + Technology
- Collecting
- Selecting
- Reflecting
- Directing
- Celebrating
- Archiving
- Linking/Thinking
- Storytelling
- Collaborating
- Publishing

Present

- 2001~2004
  - Increasing interest in Higher Ed
  - NLII & Industry focus (Educause)
  - Decreasing interest in K-12 in U.S. (NCLB)
  - Commercial Market emerging
  - Institution-wide implementation
    - Programs, campuses, Boards of Education
  - From desktop/CD to the WWW

NLII e-Portfolio Definition

- a collection of authentic and diverse evidence,
- drawn from a larger archive representing what a person or organization has learned over time
- on which the person or organization has reflected, and
- designed for presentation to one or more audiences for a particular rhetorical purpose.

Electronic Portfolio Development

Publishing environments:
- Optical media (CD-R, DVD-R) or WWW

Authoring environments:
- Common Tools or Customized Systems
Common Desktop Tools with hyperlinks
- Office - Word, Excel, Powerpoint
- Hypermedia authoring tools - HyperStudio
- Inspiration or Kidspiration (mind mapping)
- Adobe Acrobat
- HTML Editors - Front Page, Dreamweaver, Netscape/Mozilla Composer
- Multimedia Authoring
- Macromedia Director & Flash, Ezedia

My evaluation study of online software, services, or strategies
- [http://electronicportfolios.org/myportfolio/versions.html](http://electronicportfolios.org/myportfolio/versions.html)
- Under On-line Publications
- To date, recreating my new portfolio using 17 different software packages, services, or strategies

Online Portfolio Tool Characteristics
- Custom-designed Electronic Portfolio Systems - (A)system includes database to align artifacts to standards
- Free Server Space
- Open Source Software
- Commercial Software - primary market: Higher Ed, Teacher Ed, PK-12, Any
- Content Management System (CMS)
- Web Log Software or Journal - “Blogs”
- License agreement with - Individual or institution
- Hosting - Hosted: resides on a centralized server; Server: software installed or data stored on own server space
- Cost & Storage space available

Conclusions
- Too early to judge
- Scales applied to each system:
  - “Trade-offs” - “Balance”
  - Creativity
  - Ease of Use
  - Cost/Storage & ROI
  - Features
  - Flexibility/Customization Allowed
  - Integration with Assessment System
  - Transfer & technology skill development

Reflection Questions that tie the Past to the Future
- What? Past
- So What? Present
- Now What? Future
- What have I concluded about my life/work/learning? (my artifacts)
- What do those artifacts show about what I have learned? (my current reflections on my knowledge, skills and dispositions)
- What direction do I want to take in the future? (my future learning goals)

Linked to...
- Digital Storytelling
- Blogs & Wikis
- Games

Strategies that promote Intrinsic Motivation to maintain the process for Lifelong Learning
Some concerns...
- Assessment for Learning
- Portfolios for Learning
- What about Motivation?

Components of Portfolio Development
- Content
- Purpose
- Process

Components of Portfolio Development
- Content: evidence (artifacts + reflections)

Components of Portfolio Development
- Purpose:
  the reason for developing the portfolio - includes audience
  - Learning & professional development - Process
  - Assessment (of and for learning)
  - Showcase (Employment/Marketing)

Components of Portfolio Development
- Process:
  - tools used
  - sequence of activities
  - rules
  - evaluation criteria (rubrics)
  - collaboration/conversation

Developmental Levels of Portfolio Implementation
- Extrinsic Motivation
  - institutional directed content, purpose & process - external locus of control
- Mixed Motivation
  - learner ownership over one or two of the components
- Intrinsic Motivation
  - learner ownership of content, purpose and process
Learner Ownership and Control of Electronic Portfolio Development

**Motivation**
- Intrinsic
- Extrinsic

**Process**
- Purpose
- Contents

**LEARNER CONTROL**
- Learner Control vs. Organizational Control
- Assumption: Greater Learner Control leads to more Intrinsic Motivation

**Future**
- 2004–2010
  - State/National implementation
    - “an e-portfolio for every citizen”
  - Workplace and life-wide/life-long development
  - Multiple publishing formats
    - WWW, CD, DVD
  - Use of multimedia - moving beyond static text and images
  - Interest in reflective digital storytelling

**Digital Storytelling Process**
- Learners create a 2-4 minute digital video clip
  - First person narrative
  - Told in their own voice
  - Illustrated by (mostly) still images
  - Music track to add emotional tone

**Center for Digital Storytelling**
- [http://www.storycenter.org](http://www.storycenter.org)

**Why include Digital Storytelling in ePortfolios?**
- Learner Motivation and Affect Brain Research

**Storytelling as Reflection**
- (Schön, 1988)
  - “...for storytelling is the mode of description best suited to transformation in new situations of action.”
Storytelling as Reflection (Schön, 1988)

“Stories are products of reflection, but we do not usually hold onto them long enough to make them objects of reflection in their own right.”

Storytelling as Reflection (Schön, 1988)

“When we get into the habit of recording our stories, we can look at them again, attending to the meanings we build into them and attending, as well, to our strategies of narrative description.”

Storytelling as a Theory of Learning

- Two educators from New Zealand - staff developer and health educator
- Relates storytelling to literature on learning and reflection
- Provides stages of storytelling related to reflection

Constructivist Approach to Project-Based “Assessment-as-Learning”

Learner Ownership and Engagement with Portfolio

- The tools should allow the learner to feel in control of the process, including the “look and feel” of the portfolio.

Deep Learning

- involves reflection,
- is developmental,
- is integrative,
- is self-directive, and
- is lifelong

**Voice = Authenticity**

- multimedia expands the "voice" in an electronic portfolio (both literally and rhetorically)
- personality of the author is evident
- gives the reflections a uniqueness
- gives the feeling that the writer is talking directly to the reader/viewer

**Digital Paper or Digital Story?**

- If your e-portfolios are just digital paper (text and images on the screen) you are losing a wonderful opportunity to really tell your story in your own voice.
- With the capability to add multimedia, audio and video, we can truly create an engaging environment to document the milestones of our lives.

**A 2nd Grader’s Autobiography**

- Perhaps you are a 2nd grader telling your autobiography for a VIP school assignment
- Play "tori's 2nd grade bio"

**A Graduate Student’s Letter to a former teacher**

- ...or you are a graduate student reflecting on what is drawing you into teaching (while showing your photo portfolio)
- Play "coming full circle"

**My own story**

- ...or you are reaching another transition and decision point in a long career, reflecting on the milestones in your life
- Play "choices"

**What’s Your Story?**

- We all have a story to add to our portfolios. These digital stories provide opportunities for a richness not possible in print.
- Some stories will represent the fresh innocence of youth, some will reflect the experiences of a rich life.
- The audiences might be worldwide, like the BBC Wales, but most likely the audiences will be small and intimate.
Digital Story as Legacy

- These digital stories aren't just for professional development
- They aren't just for skills-based portfolios
- They are our legacy for those who come after us...the stories of our lives we give to our children's grandchildren.

My Final Wish...
May all your electronic portfolios become dynamic celebrations and stories of learning across the lifespan.

Presentation online and some stories are on my CD
- [http://electronicportfolios.org](http://electronicportfolios.org) and click On-Line Publications
  “Electronic Portfolios as Digital Stories of Deep Learning”
- [http://electronicportfolios.org](http://electronicportfolios.org) and click Recent Conference Presentations
- My CD has examples of digital stories as well as hands-on activities to learn the process on Mac and Windows XP

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