



Writing ePortfolios with <emma> at The University of Georgia

Christy Desmet, University of Georgia (Cohort II)

The University of Georgia First-year Composition Program includes 3,500-4,000 students per term, employs 100 instructors, and schedules and supports 140-180 sections of composition per semester. Two years ago, the program made the move to using ePortfolios as the capstone project for its courses. Before implementing this system-wide change, we needed a mechanism that, given the size and dispersed nature of our population, would allow teachers and students to create, exchange, and grade portfolios at a distance. The advent of ePorts was necessary to this pedagogical change.

<emma> is the application that we use for FYC ePorts and, more broadly, for all aspects of the writing program (<http://www.emma.uga.edu>). Students and teachers can write essays, upload them into the <emma> database, comment upon those essays, revise, upload again, and finally, publish those essays as part of a class Zine or in their course portfolios. Other pedagogical tools help them with the writing/revision process and with constructing particular exhibits within the

portfolio (such as the demonstrations of revision/composing process and peer review process). <emma>'s capabilities are directed both toward these particular tasks and toward the writing process generally, as it has been defined by theory, scholarship, and research in Rhetoric and Composition.

Front page of an <emma> writing ePortfolio

In our case, using a single tool has a number of advantages. First, because the application is home-grown, <emma> has been developed according to our program philosophy and has been directly responsive to our program's needs. One of the most exciting aspects of the whole process has been the intimate and ongoing conversation between Ron Balthazor, our software designer, and both administrators of and teachers in the program. Many of the features currently offered by <emma>, such as the possibility of creating an e-Zine, were produced in direct response to teachers' ideas; and Balthazor and other coders have all been active teachers in the FYC Program. The second advantage of using a single, home-grown tool is the ability to make the technology support program goals rather than to ask

A Note from the Editors

Welcome to this issue of the I/NCEPR newsletter. In this issue we explore using one tool or many for creating ePortfolios.

Our theme for this issue arose out of our discussions with you about which tools best suited our work with ePortfolios. One of the biggest challenges is deciding which tool will best suit our needs, and those needs vary by program and institution. We hope you will enjoy reading about some of the different tools available and how our colleagues have used them. Remember, we want to hear what you are doing on your campuses, so please be sure to send us note of your publications, presentations and any other news you would like to let us all know about. The next edition will focus on career portfolios and the deadline for submissions is March 30th, 2008.

We look forward to hearing from you! In addition, if you have ideas for future issues, please let us know.

~Cara Lane (cgiacomini@u.washington.edu)

~Tracy Penny Light (tplight@uwaterloo.ca)

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Can One-Size-Fit All? ePortfolio Growth at San Francisco State

Ruth Cox, San Francisco State (Cohort III)

Editor's Note: The work at SFSU is an example of the various initiatives being undertaken by the CSU on ePortfolios.

"If the shoe fits, wear it." --Old Proverb

"If software fits, wear it!" --New Proverb, Academic Technology, SF State

Finding the right "fit" is always challenging when considering implementation of any new technology across a range of disciplines--each with unique learning and teaching needs. In 2005, we conducted a needs assessment of our campus relating to the use of student portfolios (both paper and digital). Many departments had begun using their own solutions to create student ePortfolios, raising fiscal and technical-support sustainability issues. Another worry was that students could be required to create different portfolios for different classes/majors, with no technical or pedagogical coherence. With 28,000 students across 90 programs/departments, a growing sense was that things could get "unwieldy" and that Academic Resources should prepare to recommend a unified campus-wide ePortfolio system.

Feedback gathered from more than 40 undergraduate, graduate, and credential programs has guided SF State's ePortfolio Project in some unexpected directions over the past three years. Sixty-two percent of respondents (25 departments) already required some form of student portfolios (paper-based or digital) or expressed interest in using electronic portfolios at the course or department levels. Nearly two-thirds of those requiring student portfolios (17 departments) were already working with a range of digital portfolio solutions (hosted software such as eFolio Minnesota, Carnegie's KEEP Toolkit, Taskstream) as well as CD/DVD, and SF State built software and websites.

Was it essential to rein in department level ePortfolio developments and push everyone towards one system? Was there a "magic bullet" system that we could afford and roll out campus-wide? If so, what was it, and how could we project a budget scenario for it? Moreover, what would this "top-down" decision do to the existing portfolio-using programs that represented our core expertise relating to the teaching and learning benefits of ePortfolios?

Focusing on the top primary purpose(s) cited for student ePortfolios gave us some directional clues. "**Career development and supporting student professional preparation**" were by far the most important reason for portfolio use. Most indicated that portfolios were used for senior seminar requirements, capstone

"signature" assignments, Internship reflection, graduate research, culminating project presentation, and creative/design/performing arts professional portfolios. Portfolios needed to be "student-centered and controlled" yet archivable.

"**Student assessment**" portfolios, tying coursework and student artifact/evidence to stated program goals, state standards, or professional licensure requirements were second. Finally, **program assessment**--tracking groups of students to support accreditation needs and aggregate student achievement data was seen as a value. The **I-CAP (Candidate Assessment Portfolio)** system [<http://www.sfsu.edu/~coe/sed/sedicapoverview.html>] was created by the College of Education to help students meet their California Teaching Performance Expectations in Secondary Education, a "homegrown" example of a portfolio file repository system.

For some departments, a *mix of these three core functions was seen as ideal*. However, consistent faculty concerns included the need for freedom and flexibility of any portfolio tool--the importance of a student's ability to uniquely reflect upon their academic work, life experiences, and professional goals. Faculty members expressed that a "one size fits all" system would not support these important aspects of portfolio development, and could impede student incentive to invest energy in creating a portfolio.

Inspired by Penn State's use of open web-space, we established an **ePortfolio clearinghouse site**" [<http://eportfolio.sfsu.edu>] and began creating web-templates and an online tutorial for students to publish ePortfolios to SFSU web-space (200 Mbytes). This has accommodated the request for attractive capstone **ePortfolio templates** [<http://eportfolio.sfsu.edu/colleges.php>] in disciplines such as Public Administration, Professional Technical Writing, Information Systems and Interior/Apparel Design among others.

In English Education, we use the KEEP Toolkit to create student portfolios--also introducing the students to the rich archives of the **Carnegie Foundation** [<http://commons.carnegiefoundation.org/>], where their portfolios are hosted. In Public Health Education as well as Recreation Studies, easy-to-use web-based eFolio has been successfully implemented, with graduates sites archived each year on the **Health Education Department website**. [<http://www.sfsu.edu/~hed/masters/portfolio.htm>]

In the long term, our campus may launch a repository ePortfolio system that would play well with our CMS, **iLearn (Moodle)** [<https://ilearn.sfsu.edu/login/index.php>]. However, the core functionality of an ePortfolio management system would still need to accommodate the valuable "face to the world" capstone portfolio sites that benefit students as they enter careers. As one public health student told us, "When I went to Kaiser for the job interview, they had my ePortfolio site pulled up on the screen, and had

*Was there a
"magic bullet"
system*

Writing ePortfolios with emma (continued from page 1)

teachers to figure out ways in which to adapt an out-of-the-box application to their own and the program's stated outcomes.

One of the reasons that we developed emma as a writing environment was that WebCT, which is still the University of Georgia's default LMS (Learning Management System), was more congenial to large classes in the sciences centered around quizzes and tests than to writing-based courses. Finally, emma's close connection to the world of teaching is already proving to be an advantage as the institution seeks to expand its writing initiative in response to a Task Force recommendation. The interaction of administrators and teachers

The program does all of its own training

in different institutional locales and the development team's ability to respond to local imperatives is proving invaluable as the University of Georgia expands its writing centers and develops a Writing Certificate for undergraduate students.

Among the principal disadvantages for the FYC Program, at this time, is the lack of university-wide support. The Program does all of its own training (we have about 28-35 new teachers every year) and

provides its own support (which covers an emma help lab, two computer-lab classrooms, and the technology carts in ten classrooms). Second, new users often are reluctant to either try a new application or abandon one they know well, have used in the past, and is supported by the university -- WebCT. (Accordingly, one of the upcoming emma development projects is to incorporate emma into WebCT.) Finally, due to the lack of institutional support, we have found it difficult to expand and accept new partners, either at the University of Georgia, at other system schools, or at schools outside Georgia. Nevertheless, within a five-year period, emma as a tool for creating and assessing ePorts has gone from being nothing more than a concept to a reality in a large university.



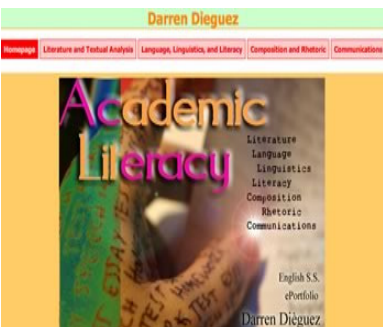
Member News: Presentations and Publications

Bob Sproule, University of Waterloo (Cohort III)

I gave a presentation at the MERLOT conference (August 2007) entitled, "Integrated Learning and Student Engagement Using ePortfolios." The abstract for the presentation is as follows: "Students can learn in multiple contexts: academic, workplace and community. ePortfolios are being used as an integrating tool and can lead to a richer and more holistic view of their university experience. Results from a study commenced in the fall of 2006 will be discussed." This research is based on the work we began when we joined I/NCEPR.

Ruth Cox, San Francisco State University (Cohort III—CSU System)

Recently, the ePortfolio work at San Francisco State was profiled by the Carnegie Foundation in their KEEP Gallery of Teaching. The case study, entitled, "Showing Subject Matter Competency at SFSU," profiles their use of the KEEP Tool Kit to support their English Education portfolio work. For more details and to read the full case study, visit <http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org>



Stanford Electronic Portfolio Institute

Helen Chen, Stanford University (Cohort I)

In August, Stanford held its first Electronic Portfolio Institute as part of its Summer Institute series at Wallenberg Hall. The 2-day workshop was facilitated by Helen Chen (Stanford), Tracy Penny Light (University of Waterloo), John Ittelson (CSUMB) and Toru Iiyoshii (Carnegie Foundation). Participants came from across the United States as well as from New Zealand, Japan and Sweden. The workshop focused on ePortfolios for teaching, learning and assessment and participants considered how to effectively integrate ePortfolios into their institutional context. Participants also had the opportunity to consult with the facilitators on their individual projects and to present to the large group for feedback. A special treat was a presentation on digital stories by expert, Helen Barrett, who also attended the workshop. Plans are underway for the next offering of the workshop, which will happen in conjunction with the I/NCEPR meeting next summer at the University of Waterloo.



The facilitation team from left to right: Kevin Kelly (San Francisco State), Una Daly (Grad Student, UC Santa Cruz), Helen Chen (Stanford), Tracy Penny Light (University of Waterloo), John Ittelson (CSUMB), Helen Barret (Oregon State University), Toru Iiyoshi (Carnegie Foundation)

Member News: Announcements and Updates

Shouting it from the rooftops: The student voice gets louder in the UK

In 2007, JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) commissioned a study to focus on the learner's experience of e-Portfolio across the sector. Two students from the University of Wolverhampton were approached to feature in a video case study for this project. Jenny and Emma were students in the School of Education, studying for a post graduate teaching qualification. On the 4th Sep 2007, the finished video case studies and accompanying publication were launched at a national learning technology conference. The university is proud that their student voices have nationwide recognition and that their story can be used to encourage and inspire others.

Links

The Learners Voice [video case study](#) (links to a number of student voice case studies including Jenny and Emma)

The Learners Voice publication '[In Their Own Words](#)'

BGSU Adopts the Epsilon Environment

Bowling Green State University (BGSU) has been instrumental in developing and realizing the potential of the robust, Web-based learning environment known as the Epsilon Environment. A 2007 winner of the Council on Higher Education Accreditation's Award for Institutional Progress in Student Learning Outcomes, BGSU has helped to refine Epsilon's Global Learning System, ePortfolio and Student Learning Matrix. Building on its five-year history with Epsilon, BGSU is Epsilon's first commercial Charter Member, including a university-wide enterprise license and the content of The New York Times Knowledge Network's Times Templates. Contact Milt Hakel, <http://mhakel.bgsu.epsilon.com>

New Book on ePortfolios—*ePortfolios: Emerging Opportunities for Student Affairs* (Jossey-Bass, 2007)

The development and application of ePortfolios within higher education are rapidly emerging at national and international levels. Their design and use is varied ranging from ePortfolios to support the learning process through reflection, assessment-based systems that are often used in support of institutional accreditation and so called "showcase ePortfolios" used in support of students' career development and employment. The purpose of this volume, *ePortfolios: Emerging Opportunities for Student Affairs* is to examine the range of ePortfolio systems, consider various design considerations associated with ePortfolios, provide examples of ePortfolio models at selected institutions and stress the importance for student affairs leadership

in creating a college or university-wide ePortfolio delivery system. Furthermore, this publication places primary focus upon career or showcase ePortfolios intended for student use often involving student affairs and supporting units such as career services.

I/NCEPR Cohort IV Launched!

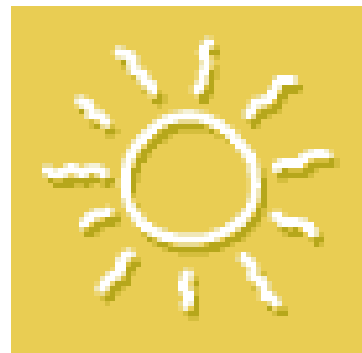
The launch of Cohort IV, an excellent group of institutions from England, Scotland, Netherlands, and the US, took place on October 14-16, 2007 in London. Members of Cohort IV include London Metropolitan University, Northumbria University, Queen Margaret University, University of Bradford, University of Cumbria, University of Groningen, University of Manchester Medical School, University of Michigan, University of Nottingham, and the University of Wolverhampton.

Coalition leaders will rotate at the UK-based Cohort IV meetings. Darren Cambridge and Kathleen Yancey will lead the next meeting which will happen during the week of April 21st, 2008. If you have an interest in participating in the meeting, please contact either Darren or Kathi for more information.

Best wishes as the new year begins: hope your electronic portfolio work continues to flourish.

I/NCEPR Summer Meeting, 2008

Next summer, the University of Waterloo and St. Jerome's University will host the I/NCEPR meeting in Waterloo, Ontario (about 1 hour west of Toronto) from July 9-11, 2008. In addition to the meeting, we are planning 2-day conference on ePortfolios which will tentatively be held on July 7-8, 2008. More information will follow, but in the meantime, please consider presenting at the conference. We'll let you know about submitting proposals in the near future. For more information, contact Tracy Penny Light (Cohort III) at tplight@sju.uwaterloo.ca



eFolio Minnesota available more widely

Part of Cohort III, the Minnesota State Colleges and University have developed eFolio Minnesota to support the ePortfolio work being undertaken in the state. The software is now going to be available to users outside the MnCSU system. For more information, about the software you can go to the website at www.efoliomn.com or contact Jeff Bria at jeff.bria@so.mnscu.edu

“Can One-Size-Fit-All?” (continued from page 2)

printed out examples of my work. I'm convinced that the ePortfolio was important to my being hired.”

At this point, we have found that addressing the unique situational and contextual factors within a course or program appears to be working well to deliver the outcomes our institution desires. Regarding concerns that students may be asked to create several different portfolios, we have seen students become increasingly more comfortable with representing themselves on the web (with Facebook, MySpace, Google Pages, personal websites and multiple Picasa or Flickr albums). Creating a new portfolio is more like putting on a new shoe: the same basic concept, with different styles or software for different occasions. You can check out our [gallery space](http://eportfolio.sfsu.edu/gallery.php) [http://eportfolio.sfsu.edu/gallery.php] to see examples created using a variety of tools.

To read more about project developments at SF State, or read guiding questions we share with faculty to determine ePortfolio

choices, please visit my [blog](http://eportfolioadventures.blogspot.com/). [http://eportfolioadventures.blogspot.com/] We welcome your thoughts!

Email: ruthcox@sfsu.edu

Connections is published by the Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research (I/NCEPR). Members of I/NCEPR can contribute to this publication by submitting news items or volunteering to write a spotlight article or review. Please send inquiries, article suggestions, and news to the editors: Cara Lane, University of Washington (cgiacomu@u.washington.edu) and Tracy Penny Light, University of Waterloo

ePortfolio Positions at LaGuardia

From: Bret Eynon, LaGuardia Community College

ePortfolio Friends & Colleagues,

We're hiring at LaGuardia for three ePortfolio-related positions. Please take a look at the announcement pasted in, below and think about whether there is someone you know who might be right for one of these positions.

We're looking for special folks -- smart and energetic, insightful and not afraid of a challenge. You may already know about our work and our new grants. This announcement (and the descriptions on our website at <http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/ctl/positions.html>) should give you a sense of how these positions fit into our growing project team. PLEASE forward this to anyone you think might be appropriate.



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electronic portfolio research

Send us news!

We are now accepting news items from I/NCEPR members for the next issue!

Send your 100-word contributions to or Tracy Penny Light (tplight@uwaterloo.ca) or Cara Lane (cgiacomu@u.washington.edu). The deadline for submissions is March 30, 2008.

Deadline: March 30th, 2008.