

ePortfolio Task Force
Final Report to the Academic Senate
May 15, 2006
(rev. 5/12/06)

The ePortfolio Task Force was created by the Academic Senate via SM-S05-4 (<http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/SM-S05-4.htm>) and convened by Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno in Spring 2005 to do the following:

1. Identify current efforts underway to enable students in some programs to create ePortfolios and what tools they are using
2. Identify purposes for the use of ePortfolios
3. Identify issues and opportunities associated with the use of ePortfolios
4. Identify policy and resource implications of the use of ePortfolios

To meet these goals, committee members did the following:

1. Organized, in collaboration with the Center for Faculty Development and Support, a highly successful ePortfolio Symposium in Fall 2005 which brought together almost 100 participants from within and outside campus -- ranging from experts to early users to persons planning on implementing ePortfolios in their departments. Proceedings here: <http://www.sjsu.edu/cfd/docs/schedule.htm>
2. Committee members visited four of the seven colleges (Business, Social Sciences, CASA, Science) and the student affairs leadership team (SALT) to gather information from across campus on current efforts, level of interest, potential uses, opportunities and issues associated with ePortfolios. We also gathered information on efforts underway in the College of Humanities and the Arts via Alice Carter's participation in the ePortfolio Symposium and in the College of Education via the Symposium and Robin Love's participation in the task force.
3. Committee co-chairs participated in the system-wide and national conversations regarding ePortfolios. Attended the first all-CSU systemwide meeting on ePortfolios in March 2005 and actively participating in the development of a proposal to join a research cohort organized by the National Coalition on Electronic Portfolio Research. The former has resulted in a potential collaboration among CSUMB, SJSU, SFSU, several Minnesota Universities, and an ePortfolio vendor (AVnet) to jointly develop (with potential for joint ownership of intellectual property rights to the software) an ePortfolio system uniquely customized to our needs. The latter has resulted in a successful proposal to join a third cohort of the National Coalition on Electronic Portfolio Research to study the impacts on student success of the use of ePortfolios to support integrative learning efforts, such as those stemming from the Greater Expectations and Strategic Planning conversations occurring on our campus (particularly the Students Active in Integrative Learning proposal of the Integrative Learning panel, intended to address goal 1 of Vision 2010, Curricular Reinvigoration).

4. The committee piloted and developed an on-line survey, recently approved by the IRB, that may be used in the future to undertake a full scale campus-wide survey of ePortfolio requirements and interest.

Current Efforts at SJSU to implement ePortfolios are primarily in the early pilot stages – with the exception of the one in the College of Education. The efforts we have identified are as follows:

Unit	Tool/Technology	Status
Geography	Off-line repository of student work on CDs	In use as repository
Communication Studies	Off-line repository of student work on CDs	Piloting Sp 06 repository
Recreation & Leisure Studies	KEEP Toolkit	Pilot started in Fall 2005
College of Education	TaskStream	Pilot started in 2004 in the Integrated Degree/ Credential Program of Child and Adolescent development. Pilot to be expanded to one program each of all departments starting in Fall 2006.
Illustration & Animation	Student designed and managed websites with close monitoring by department	In use but without reflection
School of Library and Information Science	PLONE	Pilot to start in Summer 2006

From our various conversations with current and potential ePortfolio users, the following purposes for the technology emerged:

1. Assessment – This is the primary impetus for most current implementations, particularly in Colleges of Education within the CSU system. There are ePortfolio tools that are specialized for this use (e.g. TaskStream, Livetext). These tools are excellent for structuring the process of drilling down from state/national/professional standards to learning objectives and matching class activities and grading rubrics and for rolling up data into reports required by the various agencies charged with administering standards.
2. Reflection – another much talked about use of ePortfolios is its potential for supporting learning through providing a convenient venue for students to reflect on their learning within and across courses during their tenure at the university. This use of ePortfolios ties in very well with current national and SJSU-local discussions around integrative learning – e.g. AACU’s Greater Expectations

- initiative¹ and campus strategic planning efforts. Portland State University has been piloting such an ePortfolio system² (see an example here: <http://bubbler.net/5A-files/653861/OSP.pdf>) and there is an initiative to pilot such an effort at SJSU as well. This initiative has now been tied to a research project we are undertaking in collaboration with other CSUs (notably CSUMB and SFSU) and the Chancellor's office to study the learning impacts of the use of ePortfolios for integrative learning – recently accepted for inclusion in a research group convened by the National Coalition on Electronic Portfolio Research.
3. ePortfolios can greatly facilitate professional review efforts including our own internal reviews of faculty and staff dossiers. Additionally, departments such as Health Science and Recreation Studies currently collect paper dossiers of their students and send them out to professional reviewers on a regular basis. These procedures can be made more efficient by the use of online, well protected dossier repositories that can be accessed by reviewers 24/7. Students, Faculty, and Staff can benefit from templates to structure their input into the dossiers and 24/7 access to their online repositories.
 4. Once ePortfolios are built, subsets of the data collected in them can be used to showcase the University and its students, faculty, and staff to various audiences including potential employers, prospective students and their families, press, and funding agencies. ePortfolios may also be used to encourage continued connection with our graduates building a long term, extended sense of community with them as well as encouraging their involvement in life long learning.

ePortfolios are at the early stage of development, particularly as tools for supporting integrative learning. Opportunities exist for getting involved in the development of ePortfolios to support such efforts and for determining their effectiveness for doing so.

1. Our collaboration with other units within the CSU and involvement in a National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio research will enable us to be involved in leading edge work on the effectiveness of ePortfolio in supporting educational initiatives – e.g. integrative learning – which tie in quite closely with our local strategic imperatives. Furthermore, our cohort at the National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio research includes Indiana University/Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) which has struggled with implementing ePortfolios for the past ten years³. We expect to learn much from interaction with IUPUI representatives, particularly in avoiding the mistakes that have prolonged their own implementation.
2. Our collaboration with CSUMB, SFSU, Minnesota Universities, and the ePortfolio vendor AVnet will enable us to build a tool that matches our needs

¹ Humphreys, Debra. "Why integrative learning? Why now?(Reality Check) integrative learning." Peer Review 7.4 (Summer-Fall 2005): 30(2). Expanded Academic ASAP. Thomson Gale. SAN JOSE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM. 18 April 2006

² Flower, Michael J., and Terrel L. Rhodes. "Integrative learning, e-portfolios, and the transfer student.(Practice)eportfolios." Peer Review 7.4 (Summer-Fall 2005): 21(3). . Thomson Gale. SAN JOSE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM. 17 April 2006

³ In conversation with Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno at the AAC&U Learning and Technology Implications for Liberal Education and the Disciplines, 20 April 2006, Seattle Washington.

most closely – particularly in terms of using ePortfolio to support learning and hopefully in the development of a system that allows flexibility of presentation to meet the needs of a wide range of campus users and their constituents.

Issues:

1. Need to demonstrate to faculty the educational value of ePortfolios as it will take some investment on their part to transition to the new platform. Studies such as those identified in the opportunities section will help with this effort.
2. Need for Training – faculty will need assistance with building their local templates for using ePortfolios and with just the basics of using an online repository to upload materials and build reports of their own and their students' work. Students will be more comfortable with this technology as many of them use similar tools on a regular basis (e.g. myspace) however, they will need training in refining their skills and materials to match the more professional ambiance of an ePortfolio space that reflects on the university's brand image.
3. Privacy – Many students and faculty members are concerned about controlling access to materials posted to the ePortfolio site – particularly in light of recent breaches of our campus servers.
4. Digital Rights – Who owns the material posted to the ePortfolio is another important issue to consider. While there are technologies to control how and how many times material is accessed (e.g. Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Livecycle Policy Server), it's important to make sure that any material posted is copyright protected when necessary and that students, faculty and staff are aware of their rights and how to protect them. Also, when negotiating contracts with any vendors who might host the ePortfolios, it should be noted that rights to content remain with the creator and/or the university as agreed upon by all parties concerned.
5. Who pays? – will the university provide this as a service to all students, faculty, staff or will students be required to purchase ePortfolio services during their time at the university and beyond? If the latter, who will have control over the quality and access to any materials posted by students?

Recommendation

At this point it is too early to commit to a single ePortfolio solution for the entire campus. There is no single solution that meets both our student learning and assessment requirements. Furthermore, most of the ePortfolio solutions are still in early stages of development so it is unwise to commit at this point – particularly since major CMS vendors with a significant number of SJSU customers (e.g. the now merging WebCT and Blackboard) are planning entry into this market.

We recommend that:

- the university undertake several ePortfolio pilots in the next year, including the following:
 - An integrative learning pilot in collaboration with MUSE and the Integrative Learning Panel along with CSUMB and SFSU using AVnet

(core to our collaboration with the National Coalition on Electronic Portfolio Research)

- a server-based, storage only solution for the Communication Studies Department
- A Health Education pilot to assess the use of ePortfolios to support professional reviews of student credentials as well as learning activities within disciplines such as Nutrition, Health Science, Recreation & Leisure Studies.
- the university continue to collaborate with other universities in the CSU system – to conduct research into the learning impacts of ePortfolios (as part of the National Coalition on Electronic Portfolio Research cohort) and influence the development of an ePortfolio system that addresses our unique requirements (in collaboration with a motivated ePortfolio provider such as AVNet)
- the Senate extend the term of the ePortfolio Task Force for another year, adding a representative from the King library to make sure that the task force recommends a solution that is compatible with the library’s digital repository solution. The task force will meet quarterly to monitor and integrate findings from various ePortfolio pilots and efforts. At that point we expect to have research results that will potentially convince most of the university community that ePortfolios are worth the investment of effort and resources. This critical mass of university users – along with other users systemwide –stronger vendor relationships, and advances in ePortfolio offerings will place us in a better position (vs. right now) to negotiate an attractive pricing and support arrangement.