E-Portfolios give learning a boost

E-Portfolios can help your students, your faculty, and your institution

E-Portfolios can be used to foster introspection

and cumulative learning among your students; they can provide feedback for your faculty on their curriculum and presentation; they can deliver tangible evidence of program effectiveness to your institution. How your particular campus (or academic department) uses e-portfolios will depend on your institutional culture, direction and goals.

Wouldn't it be nice to have a tool and a solution partner flexible enough to accommodate your unique perspective? [Enter OSPortfolio and Serensoft.]

E-portfolio Buzz

As the concept of contextual learning becomes increasingly formalized and expands beyond the walls of the classroom, e-portfolios are emerging as higher education's "must-have" tool to foster reflection, cumulative learning and assessment. E-portfolios have become a buzz word in higher education with volumes written in the past few years by all kinds of 'experts'. The questions are: who is actually using them now? Who will be shaping the development of the tools as they evolve? How and to what extent are they being used within institutions?

For Instance...

As broad a concept as the e-portfolio currently is, there are institutions that are using it effectively to improve the learning experience for students; using it to deliver meaningful feedback for the faculty in designing their curriculum; they are providing sound information to the institution on the potency, influence and validity of their programs.

Take the case of **Abilene Christian University** for example. ACU sees e-portfolios as so central to enhanced learning outcomes that they have structured an entire new graduate program around e-portfolios. From the beginning, the Leadership in Learning program was truly a joint endeavor between a group of forward-thinking faculty and the Academic Computing office of the IT department. The result is an innovative, structured, well-thought-through academic program where e-portfolios are central to maximizing cumulative and contextual learning.

According to George Saltsman, Director of Educational Technology for ACU, "Serensoft responded to our needs by providing the right balance of expertise and customer service. Their ability to carry out the hosting and installation of OSP (electronic portfolio application) allowed us to focus on the academic and pedagogical benefits of the electronic portfolio implementation".

E-Portfolios: wondering where to begin?

Institution-wide roll out of an e-portfolio solution is a significant undertaking. In fact, it is really a series of separate projects. Each academic department will have different objectives—and consequently vastly different perspectives on how they want students to use an e-portfolio. The best way to begin is with a pilot in one or two departments. A pilot accomplishes several things:

- Your institution will get a feel for the application without making a huge commitment to a particular platform

- Limited investment means limited financial risk

- Focus on the needs—and track the results—of a relatively small group (faculty & students)

- No licensing cost—all of your resources go for training, customization and support

- Departments participating in any pilot program are commonly viewed as innovative 'trailblazers'—carrying an air of exclusivity.

Serensoft makes the pilot process as simple as possible for Faculty & Students—and painless for IT. By applying our Providence[sm] Methodology, Serensoft can provide a turn-key, flexible, customized and cost-effective e-portfolio pilot. We make it easy. Contact us for a demo.

Cost-Effective Pilot...Really

Serensoft can provide a single departmental e-portfolio pilot for an institution—including assessment, completely customized design, IT support, faculty & student support, iterative training—for about $5,000. Additionally, we can even provide for short- or long-term hosting of your e-portfolio—allowing for minimal to no disruption to IT.

Costs are low because we employ, as the foundation of our solution, the industry standard open source e-portfolio platform, OSPortfolio. This means is that you pay no licensing cost... zip...zero. This means the resources are all directed toward what matters most... making the solution meet your needs and ensuring the success of the project (iterative training, set-up and customization, support).

Meet Serensoft

When you get to know Serensoft, you will see that we are a pure services company focused only on what is best for our higher education partners. Serensoft listens to your goals and concerns and offers a range of solutions – including open source systems that have no software licensing costs whatsoever. Looking out for your institution's best interests is central to Serensoft's *Providence[sm] Methodology*.

Whether it's Learning Management, E-portfolios or Administrative Computing, Serensoft listens and designs fully customized solutions aimed at your institution's needs.

Cool concept, when you think about it.

Sakai

Commercial Affiliate

The Sakai foundation has chosen Serensoft to be an official Sakai Commercial Affiliate

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