

EPORTFOLIO PROJECT

TENNESSEE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY



CHALLENGE

The ePortfolio project is a crucial component of the curriculum that allows you to apply concepts, theories, and skills to real-world situations. Tennessee Tech strives to make this experience as impactful and transferable as possible.

Your challenge is to create an ePortfolio that highlights your professional development. The following pages will guide you through this process. Best of luck.

TASKS

Your ePortfolio is comprised of five tasks that must be completed. The tasks do not necessarily have to be completed in this order, but you may find that this is a logical method.



TASK 1: PLATFORM AND LAYOUT

You will select a platform to design your ePortfolio. You need to select a layout that is both professional and relevant.



TASK 2: PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

You will need to have a professional photo taken to include in your ePortfolio. Dress appropriately.



TASK 3: RESUME / CURRICULUM VITAE

You will create either a resume or a curriculum vitae, depending on your goals following graduation.



TASK 4: ARTIFACTS

You will add artifacts from your classes or other relevant sources that demonstrate your professional potential.



TASK 5: REFLECTION

You should write a reflective essay on your experiences.



TASK 1: PLATFORM AND LAYOUT

PLATFORM

The first task of creating your ePortfolio is to decide on a platform. This is the online tool that you will use during this project to create, present, and update your ePortfolio. You should keep in mind five aspects when selecting a platform:

- Ease of Use
- Customization
- Storage
- User Support
- Administrative Settings

The purpose of this section is to help you select a platform to meet the needs and goals of your ePortfolio by considering each of the five aspects mentioned above on three potential platforms.



EASE OF USE

Ratings were determined by simplicity of design, level of intuitive use, and how accessible the platform is for new users.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix	★★★★☆	Has a simple drag-and-drop interface, but some find it slightly glitchy and think tool organization is less intuitive.
Wordpress	★★★☆☆	Fairly easy to use. The page editor feels like a word processor, but content on the dashboard can be overwhelming to some.
Weebly	★★★★☆	Has a simple drag-and-drop interface, but some find this structure less flexible and harder to control.



CUSTOMIZATION

Ratings were determined by the number of templates, fonts, colors, and overall features that allow users to develop their website in an effective way.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix	★★★★☆	Offers dozens of fonts, hundreds of templates, and a large color spectrum.
Wordpress	★★★☆☆	Has many templates and fonts, but lacks significant personalization because of generic formatting.
Weebly	★★★☆☆	Offers hundreds of fonts and templates, but its drag-and-drop interface lacks flexibility.




STORAGE

Ratings were determined by how much room users have to upload content to the cloud-based storage within the platform without having to purchase more space.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix		500 MB of storage without purchase. Also offers a gallery to view all personal documents that have been uploaded.
Wordpress		3 GB of storage without purchase and a gallery feature to view documents that have been uploaded before.
Weebly		Unlimited storage for free. Documents must be re-uploaded each time they are used on the site.




USER SUPPORT

Ratings were determined by the amount of technical help available within the platform (e.g., FAQs, forums, live chats, and tutorials) and by the help content's clarity and ease of use.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix		Has large FAQs and public forum sections. Offers interactive video tutorials. Can call or submit a ticket for support.
Wordpress		Has an extensive support forum which is updated constantly by users and administrators.
Weebly		Has a large forum and on-hand support team. Includes a steps-to-publish checklist during website creation.

ADMINISTRATIVE SETTINGS

Ratings were determined by the types of privacy settings, search engine optimization, and sharing capabilities.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix		Has the ability to set up different levels of privacy, including free password protection.
Wordpress		Can set up different levels of privacy and password protection Includes advertisements unless the premium version.
Weebly		Has the ability to set up different levels of privacy. Must purchase the pro version for password protection.

YOUR TURN!

Which aspects are most important for you when selecting a platform?

Which platform will you use to create your ePortfolio?

LAYOUT

After you have selected the platform you will be using for your ePortfolio, it is now time to select the layout. This is how your audience will interact with your ePortfolio, so it is crucial that the layout is user-friendly and professional. The purpose of this section is to guide you through selecting a layout that communicates your message by considering the producer, the consumer, and the design. Your ePortfolio should have the following sections:

- About Me + Professional Photo
- Resume / Curriculum Vitae
- Artifacts
- Reflection
- Contact Information

Of course, there is some flexibility for the layout of your ePortfolio. Just be sure to include the required content. You have the creative liberties to make this project your own.



THE PRODUCER (YOU)

You are the producer of your ePortfolio. This means that you are telling your story. The About Me section is an opportunity for you to introduce yourself and highlight the connections between your knowledge, skills, and experiences. Make sure your biographical information is relevant and professional. Keep the About Me section clear and concise. Do not overwhelm your audience with unnecessary details.

YOUR TURN!

What biographical information is important to your audience? Consider discussing your major, interests, or future plans. Remember to only include relevant information.

Which knowledge, skills, and experiences would you like to highlight? How will you guide your audience to other parts of your ePortfolio?

THE CONSUMER (EMPLOYERS / GRADUATE PROGRAMS)

Employers and graduate programs are the consumers of your ePortfolio. This means that they are interested in learning more about you and your potential for impact within their institutions. While this is not a section of the ePortfolio, it is imperative for you to spend from time considering the target audience who will be consuming the finished product.

YOUR TURN!

Briefly describe your professional goals. What do you hope to accomplish before graduation? After graduation?

Using your previous response as a guide, who is your target audience?

What knowledge, skills, and experiences are important to your audience? What concepts or words/phrases should you include in your digital profolio to appeal to your audience?



THE DESIGN (CONNECTION OF PRODUCER AND CONSUMER)

You should consider how design elements serve to connect the producer of the ePortfolio with the consumer of the ePortfolio. Design elements in your ePortfolio include color, font, space, and flow. You will also want to include non-text elements such as boxes, icons, buttons, and images. As with any professional website, your ePortfolio should be functional and aesthetically pleasing. Evaluate these four design principles:

- **Contrast:** If two items are not exactly the same, make them very different. In general, high contrast provides more emphasis while low contrast provides less emphasis.
- **Repetition:** Repeat some aspect of design throughout the entire page or ePortfolio. Repetition creates consistency and helps the reader follow along.
- **Alignment:** Everything on the page should have a visual connection with something else. Align items to give the page coherence. Do not place anything arbitrarily on the page.
- **Proximity:** Group related items close to each other and space unrelated items far apart. Related items are seen as one cohesive group rather than a bunch of unrelated parts.



TASK 2: PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

The second task of creating your ePortfolio is to have a professional photo taken of yourself. Your ePortfolio is a mode of communication that highlights your professional development. Thus, the professional photo plays a central role in demonstrating your potential. It also simply adds a face to your ePortfolio, which makes it seem more humanized. The purpose of this section is to help you make decisions about the professional photo for your ePortfolio by considering the following factors:



COST

How much are you able to spend on your professional photo? It does not have to be expensive. Always shop around for the best deal.

CONTENT

What in the photo contributes to a professional message? You should dress appropriately and should be the only subject. It needs to be a fairly recent photo, too.

QUALITY

Does the photo meet standards necessary for a website? It should not be blurry or pixelated.

QUANTITY

How many photos do you want to include in your ePortfolio. Only one is required. This will effect the cost.

Model 1



Model 2



Model 3



While each model photo is a little different, they share several common characteristics, including high quality and single subject. Be sure that your professional photo captures not only who you are as an individual but who you can be at a particular institution (employer/graduate program).

YOUR TURN!

Indicate whether or not the photo should be considered for a ePortfolio.



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No

TASK 3: RESUME / CURRICULUM VITAE

RESUME / CURRICULUM VITAE

The third task of creating your ePortfolio is to design either a resume or a curriculum vitae (CV). While the resume and CV provide details about your professional history and skills, you might think of them as ways to tell your story to possible employers and/or graduate programs using clear and concise language. The purpose of this section is to help you make decisions about the structure and content of your resume or CV, depending on the audience. As a general rule, a resume is generally better for employers while a CV is generally better for graduate programs. Again, it is important to know your audience and their expectations.



A TYPICAL RESUME

- **Name and Contact Information:** Your residential address might be most appropriate, especially if you do not want your current employer to know that you are looking for another job!
- **Education:** A listing of your degrees or certifications and educational institutions or programs.
- **Work Experience:** Names of the companies or organizations that you have worked for, the location of each company, the dates worked, your job title, and duties performed.

A TYPICAL CURRICULUM VITAE

Name and Contact Information: Contact information for your current institution or place of employment may work best, unless you do not want your colleagues to know that you are job-hunting.

Areas of interest: A listing of your varied academic interests.

Education: A list of your degrees earned or in progress, institutions, and years of graduation. You may also include the titles of your dissertation or thesis here.

Grants, Honors, and Awards: A list of grants received, honors bestowed upon you for your work, and awards you may have received for teaching or service.

Publications and Presentations: A list of your published articles and books, as well presentations given at conferences. If there are many of both, you might consider having one section for publications and another for presentations.

Employment and Experience: This section may include separate lists of teaching experiences, laboratory experiences, field experiences, volunteer work, leadership, or other relevant experiences.

Scholarly or Professional Memberships: A listing of the professional organizations of which you are a member. If you have held an office or position in a particular organization, you can either say so here or leave this information for the experience section.

References: A list of persons who write letters of recommendations for you, which includes their contact information.

TASK 4: ARTIFACTS

ARTIFACTS

The fourth task of creating your ePortfolio is to select and add artifacts. Artifacts are documents and media that you include in your ePortfolio. They act as evidence of your knowledge, skills, and experiences. As you gather artifacts for your ePortfolio, remember to display relevant evidence and include a variety of artifacts. The purpose of this section is to offer suggestions for artifacts, which might be collected from the following sources:

- Courses
- Internships
- Research
- Service Learning
- Leadership Positions
- Study Abroad



LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Paper or Essay
- Presentation
- Grant Proposal
- Research Poster
- Lab Report

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

- Syllabus
- Lesson Plan
- Activities and Assessments
- Recorded Sessions
- Teaching Philosophy

SKILLS, WORKSHOPS, CERTIFICATIONS, AWARDS,

- CPR/AED
- Foreign Language
- SPSS, NVivo, Qualtrics
- Honor Societies
- Press Releases

INTERNSHIP, WORK, SERVICE LEARNING, STUDY ABROAD

- Products from Collaborative or Individual Projects
- Flyers or Brochures
- Blogs, Photos, or Videos
- Leadership/Service Philosophy



When selecting artifacts for your ePortfolio, remember the consumer. Ask yourself: Who will be interacting with your ePortfolio? The answer will impact what you include in your ePortfolio and what you exclude in your ePortfolio. The following exercise can guide you through this.

YOUR TURN!

As you consider the artifacts that you are going to include in your ePortfolio, it is also important that you think about their overall purpose and contribution to your ePortfolio as a whole. Remember, artifacts are the evidence of your skills and experiences. For example, a study abroad program is not an artifact, but the journal you kept for class while you were abroad is an artifact.

Artifact

Purpose

TASK 5: REFLECTION

REFLECTION

The fifth task of creating your ePortfolio is to reflect on your experiences. Reflection is a significant component of the experience, as it is your opportunity to connect what you learned to the bigger picture of your academic and professional journey. You should write a reflective essay on your experiences.

A good way to think about reflection is by asking yourself: **What? So what? Now what?** Below are a set of questions to consider when processing the experiences.



QUESTIONS

- What were your expectations before you started your work?
- What knowledge of your field was most important?
- In what ways were you able to apply what you have learned in your academic coursework?
- How might you apply what you learned in your academic coursework?
- What transferable skills did you develop through your experience?
- Have you identified any skills or areas that you would like to further develop?
- What pushed you outside of your comfort zone? What was the biggest challenge you encountered?
- What new ideas or questions were raised as a result of this experience?
- What was the most important thing you learned about yourself?
- What was your greatest accomplishment or reward?
- In light of your experiences, how have your personal goals evolved?

YOUR TURN!

One of the best ways to show a potential employer or graduate school how qualified you are for a position is to talk about your successes in past internships, jobs, or activities. In thinking about these, mark the skills you gained or improved.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking initiative | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting deadlines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working under pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing to a work team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing data and statistics | <input type="checkbox"/> Coming up with ideas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating well with staff and clients | <input type="checkbox"/> Following through on plans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delivering a presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Being accurate and detailed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being persuasive | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing articles or reports |

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ETHICS

As you develop your ePortfolio, it is important for you to keep in mind some ethical aspects of the project. In other words, you will be making choices and taking actions that could impact yourself and others. The public nature of the Internet often raises questions about what media to include and how to give appropriate credit. Any time you use the work of others — such as images, videos, and music — you must be aware of copyright, fair use, permission, attribution, and representation. Although such concepts can be complex, working within these parameters is an essential component of creating your ePortfolio.

Creative Commons is the most popular database for images, videos, and music. Remember, even if you use these databases, you will probably still need to credit the artist.

- search.creativecommons.org
- pixabay.com
- commons.wikimedia.org



If you want to include photos or videos of persons other than yourself, it is required that you receive their consent first. The form for this can be found at https://www.tntech.edu/files/news/photo_rel_form.pdf.

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