ePortfolios for Reflective Learning: Documenting the Evolution of Intellectual Pathways at NYU Gallatin
Nick Likos
Chief Information & Operations Officer

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1600 Students

1600 Concentrations
Each a completely unique major

19 Schools
1 ePortfolio Dream
[Students] need to shift from thinking about jobs and careers to thinking about challenges and problems.

So that they can . . .
... plan for what many call a ‘portfolio career’. This type of career is made up of somewhat disparate projects or roles and will be more prevalent.

Alina Dizik, Jean-Philippe Michel
BBC.com, 4/24/17
Some of my students don’t even remember what courses they took last year.

NYU Gallatin faculty member
WHAT NYU GALLATIN STUDENTS DO

- Concentration
- Coursework
- Colloquium
- Affinity groups / Community
- Independent Studies / Tutorials / Internships
- Senior Project
WHAT NYU GALLATIN STUDENTS NEED

- Concentration
- Coursework
- Affinity groups / Community
- Colloquium
- Senior Project
- Independent Studies / Tutorials / Internships

ePortfolio
PILOT NUMBER ONE: SAKAI OAE (Open Academic Environment) AND THE GLOBAL DREAM
FROM ONE SMALL SCHOOL, AROUND THE GLOBE AND BACK
FROM EPORTFOLIO TO NEXT GEN LMS

Nine schools at NYU

Six Sakai steering committee member universities.

Indiana University
University of California, Berkeley
Georgia State University
Cambridge University
Charles Sturt University
A “Too Many Cooks” mind map by artist John Hogan.
John Hogan
NYU GALLATIN

- Flexible repository
- Sharing
- Tagging, browsing, searching
- From first-year to alumni
- Public-facing option

EVERYONE ELSE

- Everything Gallatin wanted
- Every function of an LMS
- Every function of Facebook
It Didn’t Work
WHY THE GLOBAL PORTFOLIO/“ACADEMIC FACEBOOK” DID NOT WORK

All those Cooks
Far too many requirements from far too many stakeholders.

The Life of Metadata
We never mandated, or really even recommended what content should be included. We thought students left to their own tagging would do it.

Technology Over Pedagogy
We elevated technology over pedagogy.
1

PILOT NUMBER TWO: GOOGLE DRIVE
REGROUP, GO SMALL
WHY GOOGLE DRIVE

Existing Platform

- University already using Google apps.
- Flexible storage
- Sharing

Structured Submissions

We told students what to collect

- Syllabi
- Papers
- Concentration rationale
- Plans of Study

Free

Sort of mostly
How many used the ePortfolio

- 98% Adopted
- Not Adopted

Adoption rate
WHY THE GOOGLE DRIVE-BASED EPORTFOLIOS DID NOT WORK

**Inflexible System**
Frustrating and time-consuming administration. No metrics.

**No Incentive**
Nothing special about Google drive. We did not articulate its value to students and faculty.

**No Appealing Public Face**
In the end, it was just a repository. Students wanted to be able to tell a public story.
WHERE IS THE INCENTIVE?

The work
- Re-working
- Syllabi/courses
- Advising and Training
- Prompting

The payoff
- Concentration
- Capstone
- Graduation
Some thoughts about the failures of the first two pilots
MANDATORY?

Can a school-wide ePortfolio work if it is not mandatory?
The amount of work we thought an institutional ePortfolio would take to implement

The amount of work it actually takes
Stakeholder buy-in
Engaging & training faculty
Engaging & training students
Building/staging a platform
Defining the outcomes and goals
Integrating with other systems
PILOT NUMBER 3: WORDPRESS

EPORTFOLIOS FOR REFLECTION
WHY WORDPRESS

Existing Platform
- NYU IT support & training
- Multimedia storage
- User authentication
- Free

Tailored Template
IA suggests what to collect...
- Courses & coursework
- Proposals
- Milestones

...and what to reflect on
- Course description & expectations
- End-of-Semester reflections

Shareable & Public-Facing
- Customizable
- Granular visibility options
FACULTY NEEDS

Scaffold the development of their concentrations.

Synthesize the academic, experiential, and performative.

Facilitate communication of student work.
STUDENT NEEDS

Archive
and organize their work.

Showcase
and share their best work.

Network
with peers.
STUDENT X

MY EPORTFOLIO

a showcase of work
a visualization of ideas
an archive of growth
a map of progress
a way forward...
- Fall 2016
- 330 UG Students
- 19 Courses
- Not mandatory
79% ePortfolio has the potential to be beneficial
TOP BENEFITS

55%

*It will help me *keep track* of all my courses, internships, Plans of Study, etc.*

48%

*It will help me *write* my IAPC, booklist, and rationale.*

42%-43%

*It will allow me to *showcase* the work I’ve been doing when applying to internships, jobs, and graduate schools. It will help me *develop my concentration* by keeping a blog of my Gallatin experiences.*
LACK OF TIME & MOTIVATION
“feels like extra work”
“I’m not sure what to upload”
“no one told me to do it”

SUGGESTIONS
“Incorporate it into class”
“make it part of the curriculum”
“add it to homework assignments”
THE CHALLENGES

- Student & Faculty buy-in
- Training
- Integration into curriculum
THE SOLUTIONS?

- ePortfolio elective
- Student Ambassadors
- Increase training opportunities
- Newsletters
Thanks!

ANY QUESTIONS?

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