

**MAKE YOUR
MISSOURI
STATEMENT.**

The ePortfolio Handbook

A Guide to Building and Maintaining
Professional Student ePortfolios

Missouri State
U N I V E R S I T Y

The ePortfolio Handbook

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Introduction

In today's multimedia culture, ePortfolios are useful to help an individual stand out among the competition. In fact, an extensive survey done for the Association of American Colleges and Universities by Hart Research Associates titled "Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success" gives compelling evidence to support the benefits of working with ePortfolios. One of their major findings is:

"Fewer than half of employers say that they find the college transcript very (9%) or fairly (36%) useful in helping them to evaluate job applicant's potential to succeed at their company [while] a notably higher 80% of employers say that it would be very (36%) or fairly (44%) useful to be able to see an electronic portfolio of student work that summarizes and demonstrates a candidate's accomplishments in key skill and knowledge areas (e.g. effective communication, knowledge in their field, applied skills, evidence-based reasoning, and ethical decision-making)." (Hart Research Associates 13)

Also, working with an ePortfolio can help showcase specific skills during the job search and work more efficiently with LinkedIn. Including a link to your ePortfolio on your LinkedIn profile makes it easier for recruiters to access these materials.

For those looking for professional opportunities in non-traditional areas such as advocacy, freelance, or web-based career paths (such as influencers and bloggers), an ePortfolio becomes even more essential to virtually illustrate one's individual pursuits, experience, and education. Beyond this, the ePortfolio platform offers diverse and/or diverse-minded students an opportunity to articulate and celebrate their specific backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge.

This document addresses the creation of ePortfolios as a major assignment in a variety of writing classes. We will answer the following questions in defining ePortfolios:

- What is an ePortfolio?
- How are they traditionally used?
- How do they demonstrate important, professional skill sets?
- How can they expand to address non-traditional, professional opportunities?
- How can they be better utilized by diverse-minded employment seekers?

The following text and videos demonstrate the process of creating ePortfolios for multiple purposes.



Figure 1: Introduction Video (Source: "Introduction." *YouTube*, uploaded by Lori Rogers and Judy Tarbox, 9 February 2026, <https://youtu.be/izjqkXnAM8?si=RxpqL2YxAJQloqUP>)

Pre-planning

Pre-planning is a critical step in the process of creating a dynamic ePortfolio. The efforts made at this point will help the drafting stage: free writing, outlining, and creating. You need to consider the overall persona you want to portray to your primary audience along with the impact you want to achieve. Both can be achieved by first developing a plan of work:

1. Identify your target audience, purpose, and context.
2. Study other ePortfolios for inspirational design and textual elements.
3. Identify and gather key artifacts that could be used.
4. Develop a plan of action for the project.

See Figure 2 for more information.

Identify the Purpose, Target Audience, and Context

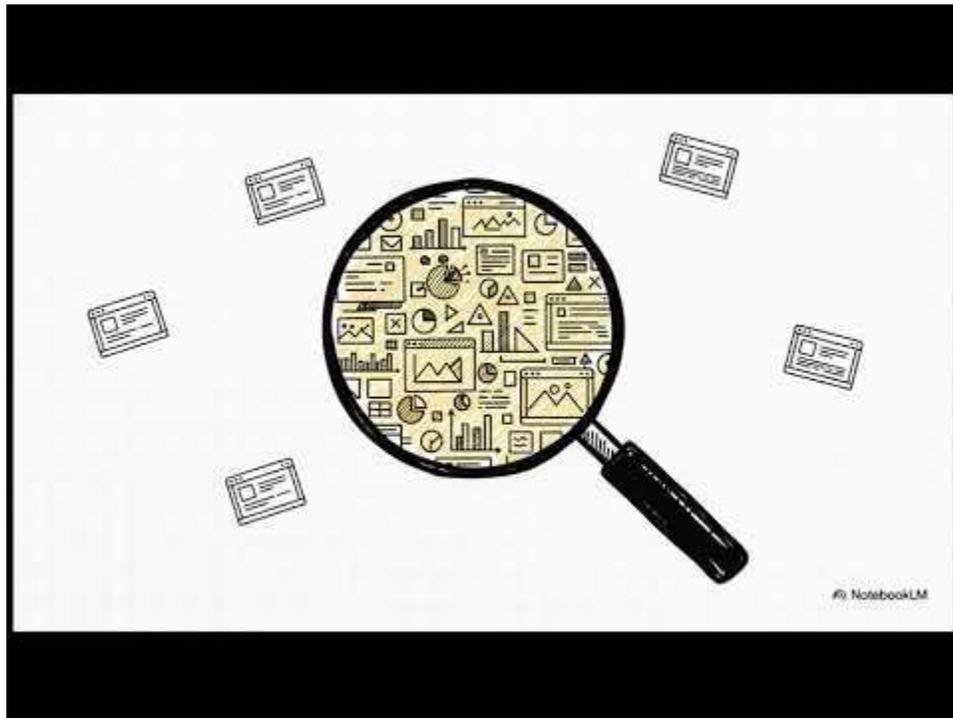


Figure 2: Pre-Planning Video (Source: "Pre-Planning." *YouTube*, uploaded by Lori Rogers and Judy Tarbox, 9 February 2026, https://youtu.be/zBFbPtTuC58?si=8_hM8MYN_2p7KzmY)

Your Task: ePortfolio Planning Proposal

Write a brief proposal plan. Here are some items to consider in your planning:

- Purpose:
 - What are you trying to accomplish in this professional ePortfolio?
 - Do you have multiple goals for this platform?
- Target audience:
 - Who will view your professional ePortfolio?
 - What are their expectations of you and your site?
 - What impression would you like them to have of you?
 - Who do you want to impress the most?
- Context:
 - What are the professional expectations in your field of employment?
 - What cultural assumptions might viewers hold of you and your professional pursuits?
 - How can you address these expectations and assumptions through written text, visuals and design, and impactful use of evidence?

Then, analyze and conceptualize your ePortfolio structure. How do you want it to look? How should it function? What should be included?

Your Task: ePortfolio Analysis

Analyze several ePortfolios using the concepts introduced in the videos. Identify the primary persuasive techniques used and how these are portrayed through text, visuals, and multimedia.

- What claims are made?
- What types of evidence or artifacts are used?
- Is the reasoning sound?
- Are appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos apparent?

Once you have identified these elements, make note of the rhetorical interplay within the written text, function and use of graphics, and overall document design. Here are some good [Missouri State ePortfolio examples](#) you can analyze.

Select your Platform

Three main platforms have good Web 2.0 templates that allow for customization of your site. If you are so inclined, there are also ways to work with embedded HTML code and CSS to add functions that are not included in the template models: back-end editors. You should know:

- You can start with the free versions that give you a custom look and move to a paid version later if it becomes necessary.
- These programs also provide hosting. However, it is possible to move to your own host choice.

For a basic, first-time web portfolio, these website builder platforms are easy to use and create professional-looking sites. Here are videos that will help you discover and get started with each of these platforms:

[Wix.com Tutorials on YouTube](#)

[WordPress Tutorial for Beginners 2021 \[Made Easy\]](#)

[Weebly Tutorial for Beginners - How to Use Weebly in 2021](#)

As you work with these, remember to consider your own customization of the template to express your voice and message. Additional information to assist you is located in the section on [Document Design](#) in this handbook.

Develop the Content

ePortfolios represent an expanded notion of what a text is in today's technological, performance-driven culture:

“A text is the product of a skilled joining of different materials to make single, supple, whole, and strong stuff. Texts are synthetic, constructed, crafted, made up, and invented: sites of interpretation and disagreement, not fixed canons. Texts can be inscribed on stone, inked on vellum, printed on paper, punched into cell phones, or etched on silicon chips. Texts can also be writing, visual art, music [or other sounds] – and other techniques of remembering, describing, representing, initiating, or repeating events. Texts can be read as coherent systems of communication – writing, visual, music/sound.” (Schechner)

The strength of the ePortfolio is the ability to include artifacts that depict a variety of hard and soft skills by working with a variety of platforms – sound, interactive images, hyperlinks, and video clips (Tarbox). This section gives an overview of the types of content that define areas, provide evidence, and create voice and narrative.

Introduce Yourself – About Me

The “About Me” page is where you introduce yourself with information that is relevant to the purpose of your site while maintaining a professional tone. In business, this is where you begin to describe your brand. The following video gives good information on how to develop and write an effective “About Me” statement.



Figure 3: About Me Video (Source: "About Me." *YouTube*, uploaded by Lori Rogers and Judy Tarbox, 9 February 2026 https://youtu.be/2lOPj5d_L4o?si=YKÜcXui6lL7S8Tej)

Your Task - The "About Me" Page

Write a short bio on yourself—who you are, where you are from, what the major influences on your life are, your hobbies, likes, dislikes, anything important about you that showcases who you are. Your goal is to offer your story. This might include achievements, obstacles, and personal interests. Your “story” should include descriptive language and concrete examples to engage the reader. You may include photos of yourself and/or your interests, a link to your resume or curriculum vitae (CV), and a contact email, if appropriate. All elements, including text and images, should enhance your ethos or image as a future professional in your chosen field.

Philosophy Statement

An important aspect of an ePortfolio is that it enables you to discuss soft skills and ethics. One way to do this is to include your philosophy statement. This can be a personal philosophy statement that guides your everyday life or a professional philosophy statement that showcases your ethical views regarding your field of work. What kind of teacher, manager, engineer, or nurse do you strive to be?

Depending on your audience and the overall purpose of the site, one style of philosophy statement may work better than the other. For example, there are some fields such as education, nursing, other healthcare professions, and business management professions that look favorably upon, if not require, a philosophy or mission statement. How do you draft the best possible philosophy statement for your purpose?

Personal Philosophy

A personal philosophy is a statement that introduces you—your core beliefs and values. It is different from the “About Me” statement in that it does not specifically describe life experiences and biographical data. A good way of developing your personal philosophy might be to free write and map out things that are important to you.

- Think about people who have impressed you—and why?
- Think about events that impacted you—and why?
- What were the driving forces behind decisions you made or did not make—and why?

Once you have this self-reflection map, develop some clear criteria that guide your philosophy and write about it. As in any piece of good writing, you should have a strong thesis and clear paragraph structure that maps out the criteria. Finally, find a friend or family member that knows you well and have them review your piece. See what they think; do they see these qualities the same way you do? Do they have some additional points to make that you may not have seen in yourself?

As you are developing your personal philosophy, think about the types of artifacts you can include to provide evidence. For example, if one of your beliefs is giving back to others and the community, do you have pictures of working at a food bank? Or helping at a local blood drive? Together the statement and artifacts will provide a more powerful message.



Figure 4: Personal Philosophy Video (Source: "Personal Philosophy." *YouTube*, uploaded by Lori Rogers and Judy Tarbox, 9 February 2026, <https://youtu.be/OoX-X342hAI?si=K-mNTEegxX1beyqC>)

Professional Philosophy

- “
- Hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public.
 - Perform services only in areas of competence.
 - Issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.”

These three statements come directly from the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) Code of Ethics (National Society of Professional Engineers). There are other statements listed in the NSPE code, just as there are similar codes of ethics tied to most professions and accessible via professional associations, usually on the web.

These codes of ethics, codes of conduct, or mission statements can assist you in developing your own professional philosophy statement. They give you important guidance in critical thinking and ethics that indicate your distinct values in your profession as well as the language that is used and recognized.

Once you have identified the normative and applied ethics that inform your field, you can usually identify clear issues of concern that are driving the conversation and research as well. Then, you can determine how these are shaping your beliefs and best practices as you perform your job.

For example, one of the statements found in the Ethical Principles statements for Technical Communications Professionals deals with honesty. It states: “We also dedicate ourselves to

conciseness, clarity, coherence, and creativity, striving to meet the needs of those who use our products and services” (Society of Technical Communication). To those technical communicators who work extensively with web text of various kinds, this indicates a need to create texts that are readable, usable, and accessible to all audiences. This can be an important area to address in your own professional code of ethics: what you strive for in service to your audiences.

Finally, as in other sections of your portfolio, think of specific artifacts that could be used to demonstrate and provide clear examples of what you are trying to portray.

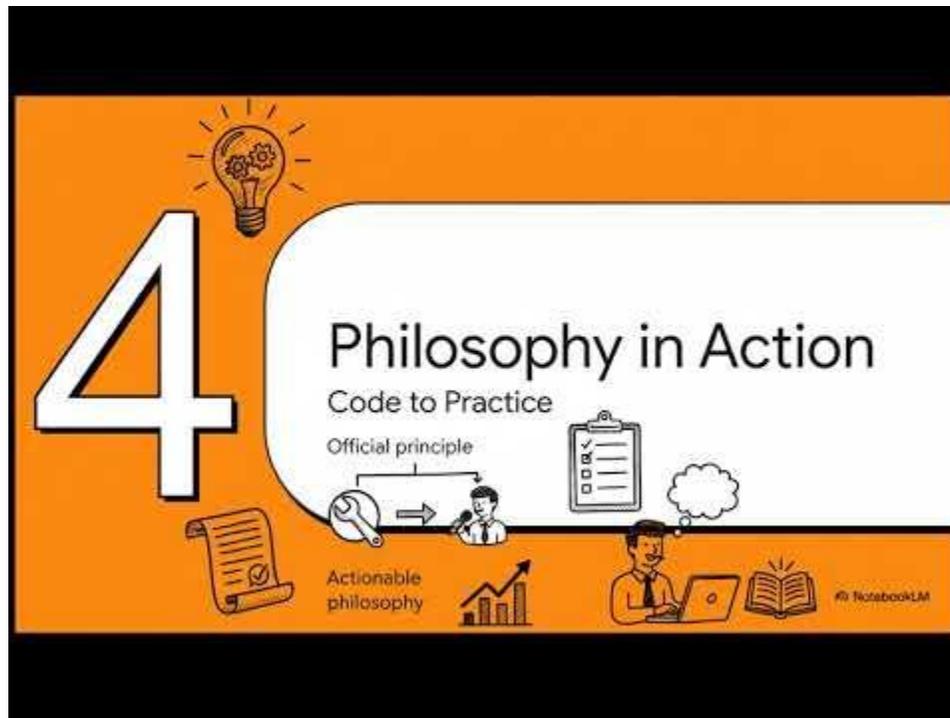


Figure 5: Professional Philosophy Video (Source: "Professional Philosophy." *YouTube*, uploaded by Lori Rogers and Judy Tarbox, 12 February 2026, <https://youtu.be/Jb5cek9KixA?si=1JXbzf2LyevrghaK>)

Your Task: Write Your Philosophy Statement

Write a 500-word philosophy statement about your identity and perspective from either a personal or professional angle. Remember, it serves as an introduction to you, focusing more on your beliefs and values than on life experiences and biographical data.

Professional Interests and Strengths

In the workplace, there are several strengths/personality tests you can take. Organizations frequently use one or the other in employee development programs. How can these help us?

By identifying your unique strengths, you can develop insights into your work persona and use this knowledge to:

- Write a strengths reflection.
- Select artifacts that will showcase your skills.

See Figure 6 for additional information and examples.



Figure 6: Professional Strengths & Skills Video (Source: "Professional Strengths & Skills." *YouTube*, uploaded by Lori Rogers and Judy Tarbox, 12 February 2026, https://youtu.be/_oCqTv3GVvs)

Finally, here is the link for the [HIGH5](#): *a free strengths test that has helped over 1,000,000 people to discover what they are naturally good at.*

Your Task: Write Your Professional Strengths

1. Watch the video that describes the test itself:
<https://youtu.be/YxfayFCGvs>
2. Take the test, create the report, and research skill sets that are desired in your field.
3. Think about how you can showcase your skills.
4. Answer these questions:
 - What life experiences did you think had already given you some insight into what being in your field meant and the skills required to work in your chosen field?
 - Work with the strength identification exercise. What are your main strengths? How do these intersect with the skills required to work in your chosen field?

Write up an analysis of your strengths and how they impact your professional experience.

Draft the Structure



Figure 7: Professional Strengths & Skills Video (Source: "ePortfolio Blueprint" *YouTube*, uploaded by Lori Rogers and Judy Tarbox, 12 February 2026, https://youtu.be/doFVq2Egpw?si=hX-otJbZzBo_w2F)

Developing an ePortfolio, like most projects, requires good planning and time management skills. Therefore, delineating tasks or steps to define the ePortfolio project is an important step in its development process. The following is an example of a schedule that can be used in the creation of an ePortfolio:

Steps in Platform Development

Before building your ePortfolio, it is important to do some planning, similar to the planning that goes into other texts you develop. Three tools can be used: wireframes, storyboards, and content outlines/scripts.

In professional web design, wireframes and storyboards are used because they are the most thorough and definitive in their results.

However, for a simple web text, such as the ePortfolio, a content outline or script can be a great starting point.

Topic	Tasks
Phase One: Pre-planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze and critique other ePortfolios. 2. Create a Planning Proposal. Choose a platform (or create your own). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with a pre-designed platform like WIX or WordPress.
Phase Two: Developing the structure of the site and text	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an outline. 2. Take a skills test. 3. Free write necessary texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About Me • Philosophy • Resume and Skills statements
Phase Three: Formalizing texts for main pages and selecting and introducing artifacts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify important artifacts. 2. Determine placement. 3. Introduce artifacts by answering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it? • Why does it matter? • How could it reflect you and your work?
Phase Four: Integrating artifacts, applying document design principles, and revising and editing text	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use or create visual elements and links to demonstrate your artifacts. 2. Apply document design concepts such as color, typography, and images. 3. Use Purdue OWL or a writer's handbook for editing assistance with text.
Phase Five: Uploading to the web, checking usability, and ensuring accessibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add the content (artifacts, text, and images) to your ePortfolio platform. 2. <u>Task analysis.</u> 3. <u>Accessibility analysis.</u>

Create a Content Outline or Script

The outline is the skeleton of a text providing the writer with a roadmap of how the final piece will shape up. When creating a digital text such as an ePortfolio, the writer drafts the main text and adds to the narrative through visual, mass media (audio/video), and hyperlink elements (Tarbox).

Steps in Working with Document Design

As with any designed text (print, digital, or web), it is important to consider the basics of document design. Even more importantly, working with these principles will make the template you choose reflect your personal message. Here are three quick steps to take that will improve your overall design:

1. Examine your selected template:
 - Does it reflect the expectations of your chosen field?
 - Does it allow for your personal presentation?
 - Are these two aspects balanced?
2. Evaluate the typeface and font used for headings and blocks of text:
 - Do your typeface selections consider the readability of serif and sans-serif texts?
 - Do your choices enhance your ethos as a future professional?
 - Do the colors of the font and background ensure easy reading?
3. Evaluate your visual elements (including photographs, quotes, memes, and videos):
 - Do visuals of yourself enhance your ethos as a future professional in your specific field?
 - Do they provide proof of your claims regarding strengths and skills?
 - How do visuals of activities, work or service experience, or achievements and interests fully reflect those experiences?

If you have any additional questions about document design, work with the following rubric. It gives links to good videos that give a brief overview of the individual concepts and a basic scale to help you evaluate your ePortfolio.

Criteria	Notes	High	Medium	Low
Overall Appearance	<u>Gestalt Psychology and Why It's Essential for Good Design</u>	Excellent – professional -looking and clear	Good – design does not detract from the viewer experience but does not enhance it	Poor – design detracts from the viewer experience
Colors and Patterns	<u>Color Patterns</u>	Enhance readability	Support readability	Detract from readability
Layout/Grid	<u>Layout and Composition</u>	Creatively enhances information	Balanced, uncluttered: adequate white space	Not balanced, cluttered: insufficient white space
Visual Elements	<u>Images</u> <u>Using Images: What you need to know</u>	All graphics are engaging and enhance the text	Some graphics enhance the text	Graphics do not enhance the text and/or are distracting
Typography	<u>Design with Type</u> <u>The History of Typography - Animated Short</u>	All text is clear and readable A few changes in size and color enhance understanding	Text is clear and readable Changes in size and color enhance understanding	Some text is clear and readable Frequent changes in size and color do not enhance understanding
Artifacts Including Text	Working with Multimedia What makes a good artifact?	A variety of artifacts are included The text is reflective and informative	A minimal number of artifacts included Incomplete text lacking information and reflection	Only one or two artifacts included Artifacts are of a similar type Missing text
Consistency of Structure	[To Be Added]	Similar prompts, tone, style, and language throughout	Minimal variation of written conventions and structure	Minimal variation and lacking consistent structure throughout

Maintaining the ePortfolio

Following the above steps and guidelines before hitting publish will ensure your ePortfolio delivers the image and message you hope to convey. Keep in mind that the ePortfolio is a living document that can develop alongside your professional and personal development. You can ensure access to your portfolio by including it in your CV, resume, and professional social media, such as LinkedIn. Finally, remember to update your ePortfolio periodically to keep it up to date.