

Student Electronic Portfolios: Discovering the Building Blocks for Success

Cara Lane, PhD, University of Washington

Study Goals

1. Identify the cognitive and technical skills that enable students to create successful e-portfolios.
2. Discover where and how students currently learn these skills.

Methods and Analysis

We used a contest to solicit examples from students of e-portfolios they believed to be successful. This approach allowed us to analyze a variety of portfolios from different disciplines. We collected and analyzed the following data:

- 1. Portfolios:** We reviewed 146 e-portfolios students submitted to the contest.
- 2. Questionnaires:** Each contestant completed a short questionnaire.
- 3. Interviews:** After the results of the contest were announced, we conducted interviews with twelve contestants.

Results

- 1. Varying Understandings of E-Portfolios:** Online writing conventions, drawn from the kinds of Web sites students most frequently visit, are their primary reference in creating an e-portfolio.
- 2. Knowledge of Intended Audiences:** Criteria for "successful" e-portfolios differ depending on the purpose of the portfolio and the conventions of the discipline.
- 3. Role of Visual and Web Design Skills:** Compared with paper portfolios, e-portfolios require additional skills in visual and Web design.

