

Google Sites Hub

Working with the UW Community to Create a New e-Portfolio Solution

The Challenge

In 2009, the Catalyst tools that had been supporting e-portfolios no longer met the needs and expectations of campus clients. We began an 18-month project to:

- assess client needs
- help clients transition to other tools

At the same time, the UW Windows Live and UW Google Apps services were coming online. All students could use cloud services for their campus email, and also have access to a rich set of Web applications.

In Autumn Quarter 2010, we released the Google Sites Hub (GSH) feature in Catalyst CommonView. GSH helps instructors:

- manage templates,
- enforce due dates,
- gather submitted student sites,
- and enables sharing of student sites with instructors and peers.

OUR SOLUTION

Catalyst e-Portfolio Tool

The Google Sites Hub integrates Catalyst CommonView workspaces and UW Google Sites. Google Sites provides rich and easy content creation tools, the Google Sites Hub manages the submission process.

E-Portfolio template:

Why use UW Google Sites (instead of commercial Google)?

UW Google Sites and UW Google Apps as a whole differ from the commercial accounts that Google offers. UW Google Apps don't include advertising and offer the same protections that apply to other UW-IT resources:

- FERPA
- Electronic discovery
- Copyright

The same guarantees student materials are not available through Google's commercial offerings or other Web-authoring programs.

TIPS FOR TEACHING

FOCUS ON OBJECTIVES

Design class activities and assignments that help students create or collect essential artifacts that demonstrate accomplishment of learning objectives, and develop the skills they need to create a strong, persuasive portfolio.

WITH PORTFOLIOS

STRUCTURE THE PORTFOLIO

Help students identify criteria for selecting artifacts related to the purpose of the portfolio. Do students want to:

- Demonstrate their skills?
- Outline steps in a process?
- Illustrate a theme in their work?

Help students think about how their selected artifacts might support—or detract from—the statement they want to make with their portfolio.

WRITE ABOUT AN ARTIFACT

A successful portfolio describes specific features of an artifact, and explains how these features demonstrate achievement of learning goals or relate to the purpose of the portfolio as a whole.

Share examples of effective reflection and provide other opportunities (outside the e-portfolio) for students to practice reflective writing.

DEVELOP DESIGN SKILLS

Early in the planning stages, discuss layout, navigation, and the appropriate visual style for the intended audience and purpose.

Offer students multiple examples of a look and feel that would be appropriate for the message they want to convey.

CONSIDER AUDIENCE

Provide opportunities for students to consider how an instructor, peer, advisor, potential employer, or graduate school reviewer might respond to the artifacts and structure of their portfolio, the language and content of their reflections, and the look and feel of the portfolio.