Learning to use ePortfolio can be profitable through MT Engage scholarship program

Not only is ePortfolio a valuable resource for students to use in creating a personal website to showcase their personality, accomplishments, and aspirations, it is a way for them to earn thousands in scholarships.

MT Engage awards up to 15 scholarships valued at $6,000 each academic year as part of a process that includes creating a Desire2Learn (D2L) ePortolio page.

MT Engage officially launched on campus in Fall 2016, said Lexy Denton, assistant director for MT Engage. Denton, Director Mary Hoffschwelle, and Assessment Coordinator Scott McDaniel have been with the program since then.

Playing new role in theatre accessibility

MTSU Theatre major Parker Chase is accustomed to finding her place in productions, whether on stage or behind the scenes. This year the senior learned a brand new role—operating Tucker Theatre's new captioning system.

Chase works for the theatre’s event staff and when the system was installed she took on the task of learning how to prepare text for presentation and operate the scrolling feature. ITD worked with Tucker staff to develop and implement the system as part of the University's ongoing commitment to accessibility.

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Video production online courses “blow up” at MTSU with help from Lynda.com access

Marie and Lynda hit the MTSU campus about the same time two years ago.

Since then as the result of their collaborative efforts, the number of online course offerings and enrollment in the Department of Media Arts is blowing up.

Marie Elliott, associate professor and program coordinator of Video and Film Production, said MTSU’s decision to offer Lynda.com video tutorial program to students, faculty and staff in the fall of 2016—just as she was beginning to teach here—has taken the program to the next level.

“This fall I am fully online—I am teaching four online classes,” said Elliott. And each one features “Lynda” courses to some extent.

“We’re one of the only places that is really utilizing Lynda.com and being able to do this. It is really something...And the students really like it,” Elliott said. “I’ve said this a million times to people: ‘Our students often come to us and want to know exactly what to do.’ And we can tell them what to do.

“But once they leave here, the technology changes so rapidly, they’re going to have to figure this stuff out on their own. So they can go to Lynda.”

Elliott’s online courses are the reasons why the video-editing software Premiere Pro is the top Lynda.com tutorial course topic heading into the 2018–19 academic year.

“Premiere Pro CC 2017 Essential Training: The Basics” and “Premiere Pro Guru: Organizing Assets” were the No. 1 and 2 most popular courses among University users, according to a report from August.

“(Post-Production I) 1080 relies totally on Lynda.com videos,” she said.

With its self-guided, hands-on lessons, Lynda.com lends itself perfectly to online classes like Post-Production I.

“It is basic editing. It is everything that’s in this book online,” Elliott said, holding the Post-Production I textbook. “It is highly technical stuff. . . . Some of them come in with no experience, some of them have done it in high school. This forces them to troubleshoot better; it forces them to learn the computer better.

“And when they watch the Lynda.com videos it’s way more digestible. It’s way more user-friendly,” she added.

Having Lynda as a student resource gives MTSU an advantage over similar programs and it is starting to show.

“We have matriculated probably 100 students through the (Post Production) 1080 class since piloting it online in spring,” Elliott said. “This spring there were two sections and this summer I taught two sections—all online.”

To access Lynda.com, sign in to PipelineMT, click on Resources, then the Lynda.com link.
It’s easier than ever to “grade” your instructors at the end of the semester, and the feedback received helps students, faculty, and the overall academic environment at MTSU.

The first use of online faculty evaluations this past spring went well, and a new shortened questionnaire should make the process even smoother, said ITD Systems Analyst 2 Curt Curry.

The questions are being consolidated from 40 down to just 10.

After a pilot program was completed last fall by several departments, the University gave the green light to phase in the program at the end of the spring 2018 semester.

Most students began using online evaluations through Campus Lab rather than the fill-in-the-bubbles paper form. Only a handful of faculty members who are in the tenure process continued to be evaluated using paper forms, he said.

While the responses were collected online, the results were processed using a database Curry developed. But this year the results will be processed through Campus Labs.

Curry has been in charge of the process for 20 years. He said that in recent years he sent out about 90,000 paper forms per semester to departments to be distributed to students. Then he received back approximately 60,000 completed forms to run through a scanning machine to pull the data.

University officials expected that nearly 70 percent participation rate to drop under the online system at first, and it did, but project it to increase as the word gets out, he said.

“If you got out and tell them there is a 40-question survey we’d like for you to fill out, they might say ‘I’m not going to do it,’” Curry said.

“But just 10 quick questions, they can get out their phone and do that.”

While paper evaluations were done by students in class, the online evaluation link is being sent out through the student MTMail program. That makes it important for students to monitor this email account throughout the year.

Ideas for improving participation include getting the word out on MTSU’s digital signage system or continuing to set aside class time for students to complete the online forms.

“It’s really to the faculty’s benefit to get bigger numbers, so hopefully the faculty will encourage their students,” Curry said.

It’s also a benefit to students, said Professor Charlie H. Apigian, former chair of the Information Systems and Analytics department.

“When we started the process for implementing an online student evaluation system, our main objective was to give students a voice in the most efficient manner that we can provide,” Apigian said.

“One of the best aspects of an online system is students can provide comments if faculty include custom questions. As you can imagine, comments directly from students can provide valuable feedback that can be instantly used in the classroom.”

For example, he received several comments on how students used his online videos.

“For this semester, I am making changes based on these suggestions,” he said. “Online evaluations are only as valuable as the responses that are collected. So it is extremely important for students to not only fill out the surveys, but take them seriously. As educators, we do value the opinion and feedback from our students.”
New Multi-factor Authentication will be mandatory for students in 2019

A new sign-in experience designed to protect your MTSU account will become mandatory for students starting in February 2019.

However, we strongly recommend you go ahead and opt in to Multi-factor Authentication now to protect your MTSU account and so you will be prepared.

With more MTSU systems using single sign-on (SSO) services and available on the internet, it has never been more important to protect your MTSU account from unauthorized access. SSO services make it easier to access MTSU systems using a common user name and password.

However, this also means the risk associated with a compromised user name and password significantly increases.

Phishing attacks, malware, and social engineering constantly target the University population with the intent of stealing users’ credentials to gain unauthorized access to MTSU systems. While users should always create strong passwords to protect against unauthorized access, passwords alone are simply no longer a sufficient means of authentication.

As a result, MTSU now offers Multi-factor Authentication services to protect your MTSU account.

This will be similar to services offered by Apple, Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook, Twitter, credit card companies, and other universities such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Northwestern, Notre Dame, University of Alabama, Ohio State University, and University of Michigan.

This means systems using SSO services will require a second factor of authentication in addition to a password. So if hackers compromise your password, they would still need a second factor, like your phone, to complete an authentication request. MTSU systems requiring students to enter the MTMail credentials or employees to enter their Pipeline/FSA user name @mtsu.edu use SSO services.

Starting on May 1, 2018, MTSU’s Information Technology Division made Microsoft Azure multi-factor authentication available to all students as an opt-in service before it will be required in February 2019.

Users will be able to visit the following MTSU website to opt in to the service and enroll their accounts. Students should log in with their MTMail user name and password (e.g. xyz2a@mtmail.mtsu.edu). Employees should log in with the MTSU Pipeline/FSA user name @mtsu.edu (e.g. jdoe@mtsu.edu).

Prior to opting in, we encourage you to read our FAQ site and enrollment instructions, which are available at the following links. If you have any questions, contact the ITD Help Desk at (615) 898-5345 or help@mtsu.edu.

MFA Web Resources

- Multi-factor Authentication FAQ Website
  www.mtsu.edu/security/mfa-faq.php
- Multi-factor Authentication Instructions
  www.mtsu.edu/security/mfa-instructions.php
- Multi-factor Authentication Opt-in Web Site
  https://webservices.mtsu.edu/EnableMFA
Printing update: Most are responsible but . . .

For the past year ITD has been evaluating MTSU student printing habits by reviewing the number of prints or copies made per student per semester.

The good news is that the vast majority of you (96.5 percent) are being responsible by printing less than 500 print clicks per semester.

In fact, of that group 81 percent are generating less than 100 print clicks per semester, which is remarkable and truly responsible. Thank you!

However, about 3.5 percent of students have abused printing privileges by printing excessively. If you are a printing abuser, expect to be notified of your future options.

Student Printing

When printing on campus, keep two colors in mind:

Think Blue...
Your BlueID card is now needed to print!

Think Green...
To avoid possible printing charges in the future, print responsibly now!

Unable to display this message

Click here to view message

Html message delayed: pNit - Date: 08/11/2018 11:21:06 (mtsu)

Cannot show this message

Click here to show this message

SMTP message delayed: uuzm - Date: 08/24/2018 10:30:45 (mtsu)
"Our first scholarships were awarded in Spring 2018," Denton said. The learning outcome of MT Engage is to help students use integrative thinking and reflection to demonstrate the ability to make connections across contexts and experiences.

"Creating an ePortfolio presentation allows students to reflect on the work they have completed and helps them to fully realize the knowledge and skills that they have obtained as an MTSU student."

This year, MT Engage awarded $54,000 in scholarship awards to nine students representing four MTSU colleges.

"Our scholarship is based on Cost of Attendance (COA) and everyone used almost every dollar of their scholarship award—in other words, the need is real and our scholarships do make an impact on their financial capacity to graduate on time," she said.

The scholarship application period is Jan. 15 to Feb. 15, 2019. In the meantime, students can work with tutors and other ePortfolio partners to begin the process of building the ePortfolio required for the application.

The overall winner for 2017–18 was Caroline Parker based on her strong ability to use reflective and integrative thinking and writing while meeting all of the requirements of the rubric, Denton said.

Other recipients were:
- Malina Langham
- Jessica Sullivan
- Ally Cherry
- Natalie Zuraf

Hafeli told MT Engage that he learned about ePortfolio in his University Seminar course. He said it was intimidating at first, but having to do a rough draft as part of his University Seminar course made him feel more prepared.

Hafeli spent approximately 7–8 hours on his ePortfolio presentation, most of which was spent writing and embedding PDFs.

He said he gained practical experience in designing and writing a web page and reflecting on everything he has done so far gives him a scope on how much he has done in two years.

Hafeli would recommend the ePortfolio process to everyone, but especially students who do not have much experience writing resumes. He suggested that students work on their projects throughout the semester in a step-by-step process, rather than at the last minute.

Up to two scholarships will be awarded in each academic college, and one overall winner will be chosen. Scholarships will be paid at the rate of $1,500 per semester for four semesters.

Any student who applies for the scholarship and meets the eligibility requirements also will receive priority registration.

To apply for the MT Engage scholarship starting in January you must:
- Have successfully completed two or more MT Engage course sections
- Have attended one approved ePortfolio training or workshop
- Have a minimum GPA of 2.75
- Have completed your 60th hour in Fall 2018 or are completing your 60th hour in Spring 2019
- Be currently enrolled as a student at MTSU with good academic standing
- Submit a complete ePortfolio presentation according to the MT Engage requirements

MT Engage applications
Find instructions on applying for an MT Engage scholarship at http://mtsu.edu/mtengage/Scholarship.php

The application process begins Jan. 15, 2019.
In addition, Chase, from Memphis, Tennessee, was part of the inaugural use of the captioning system in February as a performer in the play “A Taste of Sunrise,” which uses a lot of sign language. Chase learned American Sign Language to translate performances onstage and the captioning helped all audience members follow along.

“I was one of the translators for the main character,” she said. “I benefit from it in both ways—technical and performance. It’s pretty cool, I really, really enjoy it.”

“The most beneficial thing I’ve noticed as far as students from last semester to now, is we now know this technology exists,” she added. “And we didn’t really consider the audiences that needed that kind of technology, opening access to them during our shows. So it’s definitely been an eye-opener.”

In August she operated the captioning system for the first time during the Fall Faculty Meeting. That involved receiving, loading and preparing the text of the presenters—including the State of the University speech by MTSU President Sidney McPhee.

Chase said operating the system isn’t as easy as just hitting a button. In fact it involves hitting a lot of them at the right time. Preparation involves receiving the script, copying it into the captioning program, deleting unnecessary coding, upper-casing it, and making sure there are proper spaces between sections of the text.

Then she had to familiarize herself with the content and follow the pace of the speakers, speeding up when they skip a portion, or pausing when they ad-lib some remarks or to wait for applause. For performances, the system operator even has to come to rehearsals.

“This will definitely go on my resume,” Chase said. “I lot of the staff said ‘I really want to learn that.’ Because it is a new technology in our department. I am really honored that I get to work it.”

For Justin Reed, former production manager of Tucker Theatre, the challenge of the project was to solve one problem without creating new ones.

Starting in 2015, Reed and the theatre department began working with James Copeland, ITD assistant director of Classroom A/V technology, and the M3 Technology Group to provide captioning of performances and programs for deaf or hard of hearing audience members.

Funding was available from student Technology Access Fees, and the University had embarked upon an effort to improve accessibility services.

But in the world of performing arts it wasn’t as simple as putting up a giant screen over the stage. There were aesthetic concerns, he said.

“We really didn’t know how it was going to work. In the traditional sense in theatres they use LED light bars with running text. We did a lot of research and ... for me aesthetically, that just did not look good. It was just not attractive.”

“It’s kind of distracting for the rest of the audience.”

The goal was to have something in place by this past spring, when the theatre department was to present a production that featured a large amount of sign language along with spoken lines.

Several options were considered, including handing out iPads with scrolling captioning service; rolling out large-screen TVs on either side of the stage; or just placing large screens above or to the sides of the stage.

In consultation with Copeland, Lance Alexis, University director of ADA Compliance, and theatre department staff, Reed’s solution was to use old-fashioned teleprompter technology on two large screens mounted low on the handrails just across the aisle from two sections of seats designated for that purpose.

“Newscasters have been using it for decades. It was staring us right in the face—‘oh wow, why don’t we just use teleprompters?’” Reed said. “A prompter system is all script-based. Well, we’re theatre—we’re 100 percent script-based.”

The project began in January 2017 and was finished this past January, just in time for the February presentation of “A Taste of Sunrise.”

“In theatre we teach using non-traditional methods to accomplish goals,” Reed said. “That learning environment allows us to be on the cutting edge of new ideas when necessary...Creative ideas about how to accomplish a goal.”