



SWC 2b: ePortfolios: The Writing Basics

Creating an ePortfolio combines two different aspects—a writing aspect and a technological aspect—into a single project. This handout focuses on ePortfolio’s **writing** aspect. First, here is the definition of an ePortfolio:

An ePortfolio is a curated collection of “artifacts” (written projects, pictures, video and audio files, etc.) that document educational or professional development and are assembled into a digital presentation.

A completed ePortfolio looks much like a website and may include a wide variety of items or “artifacts.” What follows is a simple step-by-step guide to choosing or creating artifacts and assembling your ePortfolio.

Assembling an ePortfolio

Step 1: Consider instructions and expectations. The type of material you should include in an ePortfolio depends on the purpose of the ePortfolio. Pay attention to any instructions or expectations surrounding your ePortfolio. What might your audience expect? Should you focus on what you’ve learned in a particular class or across your whole time at MTSU? Should you focus on what you’ve learned in school, life, work, or a combination of the three? On the learning process itself or on finished projects? On yourself or on something else?

Step #2: Craft a theme or thesis. Just as your papers and speeches always have a main theme or thesis, your ePortfolio should also be based on a main idea—a claim or observation about yourself, your learning, the subject you’re studying, etc. Spend some time reflecting on what you most want to communicate through your ePortfolio.



University Writing Center

James E. Walker Library, Room 362
615-904-8237
uwcenter@mtsu.edu

Step #3: Create or choose content to support your theme. Just as you would write the paragraphs of a paper to support your thesis, it's important to choose or create content that supports the "big idea" of your ePortfolio. Material that doesn't connect to your theme may feel out of place or distracting. As you begin choosing or creating material, ask yourself the following question: *Given my theme, what type of material can I use to support it?*

Step #4: Assemble a variety of artifacts. Your professor may give you specific instructions on what types of artifacts to include. If they haven't, take this opportunity to think outside the box! Including a combination of text, image, and sound can add variety to your ePortfolio and help capture your reader's attention. Here is a list of different genres you can include in your ePortfolio. Ask yourself: *Do I have a relevant artifact that fits from this category? If not, could I make one?* Circle the categories that seem most promising.

- Essays
- Resumes
- Creative Writing
- Videos
- List of Goals
- Awards
- Oral Presentations
- Photographs
- Reflections
- Audio Clips

Step #5: Emphasize the connections between your theme and content through reflection. Even though the connection between your theme and some of your content may be obvious, emphasizing those connections through reflections and descriptions will show that you are thinking deliberately about your ePortfolio.

Step #6: Consider visual appeal. Once you upload content to your ePortfolio, you can choose from over forty themes to determine the "look" of your ePortfolio. Your visual elements should (1) complement your main ideas and (2) enhance your reader's experience. For example, if you're writing about technology, cold colors (blue, grey) and sleek lines may be a good choice. If you're writing about history, warm colors (red, brown) and softer shapes may represent your subject more. Arrange your artifacts in a way that guides the reader's eyes down the page. Experiment with headers, and make sure your fonts and font sizes don't clash with each other.

Visit the Writing Center for more help on your writing project! Stop by LIB 362 or visit us online at mtsu.mywconline.com to schedule an appointment.