

A Self-Reflection on Creating My Professional ePortfolio on Social Media through a Critical
Exploration of ePortfolios, the Perspectives of Marshall McLuhan, Douglas Rushkoff, and David
Sax, and My Experience as a Small Farm Owner: A Literary Review

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ABSTRACT

The thesis of this literature review investigates the value of creating a professional ePortfolio, on a private website linked to social media, to establish an online, professional identity for the author, who has trails of transcripts and decades of personal, academic and professional experience, through a self-reflection process by the author, which is based on a combination of insights gained from a critical examination of ePortfolio research, the perspectives of media theorists, and the author's experience as a student and small farm owner.

The author concludes there is value found in the process of creating, publishing, and maintaining a professional ePortfolio for the purpose of communicating a professional identity to a target audience, when ePortfolios are crafted by integrating ePortfolio research and media theory and utilized to illustrate one's holistic understanding of knowledge through reflection-based commentary provided for each artifact or project presented in a professional ePortfolio.

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis of this literature review investigates the value of creating a professional ePortfolio, on a private website linked to social media, to establish an online, professional identity for the author, who has trails of transcripts and decades of personal, academic and professional experience, through a self-reflection process by the author, which is based on a combination of insights gained from a critical examination of ePortfolio research, the perspectives of media theorists, and the author's experience as a student and small farm owner.

While there are multiple types of ePortfolios, the author will focus on the professional ePortfolio, which has been defined as “a living website that displays a student's skills or experiences through the presentation of artifacts (i.e., specific examples of learning and/or experiences), and through reflective statements that communicate to an audience outside of the university how the artifacts support professional goals”, while utilizing the framework of “Professional Identity: Combining development and learning theories, professional identity can be described as how we perceive ourselves, occupation, and career, along with explaining “self” to others (Meizrow, 2000; Wegner, 1998)” (Cordie et al., p.18).

The author proposes there is value to be found in the process of creating, publishing, and maintaining a professional ePortfolio for the purpose of communicating a professional identity to a target audience, when ePortfolios are utilized as a means to illustrate one's holistic understanding of knowledge through reflection-based commentary provided for each artifact or project presented in a professional ePortfolio, not just as a means to present evidence of academic achievement judged by a grade or rubrics.

The author suggests additional value may be gained by one who crafts a professional ePortfolio with an understanding of the interconnectedness between generating a professional identity and media theory related to professional identity, as presented through the perspectives of Marshal McLuhan, Douglass Rushkoff, and David Sax.

The topics under consideration for this literature review include ePortfolio research, the perspectives of media theorists, and the value of creating a professional ePortfolio on social media for the author: a small farm owner, a food security advocate, and a student currently enrolled in the MS Information Design and Technology Program at SUNY Polytechnic Institute, with multiple transcripts that span decades and degrees in different disciplines from Davis & Elkins College (Theater, 1991), SUNY Morrisville College (Agriculture AAS, 1998), Mohawk Valley Community College (Business AAS, 2016), and SUNY Polytechnic Institute (Interdisciplinary Studies BA, 2019).

A self reflection will be included at the end of this literature review. As an information design and technology student, a food security advocate, and an entrepreneur; who owns a small farm called Underground Greens, I feel creating my professional ePortfolio based on this review and utilizing the perspectives of Marshall McLuhan, Douglass Rushkoff, and David Sax to communicate my personal, academic and professional narrative to a specific target audience will allow me to clearly illustrate my professional identity. My professional ePortfolio, “Christina Carambia”, will include academic and business artifacts related to my academic experiences, reflections on those artifacts, and be published as a website on the Go Daddy platform at christinacarambia.com. A thematic approach will be used to organize the evaluation of the sources in this literature review.

EPORTFOLIOS

In the article, “Constructing a Professional Identity: Connecting College and Career Through EPortfolios,” the authors; Leslie Cordie, Jamie Sailors, Becky Barlow, and John S. Kush, describe a professional ePortfolio as follows: “The Professional ePortfolio is a living website that displays a student’s skills or experiences through the presentation of artifacts (i.e., specific examples of learning and/or experiences), and through reflective statements that communicate to an audience outside of the university how the artifacts support professional goals”, and while the authors also believe the most successful professional ePortfolios are developed by using the frameworks of professional identity, lifelong learning, and constructivism to steer students towards an effective construction of an ePortfolio, my professional ePortfolio and this review will focus on the framework of “Professional Identity: Combining development and learning theories, professional identity can be described as how we perceive ourselves, occupation, and career, along with explaining “self” to others (Meizrow, 2000; Wegner, 1998)” (Cordie et al., p.18).

In general, authors across current ePortfolio literature agree that ePortfolios are valuable because they offer students the opportunity to engage in deep, authentic learning by illustrating the interconnectedness of personal, academic and professional work on their ePortfolio website. When students “do ePortfolios well” by using effective frameworks and best practices, they are able to develop a professional identity and narrative, as well as effectively communicate the value of themselves to a targeted audience, online and in-real-time through self-publishing. (Kahn,p.55; Cordie et al.,p.24; Clark, 2019; Chantananungpak, 2015; Rhodes, 1018).

WHAT IS AN EPORTFOLIO?

In general, as a media object, an ePortfolio can be described as a personal website that presents a series of artifacts accompanied by reflective writing pieces, which illustrate, connect and contextualize the author's academic coursework, professional work, skills, experiences and learning, in an attempt to communicate a professional identity to a perspective audience (Rhodes, p.87; Auburn University | EPortfolio Project ,0:57; Cordie et al., p.17; Kahn,p.57). Students may choose to create an ePortfolio for academic assessment by a professor or a professional ePortfolio for a professional audience, like a future employer.

Student ePortfolio design varies across disciplines and personalities, as they are a unique representation of student's personal narrative and professional identity, however, generating any ePortfolio requires understanding the purpose, value, and student responsibility surrounding the creation of an ePortfolio. While there are similar journal articles, YouTube videos and websites about creating ePortfolios, Auburn University's content is current and relevant to my research as it addresses the value of a student and professional creating, self-publishing and maintaining an ePortfolio on a personally owned website to create an online, professional identity ("Auburn University | EPortfolio Project" ,0:57; Cordie et al.,p.17).

In the YouTube video, "Introduction to EPortfolios", the content creators from Auburn University provide ePortfolio definitions and purpose, step-by-step instructions, and examples, which help the audience understand what an ePortfolio is and why anyone would want to create one.

The video provides the definition of an ePortfolio as: "A Personal Website that:

- Communicates and showcases skills, experiences, and learning.

- Contains diverse artifacts, documents, and media.
- Contextualizes those artifacts with reflective writing for potential employers or graduate students” (“Auburn University | EPortfolio Project.” ,0:57).

EPortfolios offer a unique glimpse into the creator’s life, with a more detailed, evidence-based, reflective description of past academic and professional work than a resume or paper portfolio can provide (“Auburn University | EPortfolio Project.”, :1:27).

An important aspect of the video is focused on the self-reflective writing segments paired on the same page with the artifacts, which allows the author to add meaning, deliver context, explain significance, illustrate knowledge, provide background information to the artifact, and the reflective writing provides the opportunity to make connections between coursework, professional work, and future goals. Moving through the process of selecting artifacts and writing reflection pieces for those artifacts helps students and professionals develop their personal narrative and professional identity (“Auburn University | EPortfolio Project.”, 3:05-3:56; Cordie et al.,p.17).

In the article, “Constructing a Professional Identity: Connecting College and Career Through EPortfolios,” the authors; Leslie Cordie, Jamie Sailors, Becky Barlow, and John S. Kush, describe a professional ePortfolio as follows: “The Professional ePortfolio is a living website that displays a student’s skills or experiences through the presentation of artifacts (i.e., specific examples of learning and/or experiences), and through reflective statements that communicate to an audience outside of the university how the artifacts support professional goals” (Cordie et al., p.18). It would serve anyone’s professional goals to create a “living website”, like an ePortfolio, to establish a professional identity online, which would enable one

to illustrate meaningful connections between all of major courses professional projects and over the years.

WHY USE AN EPORTFOLIO

Much like digital storytelling, ePortfolios allow students and professionals to create a narrative about their professional identity by documenting their educational journey through artifacts and reflective writing to illustrate to others how their academic work is interrelated and how it connects to real-world, professional experiences. While students may choose to create an ePortfolio for academic assessment by a professor, the much of the focus of this literature review is on creating a professional ePortfolio for a professional audience, like a future employer.

In the article, “Constructing a Professional Identity: Connecting College and Career Through EPortfolios,” the authors; Leslie Cordie, Jamie Sailors, Becky Barlow, and John S. Kush, describe how three different programs at one university utilized ePortfolios to help students create an online, professional identity to illustrate their value to the global workforce. The programs included in the research were: the Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS), the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences (SFWS), and the Adult Education Degree Program (ADED), an interdisciplinary degree program in the College of Education. While the programs were all mired in various disciplines, the solution offered by using professional ePortfolio development in the curriculum, under a common set of frameworks and best practices, presented all of the students with an opportunity to experience the kind of authentic learning necessary to develop a carefully curated, professional identity. This article was particularly relevant, as it demonstrated that ePortfolios are useful to all students, regardless of their chosen academic discipline.

All of the programs identified a problem faced by most undergraduates, which is the task of “creating a personal narrative that effectively connects their academic experiences with their post-graduation goals (Graves & Epstein, 2011)” and successfully communicating that narrative to the desired professional audience, in an attempt to achieve those post-graduation goals (Cordie et al., p.18). All three programs implemented the use of professional ePortfolios, as a professional development tool in their curriculum, to provide a solution to this challenge.

In the editorial article, “Lift Every Voice: EPortfolios for Creating and Integrating,” Dr. Terrel L. Rhodes, Vice President for the Office of Quality, Curriculum and Assessment and Executive Director of VALUE at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), offers a current perspective of the value and purpose of ePortfolios and “posits a rationale for why ePortfolios are more important than ever for our students, our institutions, and our democratic society” (Rhodes, p. 1). Dr. Rhodes’ article provides insights related to my research by explaining why we should use ePortfolios and what ePortfolios really are, beyond a learning tool or media object.

At first glance, the ePortfolio may just seem like a digital, media object designed to replace the analog version of a resume or paper portfolio, but Rhodes proposes that ePortfolios “are variously, a pedagogy, a curriculum, and a way of thinking, of knowing, and a mindset” that students may choose to intentionally pursue, much like a discipline or career, in an attempt to unveil and connect to the “higher order aspects of learning - the very types of cognitive, emotional, and relational activities that have made recognition of ePortfolios as a high impact practice - not only enhancing learning but also student retention, graduation, and equity” (Rhodes,p.87).

Where many academics and students see the purpose of ePortfolios as a learning tool, “connected to the student’s first job and salary or to reporting for state or accreditation accountability”, Rhodes believes the purpose of creating ePortfolios is to experience the “process of advanced learning” that occurs while creating an ePortfolio (Rhodes,p.87). The process involves selecting artifacts from course work and writing a critical reflection specific to each artifact, which allows the student “to connect their learning, to reflect on their learning, ...to intentionally engage with their learning as it is happening” and to integrate that learning into one’s professional identity, while creating “their own agency as an active influencer”, who is able to make meaningful connections and sense out of knowledge (Rhodes,p.87).

In our current, technologically advanced society, it is a challenge to effectively communicate our professional identities to a specific target audience, like potential employers or graduate school committees. Controlling the narrative of our digital identities has become increasingly difficult with the rise of AI driven algorithms, data collection profiling, social media hacks, and security and/or privacy issues, however, Rhodes points out that ePortfolios are “premised on personal control and curation of information, narrative and presentation”, which allows the student to present and maintain an intentional, professional, current, online identity (Rhodes,p.88). In recognizing that “knowledge is doubling every two years or even more rapidly”, Rhodes states, “there is no way the curriculum, especially as we have instantiated it in higher education currently, can deliver that knowledge to our learners” (Rhodes,p.88). Whereas the author of an ePortfolio can update or add new knowledge in real time to their ePortfolio artifacts or reflections to keep the information current, a peer-reviewed article published in a journal may be out-of-date and irrelevant by the time it gets published, which leaves the author of the article with no remedy to make the article current in real time.

On the Texas A&M University's webpage, through an article titled "The Whys and Hows of Using e-Portfolio", the University provides insights into the value of ePortfolios by explaining that "essentially, an ePortfolio generates learning because it provides an opportunity and virtual space for students to critically assess their academic work, and to reflect on that work and make connections between academic work and other activities, such as work experiences, extracurricular pursuits, volunteering opportunities, and more. Randy Bass and Bret Eynon describe this process of critical reflection as one that makes "invisible learning" visible" (Texas A&M University).

The combination of Texas A&M's insights and Bass and Eynon's concept of invisible learning becoming visible through the development of an ePortfolio fit my research goal to find out why someone would want to create an ePortfolio, and the concept of making "invisible learning" visible is intriguing. Many students have been challenged by learning new topics in various courses and then writing essays about what they learned. The final product is the essay, which is a tangible object and an example of visible learning, but the all of the steps taken to get to that final product and what the student learns from that process is what makes up invisible learning. When a student writes a reflective essay on creating that final product, the invisible learning becomes visible. "All the steps and false starts and decisions that preceded the final product are one form of invisible learning. By reflecting on them, students can learn more: they can learn more deeply, they can learn more about how they learn, and they can do it even better next time" (Texas A&M University). The reflective essay may include struggles and successes with writing, format, a new technology or "aha moments" or ideas about how to use the new knowledge in the future.

The article also explores ePortfolios in connection with the learning theory called social constructivism, which proposes “that learning happens most effectively when a student constructs a system of knowledge for themselves”, like the knowledge gained about themselves through the process of creating their own ePortfolio, and “that it happens in a social context”, like sharing an ePortfolio on social networks, where the student may interact with others, share knowledge, and create new dialog (Texas A&M University; Cordie et al., 2019).

HISTORY OF THE EPORTFOLIO

In the article, “What, Exactly, Are We Amplifying? A Decade of AAC&U’s ePortfolio Forum” by Elizabeth J. Clark, the author highlights the history of the ePortfolio by summarizing John C. Ittelson’s presentation at the AAC&U’s (Association for American Colleges and Universities) ePortfolio Forum in 2019, as “he focused on the origins of ePortfolio, tracing one history back to 1999 at California State University when the CSU teacher prep program moved from paper binders with sticky-noted feedback to CDs. He focused on 2001-2002 as a key moment when ePortfolios began to take hold. He also wrote an article in *Educause* on Building an E-identity for Each Student” (Ittelson,2001)”, and he identified other authors of the time, like Helen Barrett, Helen Chen, Bret Eynon, and Trent Batson, who were “looking at the emerging trend of ePortfolios on campuses and raising key questions for consideration as a field” (Clark,p.60). “These contributions, and others not highlighted in Ittelson’s (2019) talk, have all contributed to a shared language and shared values about ePortfolios and an understanding of ePortfolios for integrative learning, as a curriculum, for assessment, for digital identity, for documenting learning, for inquiry, and for personal development” (Clark,p.60). Looking forward, Ittelson argued the need to communicate the importance of integrating ePortfolios into higher education, not just to provide institutions with data about student success, but to provide

students with proof of their academic culminations and “point people in the right direction as they continue on their learning journey” (Clark,p.60).

“In 2001, John Ittelson explored the early possibilities for the integrative potential of ePortfolios as a centering locus for connecting personal, academic, and professional work” (Clark, p.61) and referenced the following story:

“Joellen is a 36-year-old mother of two. She currently holds a full-time job. After graduating from high school, Joellen completed one year at her local community college. She and her husband then moved to a different state, and she took a college telecourse. She recently decided to matriculate at a four-year institution in her city. The college has asked for all of her prior transcripts, in order to determine how many and which credits will transfer” (Clark, p.62).

Ittelson believed individuals, like Joellen, could find a centering locus through the creation of an ePortfolio, which would bring structure, organization and understanding to multiple campus enrollments spanning years, sporadic completion of degrees, trails of transcripts, and all of the lived-life and employment experiences in between.

“The early days of ePortfolio assessment were typified by a focus on isolated artifacts associated with specific outcomes or competencies”, but we now see a shift towards encouraging students to integrate their entire ePortfolio through reflections by making connections between courses, recognizing their process patterns, and generate a “unified narrative of learning and identity”, which indicates that “assessment is moving toward a more holistic model” (Kahn,p.57).

FRAMEWORKS FOR EPORTFOLIOS

Identifying various frameworks accepted in the field of ePortfolios is important to my research because it allows and encourages students, faculty, and professionals to use a shared language to clearly communicate ideas and knowledge about the frameworks used to create ePortfolios.

In the article “Constructing a Professional Identity: Connecting College and Career Through EPortfolios” the authors; Cordie, Sanders, Barlow and Kush believe the most successful ePortfolios are developed by using the frameworks of professional identity, lifelong learning, and constructivism to steer students towards an effective construction of an ePortfolio, and they highlight this information in their work in the following special note, “ Professional Identity: Combining development and learning theories, professional identity can be described as how we perceive ourselves, occupation, and career, along with explaining “self” to others (Meizrow, 2000; Wegner, 1998). Lifelong Learning: Although there is no single theory for lifelong learning or adult education, the concept of andragogy by Knowles (1984) provided clear assumptions for adults engaged in the learning process; Knowles (1984) defined andragogy “as the art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 12). Constructivism: A learning theory that proposes people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (Bruner, 1966)” (Cordie et al., p.18). While the frameworks of lifelong learning, constructivism and professional identity will play a part in creating most professional ePortfolios, I believe the importance of each of the frameworks will vary, depending on the student or professional’s communication goals and target audience.

While beyond the scope of this research, another set of frameworks are noted in the article, ”Modeling High Impact ePortfolio Practice: A Review of *Catalyst in Action: Case*

Studies of High-Impact ePortfolio Practice”, Susan Kahn provides us with her insights on one of the latest works about ePortfolios edited by Bret Eynon and Lauren Gambino, *Catalyst in Action: Case Studies of High-Impact ePortfolio Practice* (2018). Kahn’s advocacy for ePortfolios began in 1998 at the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, where she served as the director of the Urban Universities Portfolio Project, and she remains a valuable voice in the ePortfolio movement today.

Kahn’s evaluation begins with a brief history of Bret Eynon and Laura Gambino’s previous work, *High-Impact ePortfolio Practice: A Catalyst for Student, Faculty and Institutional Learning* (2017), as the book helped to legitimize ePortfolios as “a powerful teaching and learning approach”, not just a tool or technology fad and “marked a turning point in the ePortfolio field” by providing three Catalyst Value Propositions and “the Catalyst Framework, for “doing ePortfolios well” and a proposed set of design principles, Inquiry-Reflection-Integration, for effective implementation of the framework”, which was recognized by scholar George Kuh’s work “as the eleventh high-impact practice (HIP) in higher education (Kuh,2017)” (Kahn, p.55).

In their follow-up book, *Catalyst in Action: Case Studies of High-Impact ePortfolio Practice* (2018), Eynon and Gambino pair up again to analyze 20 case studies of “a well-developed current ePortfolio practice related to one or more of the five Catalyst Framework components: integrated social pedagogy, professional development, outcomes assessment, technology, and scaling up (Eynon & Gambino, 2017)” (Kahn,p.55). While a deep dive into each of these frameworks is not within the scope of this research, the knowledge that several frameworks exist in the ePortfolio field is valuable information.

This body of work represents some of the most rigorous research on ePortfolios by the authors in this field to date, and colleges and universities across the country are acknowledging the positive aspects of implementing “ePortfolios to support a shift in course focus away from traditional information transition and toward fundamental concepts, reflection, and metacognition” (Kahn,p.55).

Bronx Community College, the University of South Carolina, LaGuardia Community College, Elon University, Northeastern University, University of Waterloo, and Salt Lake Community College are among the higher education institutes included in the 20 case studies one or more of the five Catalyst Framework components presented in Eynon and Gambino’s work, and Kahn discovered three major, reoccurring themes: ePortfolio technology improvements, ePortfolio assessment, and the role of e-Portfolio (Kahn,p.57). While the overall reports from the 20 case studies, regarding the use of the Five Catalyst Framework components, were positive, the case studies noted needed improvements in the use of technology, assessment strategies, and defining the role of e-Portfolios (Kahn, p.57).

EPORTFOLIO BEST PRACTICES

According to Cordie, Sanders, Barlow and Kush, the best practices associated with creating an effective Professional ePortfolio are providing student support from the faculty within the academic program, especially regarding time needed to complete the ePortfolio; offering opportunities like workshops, course assignments, and peer review; developing clear instructions about defining a target audience; including reflective writing assignments in coursework; defining and drilling down on personal mission statements; understanding personalized ePortfolios, and scaffolding the use of technology to prevent student frustration (Cordie et al., p. 24). While it is necessary to note and recognize the value of these best

practices, further assessment of the implementation of these best practices are beyond the scope of this project.

EPORTFOLIO CHALLENGES

“The early days of ePortfolio assessment were typified by a focus on isolated artifacts associated with specific outcomes or competencies”, but we now see a shift towards encouraging students to integrate their entire ePortfolio through reflections by making connections between courses, recognizing their process patterns, and generate a “unified narrative of learning and identity”, which indicates that “assessment is moving toward a more holistic model” (Kahn,p.57).

In the article “Exploration of EPortfolios for Adding Value and Deepening Student Learning in Contemporary Higher Education ” Muireann O’Keeffe and Roisin Donnelly identify ePortfolios as a “suitable means for demonstrating student learning, showing connections in learning, and articulating student competencies to the world”, as well as a useful tool for professionals to illustrate the “link between creativity and reflection” (O’Keeffe and Donnelly, p.2-3).

The study conducted by O’Keeffe and Donnelly consisted of a sample group of fourteen postgraduate students, who were all lecturers seeking to advance professionally “in the areas of e-learning, teaching, and training practices” (O’Keeffe and Donnelly,p.4). The participants engaged in a variety of e-learning topics and assignments and presented evidence of their work in e-portfolios, which were then analyzed by content and reflections for value by the researchers. As reported by the students, the overall results of the study indicated “that reflective writing was

valued”, while some struggled with the idea of creativity and the technology involved with creating the ePortfolio (O’Keeffe and Donnelly,pp.4-5).

However, it was clear that students had demonstrated evidence of problem solving with peers when using technology for their ePortfolio”, and problem solving is a clear indicator of creativity, which the authors plan to make clear in their next study (O’Keeffe and Donnelly,p.7). Including a relevant description of creativity, as it pertains to developing an ePortfolio, in future literature regarding the information included within the topics of value, best practices, and structure may be valuable for future ePortfolio authors.

As technology improves and provides more creative ways to generate and present information, students and professionals must strive to maintain a current skillset, which reflects knowledge of the use and advantages of new technologies. Improvements in the technology used to create and share ePortfolios has improved by leaps and bounds since the first portfolio was created and saved on a CD back in 1999 (Clark,p.59), and, as software and app developers have focused more on crafting a plethora of user-friendly options for students to choose from, the technological challenges faced by students are not “the source of as much frustration as it was five or ten years ago” (Kahn,p.57). For example, the frustration of learning how to code is no longer necessary due to the many drag and drop website platforms available today, like Go Daddy or Wix. Design and video editing struggles have been simplified with rise of platforms like Canva and Animoto, which offer pre-designed templates, along with stock graphics, fonts, photos, and videos that students can drag and drop into the templates. All of these technological improvements save the student hours of frustration, which allows the student to spend more time on creating unique, content and focusing on reflection while generating an ePortfolio.

Within the last decade, technological advancements and user-friendly interfaces have also made it possible for the average person to self-publish and maintain control over their personal narrative. Kanokphon Chantanarungpak's work as published in "Using E-Portfolio on Social Media", examines undergraduate student's experiences with creating ePortfolios and "using social media as a tool in publishing" their work (Chantanarungpak,p.1176). Whereas many college student's ePortfolios are published and maintained on their respective institute's website, I believe Chantanarungpak's work is relevant to this research, as it suggests students who self-publish on social media would benefit from faster, wider, dissemination of their work, which could lead to more meaningful engagements with the globally, interconnected world, as opposed to a relatively difficult to find blip about a student's ePortfolio on an institute's website, if the institute offers that opportunity at all. For example, I searched SUNY Poly's website for student ePortfolios, and I only found a few ePortfolios, which were found on the CID + IMGD program's page., which can be found by the following link:

<https://sunypoly.edu/academics/majors-and-programs/communication-information-design-cid/portfolios.html>. In light of this information and Chantanarungpak's work, students and

professional may want to consider creating their own websites and self-publish their ePortfolios.

Continuing along with the train of thought regarding ownership, in the article, "What, Exactly, Are We Amplifying? A Decade of AAC&U's ePortfolio Forum" by Elizabeth J. Clark, the author highlights the work of Sol Bermann (2019), who raises interesting points about ethics and ownership related to free ePortfolio sites offered and owned by colleges and universities; specifically "who owns the data, who has access to the data, and what can be done with the data" and "deeper questions" about student agency, privacy, and future data mining in his presentation "Beyond Technologies and Outcomes: Building Ethics and Compliance into Teaching, Learning,

and Assessment” (Clark,p.60). Berman recommends future research in this area be focused on a critical examination of the legal agreements between students and higher education institutions with regard to ePortfolio “management, privacy and ownership” (Clark, p.61). Berman’s work highlights challenges associated with ethics, ownership and students control of the narrative of their own professional identity.

Another challenge is the difficulty presented by creating ePortfolios for students or professionals within disciplines where academic literature about ePortfolios is sparse. Shelly Hume and Anita Hamilton published a more recent article in 2018, titled “The Purpose, Content and Development Phases of a Graduate Entry EPortfolio in Occupational Therapy”, and, while the discipline has nothing to do with my goals of creating a professional ePortfolio, the insights gained from their perspective on ePortfolios is current and valuable. The authors acknowledge a lack of current information about using ePortfolios in their field, while many professions are moving from static paper portfolios to interactive ePortfolios, and they intended to “develop a graduate entry ePortfolio to prepare occupational therapy students for transition to work”, by conducting a study using methods consistent with the “e-Delphi approach ...to gather the opinions of eight categories of experts” (Hume and Hamilton, p.44). The results of the study align with other ePortfolio studies, in which the conclusions and recommendations suggest emphasizing “the importance of personal choice in selecting evidence recorded” in the ePortfolio (Hume and Hamilton, p.52).

Another example of the challenges of maintaining an ePortfolio, as related to the challenges of the implementation of ePortfolios in an academic environment, can be seen in the article, “Key EPortfolio Features and Strategies for Student Success in a Competency-Based Clinical Research Program” byCarolynn Thomas Jones, Joni Tornwall, Jennifer Plahovinsak,

Jessica S. Fritter, and Majorie V. Neideker, in which the authors provide insights about the adoption of ePortfolios into the “interdisciplinary, competency-based, master’s degree program in clinical research at a university in the Midwestern United States”(Jones, Carolynn Thomas et al., p.826). The author’s study consisted of a survey of 104 students, who submitted ePortfolios between 2015 and 2019, of which thirty-seven took part in “an ePortfolio survey, and five students shared their experiences in a post-survey interview” (Jones, Carolynn Thomas, et al., p. 826). While the student’s responses to the surveys indicated an overall positive experience to creating an ePortfolio with relation to recognizing academic achievements and job search endeavors, “alumni were not motivated to maintain their ePortfolio post-graduation”, and the study acknowledges this response may be attributed to the challenges associated with the platform, social media links, and basic maintenance challenges of the ePortfolio (Jones, Carolynn Thomas, et al.,p.833). This article highlights the need to address the technological challenges faced students creating ePortfolios.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS FOR EPORTFOLIOS

Over the last few decades, the evaluation objectives associated with creating successful, impactful ePortfolios have shifted from assessing the outcome of each individual artifact with a set of pre-determined rubrics to a focus on identifying a strong, professional narrative that links the artifacts through reflective statements which results in a holistic illustration of knowledge (Kahn,p.57). This shift in assessment needs to be recognized by future ePortfolio assessors and creators, if they desire current evaluation objectives to be realized.

A variety of individual ePortfolio elements should be considered as topics of interest for further research in this field. Authors in this literature review expressed concerns about defining creativity, obtaining technological skills, self-publishing, ePortfolio opportunities in higher

education, and ownership of ePortfolios (Kahn, 2019; O’Keeffe and Donnelly, 2013; Chantananarungpak, 2015; Hume and Hamilton, 2019; Jones,Carolynn Thomas, et al., 2021).

Rhodes offers a broad concept, which encompasses many of these future considerations In the future, as he claims “what we need is a concerted, intentional shift by educators to forefront the preparation of learners who are well-equipped with the skills and abilities to make sense out of knowledge and information, to make meaning of and with their knowledge for themselves and others”, and “ePortfolios are particularly well-positioned to provide the systemic, visual, tangible evidence of needed quality learning to challenge fleeting, often reductionist, popular soundbites about how higher education is failing” (Rhodes,p.88).

STRUCTURE AND STATEGY OF EPORTFOLIOS LINKED TO SOCIAL MEDIA

The structure of an ePortfolio may be as unique as the individual creating it, but the most basic structure will typically begin with an “About Me” page, followed by a collection of pages with artifacts and reflections, and end with a “Contact Me” page. Prior to publishing an ePortfolio on a website, some authors believe students and professionals should consider developing a social media strategy to effectively communicate their professional identity to the intended audience (Chantananarungpak, 2015; Jones, Carolynn Thomas, et al., 2021).

In the article, “Constructing a Professional Identity: Connecting College and Career Through EPortfolios”, authors; Cordie, Sailors, Barlow, Kush, emphasis the importance of the “About Me” page and believe the page represents an opportunity to “answer the typical interview question, “Tell me about yourself”, by including “professional qualities and skills, and clearly identify professional goals on this main page” (Cordie et al., p.19).

The University of Auburn has created several website pages dedicated to helping students and faculty with the design and development of academic and professional ePortfolios, which, when combined together, help to curate a response to the interview question, “Tell me about yourself” (2021 *Creating a Professional Personal Brand Worksheet.Docx* | Powered by Box; Cordie et al., p.19).

I found Auburn University’s webpage, “Creating a Professional Brand Worksheet”, to be particularly valuable, as the worksheet guides the user through a process that allows one to create and build a personal brand in a digital space which forwards one’s professional goals. Through this process, students and professionals would be able to tell their story about their academic and professional journey by using artifacts created during academic and business projects. Reflections about the artifacts would enable them to describe how my artifacts and reflections are connected to future plans and goals. A personal brand is “the representation of your work (research, service, teaching, professional products) in the form of a coherent message about who you are, what you do, and what you value”, which would be appropriate content to include on the “About Me” page (2021 *Creating a Professional Personal Brand Worksheet.Docx* | Powered by Box.).

Auburn University’s webpage “*Selecting and Contextualizing Artifacts for Faculty and Staff EPortfolios*”, offers another worksheet which explains that artifacts illustrate your personal brand and “show evident of your skills, experience, and knowledge and can include any kind of media: documents, images, video, audio files, evidence of certificates or awards, presentations, sample assignments, teaching/research/administrative philosophy documents, etc.”, however, artifacts are often edited or adapted into summaries or infographics for the ePortfolio in an attempt to offer a more engaging experience for the audience (2021 *Selecting and*

Contextualizing Artifacts for Faculty and Staff EPortfolios.Docx | Powered by Box). Students and professionals may also wish to include links to social media in their ePortfolio, in an attempt to provide more media examples that illustrate personal brand or identity.

In the article, “Social Media? Get Serious! Understanding the Functional Building Blocks of Social Media” the authors; Jan H. Kietzmann, Kristopher Hermkens, Ian P. McCarthy, and Bruno S. Silvestre, analyze the impacts of social media on businesses and propose using a framework derived from their analysis to enable businesses to create a successful social media strategy. I believe utilizing this framework to create and connect a professional ePortfolio to social media would strengthen the student’s social media strategy, or at least provide some guidance to developing a social media strategy. Having social media strategies in place prior to ePortfolio publication may save the student from making viral mistakes. The framework was created in response to the realization that “many executives are reluctant or unable to develop strategies and allocate resources to engage effectively with social media”, which may have disastrous effects on the business, and I believe that concept could also apply to students with ePortfolios linked to social media. (Kietzmann, Jan H., et al., p.242).

For example, in 2017, Adidas had to do major, social media, damage-control after sending out an insensitive email to all of its customers who finished the Boston Marathon. The Adidas email’s subject line was, “Congrats, you survived the Boston Marathon”. Somehow, Adidas did not take into account the devastating loss of life and limbs that occurred during the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing.

The framework is presented as a social media strategy tool, designed in a honeycomb shape to represent the “seven functional building blocks: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups”, which businesses or students with ePortfolios

linked to social media may use to observe, analyze, and develop custom media strategies that fit their objectives (Kietzmann, Jan H., et al., p.241).

I believe this social media strategy is relevant to ePortfolio research because this framework may be used by students and professionals to monitor professional ePortfolios on social media and enable them solidify, manage, and maintain a virtual, professional identity and brand. The building blocks presented in the framework could also be used to guide initial intentions during the creation of a website and ePortfolio, by satisfying the base elements of each building block to create a custom, social media strategy that fits the needs of the student or professional.

While defining social media strategies in depth and discussing all of the platforms available today is beyond the scope of this literature review, students and professionals should be aware of the audience-capture potential that exists via linking ePortfolios to social media.

In the second edition of the book, “YouTube: Online and Participating Culture by Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, the authors thesis is that YouTube’s complex, cocreated, participatory business model has dominated and altered the media industry and popular culture on a global level and is supported by people all over the world (Burgess, Jean and Green Joshua, 2018). In light of the fact that millions of messages are conveyed globally by YouTubers on YouTube every minute of every day from all walks of life, from DIY videos to socially or politically charged videos, YouTube’s platform provides a valuable link to one’s ePortfolio. Other social media platforms, like LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, also provide the opportunity to expand audience size (Burgess, Jean and Green Joshua, 2018).

MEDIA THEORISTS

By utilizing the perspectives of Marshall McLuhan, Douglass Rushkoff, and David Sax, along with knowledge gained from ePortfolio research, students and professionals will be able to craft an effective message about their professional identity in their ePortfolio, emphasized by the digital media used to deliver the message, with an understanding of the benefits and possible consequences of using digital media.

MARSHALL MCLUHAN

In Marshall McLuhan's "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man: Critical Edition", as published in 2003 and edited by W. Terrence Gordon, we are introduced to several media theories, which are still used in media courses today. McLuhan's work in media is recognized as laying the foundation for current media studies and theories, and while the first edition of "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man" was published in 1964, decades before the internet and social media existed, it remains a relevant, almost prophetic, guide for today's scholars who wish to pursue a thorough understanding of media. In the editor's introduction, W. Terrence Gordon informs readers that "the book defies summary. McLuhan wanted it that way. When we are faced with information overload, he taught, the mind must resort to a pattern recognition to achieve understanding" (McLuhan, p. xiii-xiv).

In light of that lesson, this literature review will focus on McLuhan's most notable theory; "Media is the Message", as it relates to his other theories, "Extensions of the Body" and "Narcissistic Hypnosis", in an attempt to make meaning and connections between his theories, ePortfolio research on professional identity, and the creation of my own professional ePortfolio.

In “Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man”, McLuhan's theories continue to prove to be applicable in media studies and today’s technologically advanced society, as they challenge our beliefs about how we communicate and what messages we are really sending as individuals and a society, when we engage in social media. I believe the inclusion of McLuhan’s theories in this research will benefit the overall understanding of how to effectively communicate an authentic professional identity through a professional ePortfolio published on a website linked to social media. Through very creative analogies and metaphors McLuhan walks us through the meaning behind his theories of the “Media is the Message”, “Extensions of the Body”, and “Narcissistic Hypnosis”.

McLuhan’s famous theory and coined phrase, “The medium is the message”, means that our choice of medium that we use to send messages communicates a more important message than the intended message itself, and “the message of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs" (McLuhan,2003 p.20). The characteristics of the medium send a message as important the intended message. In the case of ePortfolios, the mediums would include the ePortfolio website and any social media platforms linked to the website. In today’s technological society, we are offered a variety of choices of mediums with various characteristics, in the form of social media platforms, like LinkedIn and Facebook, which can reach an audience on a global scale, at an instantaneous pace, in a regular pattern of our choosing. Considering that Facebook has the characteristics of a social network platform and LinkedIn has the characteristics of a professional network platform, choosing LinkedIn as a medium linked to a professional ePortfolio would be a better choice to deliver messages about professional identity than Facebook.

In his theory of the “Extensions of the Body”, McLuhan contends that every media is created to extend our human mind, form, and senses through technology into an external form, and he suggests, for example, a camera would extend the human eye, and a wheel would extend the human foot (McLuhan,p.67). Continuing on with that theory, we could qualify all social media platforms on the internet as an extension of all the senses or perhaps even the brain or central nervous system as an “extension of ourselves”, which would include a professional ePortfolio published on a website on the internet (McLuhan,p.63).

After introducing readers to his theories of “Media is the Message” and “Extensions of the Body”, McLuhan describes the challenges faced by humans associated with communicating a message via the extension of the human body through a metaphor about the Greek myth of Narcissus, which has been labeled as a theory called the “Narcissistic Hypothesis”.

In his book McLuhan explained the inspiration for the “Narcissistic Hypothesis” in the following passage, “The Greek myth of Narcissus is directly concerned with a fact of human experience, as the word *Narcissus* indicates. It is from the Greek word *narcosis*, or numbness. The youth Narcissus mistook his own reflection in the water for another person. This extension of himself by mirror numbed his perceptions until he became the servomechanism of his own extended or repeated image. The nymph Echo tried to win his love with fragments of his own speech, but in vain. He was numb. He had adapted to the extension of himself and had become a closed system” (McLuhan,p.63).

“The nature of any medium, of any and all media, is the true Narcissus style of one hypnotized by the amputation and extension of his own being in a new technical form” (McLuhan, p.63). In other words, in order to communicate using new media technologies on the internet through social media, we must sacrifice belief in reality, amputate bits of our true selves,

embrace the numbness that comes with a narcissistic persona, and give up a piece of our own real-world reality or extensions of our own being to suspend the knowledge of the fact that there is a difference between the real world and the virtual world, which changes our perception of reality. The amputation of part of one's humanity is the cost of admission to the digital world, but knowledge of McLuhan's theories may help students or professionals to establish a more authentic digital identity that is purposely constructed through the creation of a professional ePortfolio. If McLuhan was still alive, he may have viewed social media as a particularly interesting media message of amputation from self in the most narcissistic way, for example, a selfie.

For the purpose and scope of this research, the topics presented in the book "Team Human" by Douglas Rushkoff will be limited to social media and agriculture in this literature review, in an effort to make meaning and connections between his concepts on media, technology, and culture; ePortfolio research on professional identity, and the creation of my own professional ePortfolio.

DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF

Douglas Rushkoff is a media theorist, known for coining terms such as "viral media", "digital native", and "social currency", and he is the bestselling author of several books on media, technology, and culture. Rushkoff is currently Professor of Media Theory and Digital Economics at the CUNY Queens College, and MIT declared him one of the top ten influential thinkers in the world.

In "Team Human", Rushkoff delivers an overview of the ways technology and humanity have influenced each other, which is organized in a list of 100 main ideas with insightful

commentaries based on his years of research. In an interdisciplinary nature, Rushkoff touches on many of the complex problems that exist in our current economy, politics, and agriculture industry to explain the relationship between technology and people.

Rushkoff believed technological advances and the Internet held a great promise of a renaissance a few decades ago, with the means to connect and communicate with people from all over the world, and, today, we can reach almost anyone on the planet if they are connected to the internet, but there is a cost to humanity (Rushkoff, p.187). Rushkoff explains that “autonomous technologies, runaway markets, and weaponized media seem to have overturned civil society, paralyzing our ability to think constructively, connect meaningfully purposefully”, and he points the blame at an antihuman agenda entrenched in our modern technology, which may only be thwarted by reconnecting to our human selves and “recognize that being human is a team sport” (Rushkoff, p.3).

To be clear, Rushkoff is not blaming technology. It's not technology's fault. He believes the problem is how people interact with technology. In line with Marshall McLuhan's theory about “Extensions of the Body” (McLuhan, 2003), Rushkoff states, “We have amplified and extended our natural ability to connect by inventing various forms of media”, and the act of extending our being into media is evident in our use of social media, which provides many useful platforms to promote an ePortfolio (Rushkoff, p.4). In the beginning, social media “allowed people to create profiles, link to their favorite music and movies, form lists of friends, and establish a new, if limited, outlet for self-expression in the global medium”, but what social media platforms do now with our extended being and profile information has changed over time (Rushkoff,p.33). We now know that advertisers quickly learned how to capture data, create personalized algorithms, and monetize the consumers of social media, turning consumer

attention and data into a product. Regarding the social media platforms, Rushkoff points out that “each of their algorithms is designed to engage with us individually, disconnect us from one another, neutralize our defense mechanisms, and program our behavior as if we were computers”, and “each extension of our social reality into a new medium requires that we make a conscious effort to bring our humanity along with us” (Rushkoff, p.39).

When a student or professional chooses to create a professional ePortfolio, they may want to consider making a conscious decision about which part of their humanity they leave behind or bring along into the extension of their being on social media to promote their mission and work. There is also difference between using an ePortfolio to represent an authentic professional identity and using an ePortfolio to create a desired or fake identity, and, as Rushkoff points out, “the internet became a place where people sounded and acted smarter than they do in real life” (Rushkoff, p.61). Rushkoff’s perspective is that “Human beings are not the problem. We are the solution”, and ultimately it is up human beings, including authors of ePortfolios, to consciously choose whether or not they interact with social media in an authentic, truthful way to be part of the solution or perpetuate an inaccurate reality. (Rushkoff,p.126). Rushkoff is truly on Team Human.

Among other complex problems, Rushkoff makes an effort to address agriculture and the agricultural economy in his book, “Team Human”, which ties into this literature review, as it pertains to creating the ePortfolio of the owner of a small, organic farm. Rushkoff acknowledges that our current, technologically advanced agriculture system threatens the existence of our planet’s topsoil and has “nothing to do with feeding people and everything to do with amassing power” (Rushkoff, p. 174). “Industrialized agriculture today primarily serves the shareholders of chemical, pesticide, and bioengineering companies. Industrial farm advocates argue that organic

practices don't scale because they are too intensive, but this is only true for the first year or two, while the soil destroyed by decades of chemical abuse is restored to health" (Rushkoff, p.175).

"The digital economy...does it like people? No. If you have a business plan, what are you supposed to do? Get rid of all the people. Human beings... they want health care. They want money. They want meaning. You can't scale with people" (How to be "Team Human" in the Digital Future ,3:36).

Scale refers to a measurement of the ability of a business to grow fast and grow big, while exponentially increasing profits, and that ability is usually tied into the utilization of technology. For example, potential investors always ask entrepreneurs, "What is the scalability of your venture?" The answer usually includes the entrepreneur's plans to reduce labor costs or a new, ground breaking, patented technology, which will reduce labor or overhead costs, that will maximize profits in record time. Organic farms are labor intensive because the cultural practices are very difficult to automate. Organic farms need human labor, and that need of humans does not allow the farm to scale as fast or as profitable as a large, industry farm.

The idea of using scale as a measurement of a farm's potential financial success is not a holistic measurement of the overall success of the farm. Scale doesn't take into account the jobs provided to the community or the increase in availability of fresh food with a high nutrient level to the local people. Scale is just a metric or rubric, distilled down to ones and zeros in data, designed to prove profit to shareholders and investors, while scale ignores the whole value an organic farm offers to the local community.

"The endless succession of inspirational talks by well-meaning techno-solutionists with patented, world saving ideas doesn't make the world feel any more real, either. The narratives all depend on linear, forward-moving, growth-based progress rather than the recognition of cycles

or the retrieval of wisdom” (Rushkoff, p.179). “A renaissance without the retrieval of lost, essential value is just another revolution. The first individuals and organizations to capitalize on the digital era ignored the underlying values that their innovations could have retrieved. They childishly assumed they were doing something or someone better – usually themselves” (Rushkoff, p.189).

“Values once gave human society meaning and direction. Now this function is fulfilled by data, and our ideals reduced to memes. We track aggregate opinion and stoke whatever appetites guarantee the greatest profit. A consumer democracy cannot express our higher values as humans; it amounts to little more than metrics” (Rushkoff, p. 211). Using scale derived from human deficient-data to measure the value of a business, like an organic farm, is similar to using a rubric to grade a student portfolio, where neither scale nor rubric represent the whole value.

“We are not perfect, by any means. But we are not alone. We are team Human. Find the others” (Rushkoff, p.216).

DAVID SAX

For the purpose and scope of this research, the topics presented in this literature review from the book “The Revenge of Analog: Real Things and Why They Matter” by David Sax will be limited in an attempt to make meaning and connections between his examination of the phenomena of the resurgence of analog media, ePortfolio research on professional identity, and the creation of my own professional ePortfolio.

“”The more advanced our digital technologies, the more we come to realize that reality rules. David Sax reassures us surviving members of team human that material existence is alive and well, and makes a compelling case for the reclamation of terra firma and all that comes with

it."—Douglas Rushkoff, author of *Throwing Rocks at the Google Bus and Team Human*" (Sax, Inside jacket of book).

David Sax tackles the myth that digital will always surpass analog, and he instead guides his readers to consider the personal and societal value of both digital and analog objects and ideas. Tech slang like IRL (in real life) acknowledges that the digital world is not the real world, and Sax's examination of the phenomena of the resurgence of analog media is highlighted in example after example of people in our current society trying to reclaim a piece of the analog world in an attempt to create personal experiences, inspire free-flow thought and creativity, and reconnect to other humans on a more emotional, meaningful level, by playing boardgames, designing on paper, or playing vinyl records (Sax, 2016).

Sax doesn't deny the advantages that come with a technologically advanced world, and he states "this book is not a screed against digital technology" (Sax, p. xvii). Sax insists people aren't giving up digital tools or goods in favor of analog counterparts, but they are re-discovering the human value of interacting with the analog world.

For example, Sax brings up the common occurrence of saving hundreds of perfectly edited photos in our digital spaces, and he notes that those pictures aren't really a realistic snapshot of our lives, while analog pictures were taken on film, brought to the store, developed as is, and placed lovingly into photo albums represented a more realistic snapshot of our lives(Sax,p.67). Sax believes we should question the value of the hundreds of perfectly edited, non-physical, pictures in our phones or on social media vs. the twenty-four, imperfect, yet realistic, prints available on a roll of film, which get put into albums that may be shared and cherished for generations (Sax,p.67). While Sax may believe there is more value to an unedited, physical photo, McLuhan might say that every edit to a digital photo is a necessary amputation to

achieve the numb, narcissus state needed to extend one's being into social media. Rushkoff might tell us to heed our humanity before editing and posting a digital photo. Anyone creating an ePortfolio may want to critically assess the kind of professional identity they want to establish prior to posting a picture on their website, as well as how much of their being or humanity would have to be amputated.

“The choice we face isn't between digital and analog”, Mr. Sax asserts. “That simplistic duality is actually the language that digital has conditioned us to: a false binary choice between 1 and 0, black and white, Samsung and Apple. The real world isn't black and white, Reality is multicolored, infinitely textured, and emotionally layered. And it's often analog-perhaps less efficient, less perfect, less speedy-which best captures those human imperfections, creating a tactile interface with the world” (Sax, p. xviii; Katutani,p.1).

CONCLUSION

Current expectations in the academic and professional world require that students and professionals present themselves as more than the culmination of the traditional indicators that signal a path to a successful career; those expectations now require a holistic-illustration of skills, intention, critical thinking, and the ability to create and share knowledge in the most effective way possible. The professional ePortfolio could be an efficient media object used to deliver these expectations, if it is designed and created by a student or professional, who has an understanding of the purpose of an ePortfolio and media theory.

In general, as a media object, an ePortfolio can be described as a living, personal website that presents a series of artifacts accompanied by reflective writing pieces, which illustrate, connect and contextualize the author's academic coursework, professional work, skills,

experiences and learning, in an attempt to communicate a professional identity to a perspective audience (Rhodes, p.87; Auburn University | EPortfolio Project ,0:57; Cordie et al., p.17; Kahn,p.57). Students may choose to create an ePortfolio for academic assessment by a professor or a professional ePortfolio for a professional audience, like a future employer.

Beginning in the 90s, digital portfolios began as a collection of a student's work, saved on a CD and graded by rubrics. "The early days of ePortfolio assessment were typified by a focus on isolated artifacts associated with specific outcomes or competencies", but we now see a shift towards encouraging students to integrate their entire ePortfolio through reflections by making connections between courses, recognizing their process patterns, and generate a "unified narrative of learning and identity", which indicates that "assessment is moving toward a more holistic model" (Kahn,p.57).

The task of "creating a personal narrative that effectively connects their academic experiences with their post-graduation goals" and successfully communicating that narrative to the desired professional audience, in an attempt to achieve those post-graduation goals has been identified as a "problem faced by most undergraduates (Graves & Epstein, 2011)" (Cordie et al., p.18"). One possible solution is provided by the creation of an ePortfolio.

In general, authors across current ePortfolio literature agree that ePortfolios are valuable because they offer students the opportunity to engage in deep, authentic learning through writing critical reflections on their artifacts, which illustrate the interconnectedness of personal, academic and professional work on their ePortfolio website. Randy Bass and Bret Eynon describe this process of critical reflection as one that makes "invisible learning" visible" (Texas A&M University).

When students “do ePortfolios well” by using effective frameworks and best practices, they are able to develop a professional identity and narrative, as well as effectively communicate the value of themselves to a targeted audience, online and in-real-time through self-publishing. (Kahn,p.55; Cordie et al.,p.24; Clark, 2019; Chantananarungpak, 2015; Rhodes, 1018).

When creating and utilizing an ePortfolio, students and professionals face challenges, which include developing an understanding of what creativity means, learning how to scaffold the technological skills necessary to create an ePortfolio on a website and link it to social media, understanding the value of how to use an ePortfolio as a publishing tool, seeking out information about ePortfolio opportunities at the student or professional’s institution or workplace, and thoroughly investigating the purpose, ethics and nuances associated with ownership and control over the ePortfolio.

Student ePortfolio design varies across disciplines and personalities, as they are a unique representation of student’s personal narrative and professional identity, however, generating any ePortfolio requires understanding the purpose and value of an ePortfolio, as well as the media used to implement an effective ePortfolio.

By utilizing the perspectives of Marshall McLuhan, Douglass Rushkoff, and David Sax, along with knowledge gained from ePortfolio research, students and professionals will be able to craft an effective message about their professional identity in their ePortfolio, emphasized by the digital media used to deliver the message, with an understanding of the benefits and possible consequences of using digital media.

Historically, humans have strived to invent technology to enhance life, including the media we use to communicate with each other. Using digital media, like websites, blogs, and

social media to send messages, instantaneously, around the globe is clearly a benefit. However, McLuhan, Rushkoff and Sax warn that the benefit of using digital media comes at a price, which should be considered by a student or professional who publishes an ePortfolio on a website linked to social media.

McLuhan's famous theory, "The medium is the message", means that our choice of medium and all of its characteristics communicates a more important message than the intended message (McLuhan, 2003). In the case of ePortfolios, the mediums would include the ePortfolio website and any social media platforms linked to the website. For example, linking a professional ePortfolio to LinkedIn would send a more professional message than linking the ePortfolio to Facebook.

McLuhan contends that every media is created to extend our human mind, form, and senses through technology into an external form, and "the nature of any medium, of any and all media, is the true Narcissus style of one hypnotized by the amputation and extension of his own being in a new technical form" (McLuhan, p.63). In other words, in order to communicate using new media technologies on the internet through social media, we must amputate bits of our humanity and embrace the numbness that comes with a narcissistic persona, in order to extend our being into a digital media. The amputation of part of one's humanity may be the cost of admission to the digital world, but knowledge of McLuhan's theories may help guide students or professionals through the creation of a professional ePortfolio to establish a more authentic digital identity that reflects human characteristics.

While McLuhan seemed to accept the fate of one's "amputated" being, as a result of mingling with media, Rushkoff believes one may consciously choose to hold on to their humanity or being, in spite of engaging with media or any new technology in our society.

(McLuhan, p.63; Rushkoff, p.39). Sax's observations indicate a fundamental shift from placing all of the value on new media(digital) to the resurgence and new appreciation of old media (analog), and, perhaps the recent resurgence of analog media is a human response to decades of over-extending our beings and an attempt to reclaim a bit more of our humanity (Sax, p. 2017).

McLuhan, Rushkoff and Sax all understand the value of technology, including digital media. However, how we use and engage with digital media affects our humanity, and one should be aware of that when creating and publishing an ePortfolio.

A SELF REFLECTION ON CREATING MY PROFESSIONAL EPORTFLIO

The purpose of creating my professional ePortfolio for my capstone project is to build my digital professional identity/brand, document academic achievements, and illustrate the connections between coursework and my professional endeavors. In light of the fact that my academic and professional experiences span decades and disciplines, I believe it would serve my professional goals of building a successful farm business to invest my time into creating a professional ePortfolio, which would enable me to illustrate meaningful connections between all of my major courses over the years. Similar to the story of Joellen, I have years of life experiences and transcript records from various academic institutions, which span from 1989 until now, and I hope the development of a professional ePortfolio will provide a starting point for me to create my own "centering locus for connecting personal, academic, and professional work" (Clark, p.61).

I have struggled for years to find a way to effectively communicate my value within academic and business realms. I've enrolled in academic programs, crafted business plans, mailed out resumes, joined Twitter and LinkedIn, held workshops, and spoken at conventions,

but I don't believe any of those single actions will have the same effect as utilizing a professional ePortfolio to present a holistic illustration of my knowledge. Kahn states, "The role of ePortfolios in supporting academic, professional, and personal identity development has been a central theme of ePortfolio research and practice", and I am looking forward to establishing my own professional identity through the process of creating and continually contributing to my professional ePortfolio and documenting the results for years to come (Kahn,p.57).

The concept of delivering relevant, current information through my utilization of a professional ePortfolio to a specific audience is particularly attractive to me, as opposed to publishing any of my work in a journal. A large part of my farm's target audience is made up of investors, supporters, and consumers relative to my farm business, Underground Greens, and no one in that audience has the time or inclination to pour over peer-reviewed journal articles to find out if they agree or disagree with my professional work, however, they may find time to peruse my ePortfolio on my website. I think my professional ePortfolio may be more interesting, interactive, attention grabbing and engaging than traditional methods of publishing one's work or research, and it may attract a larger audience interested in my professional goals.

For example, including "food security advocate" with a list of my activities related to food security advocacy on my resume will not be as effective as telling the story about how I originally became interested in food security. One of my "invisible learning" moments occurred while I was in the Davis and Elkins' theater program. I auditioned for and got a part in a college mime troupe, which performed in Bulgaria, during the fall of communism in 1989. While in Bulgaria, I met students, who were protesting against communism and the lack of food. They were hungry.....and thin. It was the first time I had ever witnessed hunger. This was the moment in time, when I decided to help food insecure people, and it is an example of one type of

“invisible learning”. Recognizing hunger was definitely not part of my theater program, so that element of my theater experience remained invisible and was not reported in the journal I turned in for a grade. My mime troupe experience in 1989 is directly connected to my current work as a food security advocate, but that story is not represented in my resume. It will be in my professional ePortfolio.

I have never been required or approached to create an ePortfolio, but I have submitted my work to Blackboard, while participating in online courses at Mohawk Valley Community College and SUNY Poly. It is my experience that the Blackboard and email system occasionally becomes compromised, resulting in limited or no access for the student. Also, once a course is completed, the student no longer has access to their work on Blackboard. I assume the same would be true for an ePortfolio submitted as an assignment, which is one more reason for my decision to self-publish my ePortfolio on my own website, where management, privacy, ownership, content, and accessibility would be my personal choice and responsibility. (Clark, p.62: Chantananarungpak, 2015).

I intend to use the “GoDaddy” website platform to create the “Christina Carambia” website and publish my ePortfolio, which will include an “About Me” section that will help establish my professional identity. The “Christina Carambia” website with the ePortfolio will be linked to my Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube accounts, as well as my other websites. Additionally, I will be linking those social media accounts to the “Christina Carambia” website and my e-profile. While lifelong learning and constructivism will play a part in creating my professional ePortfolio, I will rely heavily on the concept of developing a professional identity and media theories and concepts to generate my professional ePortfolio.

I own farm, called Underground Greens, and my farm's mission is to localize food production, food jobs, and food knowledge, by developing a custom farm model for C.N.Y. and building a soil-based, vertical farm in an old, nuclear fall-out shelter, in the middle of a food desert, where the people need it the most. Underground Greens will be a specialty plant and produce retailer, as well as feature an onsite, year-round indoor market and offer agricultural and food workshops.

The call to action to reimagine our defunct food system through entrepreneurial endeavors to create new farm models has been heard and responded to by Americans from all industries, most notably the agriculture and technological industries. I officially entered the Agriculture Industry in 2014, by creating a business plan Underground Greens in my entrepreneur course at Mohawk Valley Community College and entering the New York State Business Plan Competition in 2014 and 2015. In both years, I won first place in the sustainability track at the Mohawk Valley Regional Competition in New York and third place at the State Finals. The judges at the state level provided mostly much needed, valuable critiques, some of which I have implemented into my current business plan for Underground Greens.

I ignored advice to develop a data capture/analytical system or pay another company to collect my customer's data. I refused to cut back employees, who are needed to efficiently run my organic farm. I scoffed at paying people minimum wage, cutting hours to part time, and passing on operating costs to the local community by externalizing those expenses. And, finally, I rejected the idea of transitioning from a customized business plan, which was designed to mitigate my local community's complex food scarcity problems in the middle of a food desert and provide food jobs and knowledge, to a cookie-cutter business plan designed to scale up by using my customer's data, while passing along external costs to the community and contributing

to the decline of the local environment. “The digital economy...does it like people? No. If you have a business plan, what are you supposed to do? Get rid of all the people. Human beings... they want health care. They want money. They want meaning. You can’t scale with people” (How to be "Team Human" in the Digital Future ,3:36).

Why all the refusals to comply with advice from venture capitalists and industry leaders? I believe that creating a farm model, which places people and planet before profit, will lead to a more sustainable, local food system. I have joined "Team Human", and I intend to hold on to as much of my humanity and being as I can, when I create my professional ePortfolio and link it to social media platforms (McLuhan, 2013; Rushkoff, 2019).

I will carefully curate my messages using the most effective mediums available, while keeping in mind McLuhan’s “Media is the Message” theory. I will continue to hold free workshops in my community and at my farm to teach people how to grow their own food. Humans are wired to be physically social, pick up on body language, learn from and enjoy experiences, and “none of that social integration can happen online, regardless of how well you design social media plug-ins, or how many unboxing videos you view on YouTube” (Sax ,p.144). I don't care if I ever scale up or make a million dollars, and I don't believe we need to scale out humanity to feed people in our local community (Rushkoff, 2019).

I am a farmer and an advocate for food security. Food scarcity is a complex problem that won't be solved by an algorithm, a patent, or a pile of harvested personal data alone. However, using a professional ePortfolio in conjunction with my in-person workshops may help me with my advocacy goal. “The choice we face isn’t between digital and analog”, Mr. Sax asserts. “That simplistic duality is actually the language that digital has conditioned us to: a false binary choice between 1 and 0, black and white, Samsung and Apple. The real world isn’t black and white,

Reality is multicolored, infinitely textured, and emotionally layered. And it's often analog- perhaps less efficient, less perfect, less speedy-which best captures those human imperfections, creating a tactile interface with the world" (Sax, p. xviii; Katutani,p.1).

I want to put the place people over profits in my farm model, fight for food security, and hold onto my humanity while I do it . I hope to use my professional ePortfolio to send the right message to the right audience and make that happen: <https://christinacarambia.com/>

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