

# Digital Ethics Principles in ePortfolios: Version 1

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### Principle 2: Promote Awareness

*Institutional administrators, staff, and educators are responsible for promoting awareness of digital ethics in ePortfolio making.*

ABSTRACT: ePortfolio educators, administrators, and staff should have a working knowledge of the ethical issues related to ePortfolios, including data collection, security, and management; ethical sharing and representation; digital bias; accessibility; ePortfolio security and privacy; copyright, fair use, and open access; and intended vs. potential audiences.

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*ePortfolio creators need opportunities to develop and practice the digital literacies necessary to create accessible and effective ePortfolios.*

ABSTRACT: ePortfolio creators need practice with digital literacies. ePortfolio instruction should teach creators what ePortfolios are, why they are creating one, how to employ



visual design and Universal Design principles when creating one, and how to work with ePortfolio tools and technologies. When creating ePortfolios, a knowledge of their audience, context, and constraints should guide creators.

#### **Principle 4: Respect Author Rights and Re-use Permissions**

*ePortfolio creators should understand and respect author rights, best practices for re-use, and representation.*

ABSTRACT: Because ePortfolios ask creators to re-use text and media, they need a working knowledge of plagiarism, copyright, fair use, and licensing. Students should be ethical owners of their ePortfolios and engage in conversations about how to responsibly move artifacts into ePortfolios, particularly when artifacts represent professional or collaborative experiences or involve the representation of others.

#### **Principle 5: Access to Technology**

*Adequate access to technology must be available for all students, and ePortfolio software should be accessible with institutional devices.*

ABSTRACT: Students with limited access to technology or the internet should still have opportunities to create ePortfolios using institutional resources. An inclusive ePortfolio curriculum accommodates students who need to build their ePortfolio on a smartphone or gives students access to technology or the internet via institutional resources.

#### **Principle 6: Privacy**

*ePortfolio creators should have ultimate control over public access to their portfolios and the ability to change the privacy settings at any time.*

ABSTRACT: Students should be able to alter and explain their privacy and sharing settings as owners of their ePortfolios. Administrators, educators, and staff must be prepared to have these conversations with students.



## **Principle 7: Content Storage**

*ePortfolio creators should know where their content is stored, who has access, and how to remove it.*

ABSTRACT: Before working in an ePortfolio platform, students, educators, administrators, and staff should review the Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions with particular attention to how the platform will collect, store, and use data and if students can opt out of data collection or remove their data. Providers should communicate these details in clear and accessible language.

## **Principle 8: Cross-Platform Compatibility**

*ePortfolio creators should be able to make and view ePortfolios across any device, browser, and operating system with equitable ease of use across devices.*

ABSTRACT: ePortfolio platforms should operate across devices and operating systems from both the creator and viewer perspective. ePortfolio creators should have the technical knowledge to create ePortfolios that are readable across devices.

## **Principle 9: Accessibility**

*All ePortfolio platforms and pedagogy should be thoroughly vetted for accessibility according to the standards identified by one's culture, government, or profession.*

ABSTRACT: ePortfolio platforms should be accessible to diverse creators as well as diverse audiences. Stakeholders should test platforms for accessibility, and educators and students should be educated about accessible content creation.

## **Principle 10: Consent for Data Usage**

*ePortfolio platform providers need consent to collect and store data from ePortfolio creators.*

ABSTRACT: ePortfolio platform providers should explain their data collection, storage, and use policies in clear and accessible language. These policies should comply with



applicable institutional regulations. When these policies change, platform providers should have mechanisms in place for students and staff to review the changes and decide whether they want to keep their portfolios under these changed circumstances.

[\*\*Glossary of Key Terms\*\*](#)

[\*\*Full List of Resources\*\*](#)



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# Introduction to AAEEBL Digital Ethics Principles: Version 1

## Why AAEEBL Created this Resource:

As outward-facing ePortfolios become more common, students, educators, administrators, and staff need guiding principles to ground their practice. Indeed, members voiced this need during the 2018 AAEEBL Annual Meeting. In response, AAEEBL formed a task force of ePortfolio scholars and practitioners to develop principles, strategies, and resources for general use.

## Who is this Resource Intended for?

Anyone involved in administering, teaching, creating, or practicing ePortfolios, including students, professionals, educators, administrators, staff, and platform providers, will find advice, suggestions, and examples here.

## The Purpose of this Resource:

This resource is meant to guide students, professionals, educators, administrators, staff, and platform providers in ePortfolio practice as it relates to digital ethics. Use these principles to illustrate ePortfolio best practices to administrators, staff, and stakeholders, guide the development of your ePortfolio curriculum, or apply to your ePortfolio practices.

## Structure:

This resource is organized around a set of ten principles relating to digital ethics and ePortfolios. Each principle has three parts. First, the resource provides a guiding suite of principles and strategies that can be used across contexts. Second, it offers scenarios to illustrate how to apply these principles in practice. Third, it includes a list of citations that feature further information on each principle. You can use the principles to navigate the document and glean the suggested practices based on each principle.



## **Principles**

The principles are written as broad, overarching statements without specific details to allow for wide applicability. Each principle is explained and situated through a number of strategies that provide readers with details for application.

## **Scenarios**

The scenarios illustrate how the principles' strategies might come into practice in a particular local context. The goal of these scenarios is to model best practices in action by providing details about a situation with possible responses or questions to consider. Because contexts can vary, the scenarios are not intended to be all-encompassing.

## **Additional Resources**

Additional resources are provided for each principle and include articles, book chapters, digital repositories, guides, and educational websites.



## Principle 1: Support

*Institutions should provide appropriate support for students, educators, administrators, and staff who create ePortfolios.*

**ABSTRACT:** Institutions must devote resources to supporting ePortfolios, including professional development in ePortfolios. ePortfolio stakeholders are encouraged to partner with offices that have expertise in disability, informational literacy, technology, writing, and teaching and learning to create inclusive ePortfolio requirements with built-in alternatives for individuals with limited access to technology and the internet.

**Strategies for applying this principle include...**

- Adequately funding and evenly distributing the responsibility for developing, teaching, and assessing ePortfolios throughout the program, department, college, and/or institution.
- Developing and providing training and support on digital ethics, [digital citizenship](#), and effective pedagogical and assessment strategies for educators, staff, and program directors who work with students on ePortfolios.
- Developing clear ePortfolio requirements so that all students can be successful, especially students who have little to no experience with ePortfolio-building technologies.
- Providing alternatives for financially disadvantaged students who cannot afford the costs associated with certain ePortfolio platforms and/or technologies or do not have access to a stable internet connection.
- Identifying institutional resources and partners for ePortfolio support, such as the office of accessibility, librarians, reading/writing/learning centers, technical support, etc.



## **Scenarios:**

**Scenario #1:** You are a student. You are excited to attend your first capstone course meeting for graduating students. On the first day, the educator explains that you will be creating an ePortfolio that will both document your learning from your coursework and showcase your professional experiences to employers and graduate schools in your field.

She projects example ePortfolios from previous years and asks the class to analyze them in groups. You are new to ePortfolios and would like to participate in this well-planned first day activity, but you are blind and the educator has not considered how you can view the projected ePortfolios. When you ask about the platform's ability to interface with screen readers, the educator replies nervously that she has not been asked to consider this before. You feel anxious about your ability to engage with the class and complete this capstone assignment.

When designing ePortfolio assignments, it's important to consider all students with diverse needs. Institutional experts in disability and accommodations for students with disabilities can help you vet platforms for accessibility, and digital resources can also help you test a site's ability to interface with assistive technologies, such as a screen reader.

**Scenario #2:** You are a student. You are participating in a study abroad program and have been asked to contribute to a collective ePortfolio documenting your experiences in an online course that pairs with the abroad program. You have stretched yourself financially to be able to afford the trip abroad and take time off of work. You have never traveled outside of your home country before, so you are feeling anxious. You have little experience with online learning and ePortfolios.

In the pre-trip introduction video to the online course, the educator explains that the class members will all be able to log into the ePortfolio site and contribute photos, blog updates, and reflective writing entries. You know that you will need internet access and a device to do this. You begin to panic. You do not have a laptop, and while you can use the platform on your phone, you have not budgeted for an international data plan.

Your educator assures you that there will be free wifi available for your use where you will be staying. Also, the educator has provided you with details where you can check out a laptop from your institution to take abroad with you.



**Scenario #3:** You are a writing program administrator and/or staff member, and your dean has recently asked you to bring ePortfolio assessment into the composition program. You are excited at this possibility, as you have heard about ePortfolios at conferences and in academic journals in your field. However, when you ask about funding for this initiative, your dean says you will have to use your current budget. Your program is staffed mostly by part-time and non-tenure-track professionals who carry high teaching loads and already have limited access to professional development funds.

After taking a moment to process the situation, you explain to the dean that an ePortfolio requirement is an exciting, but sizable, commitment. You suggest reaching out to peer institutions that use ePortfolios to understand how much money they spend annually on staff, technology, professional development, assessment, curriculum development, etc. You also reach out to the disability advocates, technology experts, and the librarians on campus to assess the institution's current resources to support this initiative, as commitment from them in particular would be beneficial. After research and discussion, you meet with the dean and explain the amount of funding and support you feel your program will need to have a successful and sustainable ePortfolio initiative.

#### Resources:

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## Principle 2: Promote Awareness

*Institutional administrators, staff, and educators are responsible for promoting awareness of digital ethics in ePortfolio making.*

ABSTRACT: ePortfolio educators, administrators, and staff should have a working knowledge of the ethical issues related to ePortfolios, including data collection, security, and management; ethical sharing and representation; digital bias; accessibility; ePortfolio security and privacy; copyright, fair use, and open access; and intended vs. potential audiences.

**Strategies for applying this principle include...**

- Asking institutional stakeholders about use and storage of ePortfolio-related data, student rights to ePortfolio ownership, rationale for platform selection, and accessibility standards *before* assigning ePortfolios to students.
- Developing and sharing strategies for identifying, engaging with, and countering potential biases among learners, educator(s), and any others who might review an ePortfolio.
- Ensuring that students can determine who shall have access to their various portfolios on the platform they were asked to use.
- Teaching students about privacy settings and their implications.
- Providing students with examples that help them define and determine the distinctions between their personal and professional online identities.
- Helping students anticipate how diverse audiences will react differently to the information they share (writing, images, coursework, etc.).
- Informing students of what entities or audiences may have access to their identity representations, data, and intellectual property along with any possible benefits and harm that may result from this access.
- Sharing photo and media galleries that foster equal and adequate representation of the diverse set of students creating portfolios at your institution.
- Teaching students basic knowledge about copyright, fair use, and open access.



## **Scenarios:**

**Scenario #1:** You are a student. You have been asked by your educator to create a showcase portfolio of your most recent achievements, from activities and experiences in and beyond the course. The audience for your portfolio is humanitarian and volunteer organizations which provide summer abroad opportunities overseas.

You wonder what artifacts would be the best examples to use and decide to showcase your most recent retail work experience and holiday on the coast. You include photos with your friends at the beach and posts from Facebook about events at work. When you submit your first draft, your educator's feedback is that you need to think more about your purpose and how that purpose connects to what the particular audience would see as appropriate professional images, evidence, and experiences.

Your educator shares with the class a number of tips for choosing artifacts. First, you should consider diverse potential audiences as you choose artifacts. Second, you need to consider how you will separate your personal and professional identities online. Further, you should think about how what you share online might be perceived by others, both those you know and those you do not know, and the potential future consequences for yourself and others.

**Scenario #2:** You are an educator. Students create a public ePortfolio in your capstone course that they could use when they enter the job market. You work to provide students with example portfolios that represent a diverse group of students and experiences.

One student voices concern that she may encounter bias on the job market if her image is included in the ePortfolio. Although you want to encourage this student to represent her identity fully, you acknowledge potential bias and engage in a conversation about her options.

You provide her with a sample portfolio of another student who also had this worry. He created an ePortfolio without pictures of himself while still maintaining visual representation of his work. You also share with her another example of a student from a similar background as her own that provides an honest narrative about the intersection of her career and her identity. After the conversation, the student decides to use the example of the ePortfolio without personal photos as a model for her ePortfolio. You direct her to other examples of ePortfolios that have powerful



design without relying on personal photos as well as websites where she can access Creative Commons licensed images.

**Scenario #3:** You are an educator and administrator or staff member. You oversee the internship program for your department. As part of their internships, students are asked to prepare a final ePortfolio that documents their internship experience and reflects on what they learned. These ePortfolios are evaluated by a committee as part of the students' grades for their internship.

Although you know that this practice is important for reinforcing the learning that happens during the internship experience, you have noticed that students struggle to explore the full breadth of their experience without disclosing details that are inappropriate for public consumption.

In order to protect students and the people they encounter in the course of their internships, you work with your department chair and technology consultants to ensure that their ePortfolios are only accessible to you and the individual student. Then, in consultation with the students, you revise the assignment so that they can use the ePortfolio as their private collection and reflection space over the course of their internship and write a public-facing reflection to be reviewed by the assessment committee rather than the full, personal portfolio.\

**Scenario #4:** You are a program administrator and/or staff member. You are designing an ePortfolio workshop to deliver in collaboration with your Career Center. The topic for this workshop is “Professionalism and ePortfolios.” You want to focus on the thinking work ePortfolio creators should do before they begin building their ePortfolio.

Part of this workshop helps students develop a professional identity in response to their imagined audience and purpose. However, you also ask students to consider professionalism in the context of the ePortfolio: What does it mean to be a professional in this digital space?

Students might speak to how they select photos and artifacts to feature in the ePortfolio, how they talk about their experiences in ways that connect to terms used in their profession, or how they show knowledge of professional standards by attributing and re-using sources according to their professional community’s standards for re-use.

As students reflect on how they might signal professionalism in ePortfolio creation, you also speak to the consequences an unprofessional ePortfolio can have for them. You show students



how they can protect their ePortfolio content until they are ready to publish their site, and you give them resources for feedback from institutional partners on campus (the career center, the writing center, and/or their advisors).

## Resources:

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<https://www.med.uottawa.ca/eportfolio/Documents/ConfidentialityAgreement.pdf>



## **Principle 3: Practice**

*ePortfolio creators need opportunities to develop and practice the digital literacies necessary to create accessible and effective ePortfolios.*

**ABSTRACT:** ePortfolio creators need practice with digital literacies. ePortfolio instruction should teach creators what ePortfolios are, why they are creating one, how to employ visual design and Universal Design principles when creating one, and how to work with ePortfolio tools and technologies. When creating ePortfolios, a knowledge of their audience, context, and constraints should guide creators.

**Strategies for applying this principle include...**

- Identifying and sharing effective strategies for storing, attaching, and curating artifacts.
- Maintaining an expectation of accessibility, including the ability for an ePortfolio to be accessed across devices and by everyone, including people using assistive technologies.
- Employing [universal design](#) principles whenever possible (including color choice, contrast, font size, page hierarchy, captioning, alternatives to drop down menus, etc.).
- Teaching students about visual design considerations, such as font choices, color contrast, image selection and placement, and any other relevant design principles.
- Encouraging students to think about the context of their ePortfolio work, including considering their audience, purpose, and constraints.
- Making sure students understand the many rhetorical choices they are making during the process and how these choices differ from those made during the composition of more traditional documents such as essays, resumes, and cover letters.
- Considering the constraints and affordances of various ePortfolio genres (learning, archive, assessment, showcase, etc.) in regards to composition, sharing, maintenance, design, etc.
- Determining the availability of tools for ePortfolio making and how student materials are impacted by the constraints of their situation.
- Offering basic training in the use of the ePortfolio platform at the time of implementation, as well as periodically, and upon request through student services.



- Having available on-campus and online staff, including students, who can answer questions around the use of any mandated ePortfolio platform and can also assist with instructional design questions.
- Informing ePortfolio creators of institutional or public resources that can support them in creating their ePortfolio.

### **Scenarios:**

**Scenario #1:** You are an undergraduate business major who has composed an ePortfolio for your English course at your college. You have received consistently positive feedback from the educator on your work. Now that you wish to use examples from this portfolio in your application for an internship, you seek advice from the career center. Your advisor encourages you to include writing samples from your existing portfolio in your application yet cautions you not to include everything because you are now creating a portfolio for employability purposes and not to receive feedback on your learning experiences.

You select appropriate examples and create another portfolio specific to your internship application in which you can frame these examples, provide contextual information, and link to other experiences that are valuable for your potential employers.

**Scenario #2:** You are a non-traditional student, returning to college after many years. Your educator requires you to compose an ePortfolio, which requires the ability to create and add content in digital spaces. They acknowledge that not all of their students may have the necessary digital literacy skills to do so and perform a quick assessment at the beginning of the program, offering direct help and resources where students can self-learn and upskill.

Your educator works with e-terns, who are students employed by the university to assist students as well as educators with educational technology questions. The e-terns are available to answer your questions throughout the term and make you comfortable gaining necessary digital skills to compose your ePortfolio successfully.

You are grateful for this support because while you use your smartphone and various apps on it on a regular basis to communicate with friends and family, you have not conducted academic work digitally and only just bought a new computer to be able to participate in the online parts of the program, conduct research, and complete assignments electronically.



**Scenario #3:** You are a non-tenure track educator in a department that has decided to mandate the use of ePortfolios. A two-day workshop is scheduled the week before classes begin to introduce the requirement. A trainer from the ePortfolio software provider is brought in to run the workshop, which includes an introduction to the technical features of the platform and a chance for educators to revise their assignments and syllabi to make use of the new platform.

Four weeks later, you're asking students to set up and add their first assignment to an ePortfolio for your course, but some of the students get error messages that you don't understand, and several others seem to have saved their work in a format that the platform won't display. Your two-day workshop did not prepare you for these potential issues.

You contact the Academic Technologies office and speak with one of the e-terns who support both students and educators when it comes to ePortfolio-related questions. They can assist with the file format question on the phone, but ask that you come into the office or jump into a web conference call to take them through the steps to replicate the error message. Once they know how to reproduce the error message, they get in touch with the software provider to get this issue resolved and provide you with an update once it is done.

While you are talking with one of the e-terns, they point out that there are regular drop-in clinics scheduled throughout the year that students and educators can attend digitally or in-person to ask questions about how to make best use of the ePortfolio platform. You can also sign up for educator training in which an instructional designer reviews your portfolio component with you based on your own impressions and the feedback you have received from students.

## **Resources:**

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## Principle 4: Respect Author Rights and Re-use Permissions

*ePortfolio creators should understand and respect author rights, best practices for re-use, and representation.*

ABSTRACT: Because ePortfolios ask creators to re-use text and media, they need a working knowledge of plagiarism, copyright, fair use, and licensing. Students should be ethical owners of their ePortfolios and engage in conversations about how to responsibly



move artifacts into ePortfolios, particularly when artifacts represent professional or collaborative experiences or involve the representation of others.

Strategies for applying this principle include...

- Advocating for student ownership of ePortfolios and ePortfolio portability post-graduation.
- Ensuring ePortfolio creators are aware of how the ePortfolio will be used by an institution or employer (e.g., for institutional assessment), and obtaining consent from students for this re-use.
- Distinguishing among concepts related to plagiarism, [attribution](#), citation, copyright, fair use, and licensing.
- Demonstrating how to attribute sources according to disciplinary, professional, institutional, and cultural standards, as well as genre conventions, to avoid accusations of [plagiarism](#).
- Identifying situations in which ePortfolio creators can argue fair use within their institution/culture.
- Becoming familiar with various [licensing agreements](#) regarding re-use of resources, and knowing how to apply an appropriate Creative Commons license to an ePortfolio to guide its re-use.
- Being thoughtful in how to represent others' identities and ideas, including the use of photos, collaborative projects, and work authored and owned by others. This includes sharing artifacts that disclose others' personal information only when you have the legal right and personal permission to do so.
- Considering how representing others in an ePortfolio can be shaped by social and cultural biases, and being rhetorically thoughtful in selecting and contextualizing artifacts.
- Asking professional organizations about using work completed in internships, employment, and work-for-hire before featuring these artifacts in a ePortfolio in case information is proprietary or protected. When negotiating these professional relationships, you should ask about featuring the work you are doing in your professional ePortfolio.
- Providing specific information for students and educators who work with protected and/or vulnerable groups, such as children, patients, clients, etc., and who may include information about this work in their ePortfolios.



Scenarios:

**Scenario #1:** You are a student who is excited to design your ePortfolio. You decide to include artwork from your favorite street artist alongside your bio on the homepage. While the artwork does not have a re-use license at the bottom, you decide to use it anyway. You attribute each piece of art individually at the bottom of the page in APA format with a link to the artist's website. However, when you show your ePortfolio to your educator, you are accused of breaking copyright law.

You are confused—there's a full citation at the bottom of the page. While much of your academic career has prepared you to navigate attribution and citation, very little time has been spent on copyright. Your educator asks you to reconsider the homepage design. Specifically, they ask you to reflect on the following questions: is the artwork used in such a way that you can argue fair use? Should you replace this artwork with artwork from the public domain or artwork with clearer re-use licensing? What are the potential risks if you keep the page's design as-is?

After concluding that this artwork is protected by copyright and you are not using it in a way that suggests fair use, you redesign the page to include an open-access work instead. You still clearly attribute this work to its creator but know that you have permission to re-use it on your personal ePortfolio.

**Scenario #2:** You are an undergraduate student in their senior year. You are creating an ePortfolio as you apply for elementary teaching positions. You plan to discuss your student teaching experience in a first grade classroom, specifically a lesson that you co-designed with the supervising educator. When including details about the lesson, you want to be clear about the role that you played while giving credit to the supervising educator. Additionally, you share how you will write about this experience with the educator and get her approval of how you represented her work on the project.

As you start building this page in your ePortfolio, you realize that you would like to include photos of you teaching the lesson. You are worried about including images of young children without guardian permission, but you also know your audience will be engaged by seeing photos of you teaching. Instead of showing students' faces, you focus on images where the educator is the only identifiable face (e.g., the students are faced toward the front of the room)



or blur student faces and include a caption with the photo that explains why you made this ethical consideration.

**Scenario #3:** You are an undergraduate in your senior year specializing in early industrial design. You are developing an ePortfolio as part of your senior capstone project. You plan to also use this ePortfolio in the job market. As artifacts, you include your sample designs across a range of project contexts and your theory of industrial design.

While you want your employers to be able to view your work and ability, you also want to make sure they know which material is re-usable and which parts of your portfolio are not. In one of your classes, your educator discussed copyright and the use of Creative Commons licenses, and you understand their benefits. You add an appropriate Creative Commons license to your pages indicating to anyone who views your portfolio what material can be reused. You clearly state that all other parts of your portfolio remain under copyright.

**Scenario #4:** You are an educator of an online course. You asked your students to make a public-facing ePortfolio to reflect on and connect their curricular experiences with extra-curricular experiences. One student is struggling with several components. They recently completed an internship, where they helped assess the health of chickens. They want to connect this experience to their pre-vet coursework in hopes that veterinary school application boards will see their passion for animal care.

However, without explicit instruction on ePortfolio literacy, they run into several problems: first, when they share a draft of the site with a former supervisor, they are told that they cannot share photos that show the chickens or their care from the company because their methods for chicken care are proprietary. Second, they have included several copyrighted materials, including a journal article that they completed a reading response to and a photo from a veterinary practice's website.

Ultimately, while they have been asked to complete an ePortfolio, they are lacking the knowledge and support needed to create an ethical and accessible ePortfolio. As their educator, you can help your students avoid these frustrating issues. First, use low stakes activities to research professional standards for sharing and representation in their disciplinary, professional, and national communities. Second, provide them with knowledge of copyright and open access resources to use when selecting decorative images to include.



For additional scenarios on this principle, see Slade et al. (2018).

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## Principle 5: Access to Technology

*Adequate access to technology must be available for all students, and ePortfolio software should be accessible with institutional devices.*

**ABSTRACT:** Students with limited access to technology or the internet should still have opportunities to create ePortfolios using institutional resources. An inclusive ePortfolio curriculum accommodates students who need to build their ePortfolio on a smartphone or gives students access to technology or the internet via institutional resources.

**Strategies for applying this principle include...**

- Recognizing that not all students own laptop or desktop computers and may rely on mobile phones and campus computers (available in libraries, labs, etc. at various hours).
- Ensuring that hardware, software, and ePortfolio platforms and support are readily accessible to account for students' diverse schedules.
- Providing students and educators with training, technology support infrastructure, and resources (e.g., samples of successful ePortfolios, tutorials, resources on digital ethics, universal design, etc.).
- Making an institutional commitment to providing adequate proactive support (initial training, tutorials, examples) as well as reactive support (e.g., help desk support) for educators and students.

### **Scenarios:**

**Scenario #1:** You are a part-time student attending courses after your normal work hours. As part of your capstone course, you are asked to create an ePortfolio. While you have a desktop computer at work and know some desktop computers are available to you at the library, you do not have access to a computer at your home—although you have an iPad and a smartphone. Moreover, the library has limited hours. When you talk to the professor after class and explain this situation, they already have a plan in place to meet your needs.

The professor has technical support resources from the ePortfolio platform provider specifically tailored to people using a tablet or smartphone and the out-of-class activities have also taken a variety of devices into account. More so, your professor has a list of local libraries with weekend



and extended night hours that you can use to work on the ePortfolio and directions for checking out hardware to take home from the university library. While the professor does have on-campus office hours during the day, there are also options for distance participation in these through web or phone conferencing. You are relieved that your educator has already considered your situation and excited to begin the ePortfolio.

**Scenario #2:** You are an educator. You would like to assign students a video-making project as part of their ePortfolio development for your course. As you design this assignment, you consider that some students will be making these videos on their phones, while others will use laptops and screencasting programs, and others will have access to video cameras. Because they are using different hardware, they will most likely also be using different video-making programs.

You ensure that students have access to tutorials and troubleshooting guides available for the programs you are suggesting they use. Although you have vetted these software in advance to ensure that they comply with institutional privacy statements and do not put the student in a position where they may not be able to use them without relinquishing their rights to their work or disclosing private information inadvertently, you also ask students to review the EULAs for these programs. In this review, you help them critically consider the terms of these licensing agreements. Finally, you give students information about how they can check out a video camera or laptop through your library and edit their videos in the library's media room, where all the computers are equipped with video-editing software. All of this additional information helps students who are new to video-making or video-making platforms and models the program vetting process.

**Scenario #3:** You are an educator. You create an ePortfolio assignment for your Biology course. You chose a platform that is accessible across devices, but you are aware that some students may not have access to a computer. You provide students with details on how to check out laptops from the library if needed.

You understand that your class has a large degree of variety when it comes to digital literacy and design abilities, but you can't dedicate class time to developing these skills. Instead, you provide students with a resource list that includes technology support, platform support, and free resources to aid them in the design of their website. You also hold office hours, which students can join in person or digitally to provide additional one-on-one support. As well, you point



students to the media lab on campus that has digital and in-person drop-in hours where students can learn more about various software and seek advice from experts.

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## **Principle 6: Privacy**

*ePortfolio creators should have ultimate control over public access to their portfolios and the ability to change the privacy settings at any time.*

**ABSTRACT:** Students should be able to alter and explain their privacy and sharing settings as owners of their ePortfolios. Administrators, educators, and staff must be prepared to have these conversations with students.

**Strategies for applying this principle include...**

- Becoming familiar with all privacy settings available in the ePortfolio system, such as the ability to make an ePortfolio password-protected or “shareable” but not public.
- Prioritizing tools that optimize customization of permissions and permit page-level permissions.
- Acknowledging that how ePortfolio platforms interact with third parties can challenge students’ right to privacy.
- Preparing educators, administrators, staff, and students to understand the ways in which student privacy might be challenged via data mining, tracking, etc.
- Balancing the ePortfolio creator’s right to privacy and the efficacy of the ePortfolio program’s sharing capabilities.

### **Scenario:**

**Scenario #1:** When you are a first-year student, you are asked to provide a personal memoir in a public-facing ePortfolio in your composition course. You offer a narrative that is personally significant but has coming-of-age elements. Later, when you apply for a position as a high school educator, you realize that this story may no longer reflect the identity you would like to project online. You remove the public access from your portfolio, as the course for which you created it is long over. You do not delete it though, as you want to keep it as a record of your learning. When navigating the process of removing public permissions from your site, you have access to institutional resources that offer guidance. After you follow the directions in these resources, online search for content from this portfolio does not bring up any results.

To sustain a digital presence--but one that better aligns with your current professional identity--you create a second portfolio that includes learning evidence and reflections from your



studies that are appropriate to share in your portfolio for employability purposes. You limit the access to that portfolio to your potential employers by providing them with an access token or password, depending on the options your ePortfolio platform provides.

**Scenario #2:** You are a student. You have a portfolio component in a number of your courses this term. Depending on your class, you are asked to create different types of portfolios. In one class, you create a portfolio for assessment purposes, in your internship requirement you create a developmental portfolio, and for your writing class, you create a showcase portfolio that you can share with future employers.

For each different portfolio purpose, you can define the audience who shall have access to it, as not everything can be shared publicly. Your internship mentor, for example, does not want any confidential data to be made public and only allows you to include images if the portfolio is shared only with your internship advisor at your institution. In contrast, your showcase portfolio is going to be public, allowing you to share it widely with future employers. You are conscious of only including multimedia content and reflections that follow your institution's copyright guidelines and agreed on terms with people that appear in that content. You want to feature an experience you have working in a biology lab in this showcase portfolio. When talking about experiences you have working in the lab, you also do not publish confidential data but rather focus on the transferrable skills that this experience has taught you.

**Scenario #3:** You are a student. You are developing an ePortfolio for your capstone course and have been asked to publish your in-process site so that you can participate in a peer review activity. You know that the site is not ready for public access, but you also know that you need to publish it so that your peer can review the site.

Your educator has given you options for how to share your site with your peer: you can publicly publish the site so that it is searchable to outside audiences, you can publish the site but keep the link unsearchable, or you can password-protect the site and give your peer the password so that they alone can access the site. In reflecting on your needs for the peer review, you decide to password-protect the site and share this password with your peer. Later, when you are ready for your educator to view the finished site, you will reflect on these privacy options again and decide on the best option for maintaining your preferred level of privacy.



## Resources

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## Principle 7: Content Storage

*ePortfolio creators should know where their content is stored, who has access, and how to remove it.*

**ABSTRACT:** Before working in an ePortfolio platform, students, educators, administrators, and staff should review the Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions with particular attention to how the platform will collect, store, and use data and if students can opt out of data collection or remove their data. Providers should communicate these details in clear and accessible language.

**Strategies for applying this principle include...**

- Reviewing the Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy (and other relevant documents) of the ePortfolio site and seeking counsel, e.g. at your institution, if you are not clear whether the site is safe or appropriate to use.
- Identifying how the provider will collect and use your personal data, whether you can opt out of data collection, and how you can remove your data *before* creating an account on the ePortfolio-making platform and adding content.
- Recognizing that deleting your account does not mean your user data will be removed from data repositories *unless the end user license agreement says this*.
- Considering how complex, time consuming, or costly the portfolio transfer process is, if there is one.
- Informing students on how the institution, vendors, and/or website hosting system may preserve or share their ePortfolio information with other parties, systems, or entities.
- Sharing guidelines on data ownership, storage, and sharing in clear and accessible [end user license agreements](#).

**Scenarios:**

**Scenario #1:** You are an undergraduate senior. You are required to develop a ePortfolio of your experiences and reflections over the duration of your final capstone course. As part of the assessment task, you are able to use the web portfolio platform of your choice. Your institution provides you with a list of possible options and outlines the benefits of using each one. However, you are concerned about how each platform may use your information once it is



uploaded because recently you have seen advertisements pop up on your phone based on your previous web searches.

When you mention your concerns to classmates, they also share their concerns about the security of their information once it is “in the cloud.” As a result, the group asks the educator if they can investigate licensing agreements for the popular platforms and add relevant information to the existing resource as a class activity.

Your educator is excited to hear you are interested in learning more about the platforms and creates an activity where you work through end user license agreements in groups to identify how platforms use, store, and manage user data. After this activity, you are in a better position to decide which platform you want to use based on the best benefits and the least amount of acceptable compromises you are willing to make.

**Scenario #2:** You are a graduate student. You have spent several semesters perfecting your ePortfolio on the university’s proprietary platform. You assume that upon graduation you will be able to transfer your content to a new platform that is accessible to potential employers. However, when you ask about the transfer process, you find out that it is virtually non-existent.

You are allowed to download your content onto a thumb drive and take it with you, but the university does not assist with the process after that point. You have never used another platform, and the university only provides support and instruction on its own platform.

The institution should ensure that students are able to maintain their ePortfolio beyond the constraints of the institutional platform, while providing instruction on how to transfer the content to a new platform. When students are using a platform where transfer is impossible, that should be explained initially, and another entity, such as a career center, should be available to help students create a public-facing resource. Alternatively, the institution can make the platform available to its graduates to continue creating portfolios.

**Scenario #3:** You are the ePortfolio Program Director and decided on the purchase of a particular ePortfolio platform that is the primary platform for your institution. You receive an email from your ePortfolio provider stating that the end user licensing agreement (EULA) will change in three months, the negotiated notice period for your institution. In preparing your response, you want to consider any changes to student data collection and storage. When you negotiated the contract with this provider, you were clear about your institution’s policies



regarding student data collection and storage and required that the provider notify you via email of any changes and give you the right to terminate the contract if changes violated the institutional policy.

You saved a copy of the old EULA and can now compare it to the new EULA with your institution's legal counsel. After comparing versions of the EULA, you seek clarification on these changes from the platform representative in preparation to communicate these updates to stakeholders and students. Once your institution is satisfied to continue with the platform under the new EULA, students are presented with the changes directly in the platform and asked to review them.

**Scenario #4:** You are a program administrator and/or staff member who has been asked by your institution to start a campus-wide ePortfolio initiative as part of its Quality Enhancement Plan. There is nobody at your institution who regularly vets technologies intended for teaching and learning, and you have limited knowledge of ePortfolios and suitable platforms in general. When you gather a committee to consider different ePortfolio technologies, you make a list of priorities: students' ability to edit and share their ePortfolios both as students and after they leave the institution, universal design practices for creators and viewers, privacy capabilities for authors, and minimal direct cost to students. However, the committee soon realizes it has thought very little about use of student data, which is a big concern.

As a committee, you develop a series of criteria related to student data and privacy and their acceptable options. These criteria will help eliminate some potential ePortfolio platforms. These questions include the following:

- Does the platform collect identifiable or de-identified personal information?
- Where is data stored, and how is this data protected?
- Does the platform sell this data to third parties?
- Is user data collected/used/shared for non-authorized purposes?
- Can the user remove their data, and what is the process by which they do that?
- How does the platform inform users of changes to their EULA?
- Are vendors held to equitable standards for privacy and data collection/storage?

If students choose their own platforms for ePortfolio creation, you provide resources that inform them about potential platforms and how each platform collects, uses, and stores user data.



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## **Principle 8: Cross-Platform Compatibility**

*ePortfolio creators should be able to make and view ePortfolios across any device, browser, and operating system with equitable ease of use across devices.*

**ABSTRACT:** ePortfolio platforms should operate across devices and operating systems from both the creator and viewer perspective. ePortfolio creators should have the technical knowledge to create ePortfolios that are readable across devices.

**Strategies for applying this principle include...**

- Considering how all aspects of ePortfolio use function across platforms and mobile operating systems, including uploading, viewing, listening, downloading, embedding, and sharing.
- Considering ease of use and whether the student will use an application or a web browser to access their ePortfolio on a mobile device.
- Providing students with the technical support that they need to use the ePortfolio platform across devices.
- Questioning whether or not other users, such as employers, would need to download an application to review or interact with the ePortfolio.

**Scenarios:**

**Scenario #1:** You are a recent graduate on the job market and choose to include your ePortfolio link on your resume. You designed your ePortfolio to be viewed on a desktop computer but now imagine that your professional audience will be viewing the site on their mobile devices. You reach out to your former educator to see how you can begin revising the ePortfolio to be effective across platforms.

Your educator sends you to a support page on the platform provider's website that walks you through design tips for tablet and smartphone viewing and shows you how you can preview the design on different screen sizes. You redesign your ePortfolio with these tips in mind. Then, you reach out to friends and ask them to practice viewing the site on their phones and tablets so that you can troubleshoot any additional errors. When you are sure that the design is functional and professional looking, you distribute the link to potential employers.



**Scenario #2:** You are an educator who has asked your students to complete an ePortfolio as part of a capstone course. Students have already selected artifacts from their learning and co-curricular experiences to include in the ePortfolio but have not yet begun creating and filling the actual site. You distribute a survey to students to identify how comfortable they are using digital devices, if they have used the ePortfolio platform before, and how familiar they are with ePortfolios as a genre. You discover that while students use digital devices often for social media, few have created a website and none know what an ePortfolio is. On the first day exploring the platform, you observe students struggling to make minimal changes to the premade template.

You need to provide students with additional support in how to use the ePortfolio platform: (1) explicitly support the technical knowledge needed in the ePortfolio creation process in the course; (2) put students in contact with institutional, local, or public experts; (3) create classroom spaces for students to share peer knowledge and ask each other questions across a learning community. You should also discuss students' unfamiliarity with ePortfolios with the program administrator and/or staff member to see how students can learn about ePortfolios before entering the capstone course.

**Scenario #3:** You are an educator at a small, private college where the administration already has a contract with a particular ePortfolio platform. However, the platform can only be used in a limited capacity on a mobile device. Administration was not aware of this during the contract negotiation phase and now the contract is in place and binding. The small institution did not budget for an additional ePortfolio platform, and you must decide how to proceed. You can use the current platform and have students with iOS devices use the campus computers to access and edit their ePortfolios, or you can search for a different, free platform that is equally accessible across devices.

The portfolio program office updates its catalogue of portfolio criteria and includes the support of popular mobile device platforms so that they are not forgotten when a review of the current platform is conducted and other platforms are considered.



## **Resources:**

Bose, D., & Pakala, K. (2015). Use of mobile learning strategies and devices for e-portfolio content creation in an engineering thermodynamics and fluid mechanics classes: Student perceptions. *2015 ASEE Annual Conference and Exposition*, 1–26.

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## Principle 9: Accessibility

*All ePortfolio platforms and pedagogy should be thoroughly vetted for accessibility according to the standards identified by one's culture, government, or profession.*

ABSTRACT: ePortfolio platforms should be accessible to diverse creators as well as diverse audiences. Stakeholders should test platforms for accessibility, and educators and students should be educated about accessible content creation.

**Strategies for applying this principle include...**

- Recognizing that technologies are not always designed with all students in mind, and accessible platforms benefit all users.
- Recognizing that it isn't enough to rely upon a particular software company's assertions regarding accessibility. Decision-makers and other stakeholders should test accessibility prior to purchase or deployment of any ePortfolio platform. This can be done in cooperation with institutional partners, e.g. the Office of Inclusion and Disability (or similar) and affected students and staff.
- Including training so that educators, administrators, and staff understand accessibility standards when selecting ePortfolio tools and creating content.
- Preparing students to practice accessible design for diverse ePortfolio viewers.

**Scenarios:**

**Scenario #1:** You are a student participating in an internship as part of your work-integrated learning requirement in your Hospitality Management program. Your position as sous-chef in your favorite restaurant in town gives you rich learning opportunities, and you want to document these experiences not just in text but also in multimedia content. Your internship mentor is okay with you taking photos and video of the kitchen and your work to share in your portfolio.

During one of the introductory sessions to the ePortfolio work for your internship, you learned about creating accessible content so that people with differing abilities can read your portfolio and comment on it. Therefore, when you upload photos of the dishes you created, you provide appropriate alternative text descriptions that screen readers can access. When you use video to take viewers through the process of creating a dish or reflecting on a task, you make a transcript



or summary available as text that you place next to the video. While this adds work to your portfolio creation process, it also helps you think about your audience, how your portfolio is viewed, and how you can express your ideas and reflections in an effective and concise manner.

**Scenario #2:** You are an educator. Your institution is finalizing its ePortfolio choices. As a member of the selection committee, you are tasked with verifying that each platform is compliant with the accessibility standards adopted by your institution. In this role, you collaborate with any units that work with students with disabilities to involve them in testing, asking them to provide a representative for the team that makes decisions.

As part of the vetting process, you also ask the vendor for a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) that shows which accessibility accommodations they have created and which are on the roadmap. Furthermore, the committee hires student assistants working in a Disability Programs and Resource Center to take part in the testing process.

This way, the committee strategically and intentionally assesses each platform in regards to accessibility.

**Scenario #3:** You are a program administrator and/or staff member. Your department has just started an undergraduate ePortfolio requirement. You have vetted potential platforms to ensure they fit your ePortfolio program's purpose and are accessible to students across devices (including assistive technologies). You are now ready to introduce the requirement to educators and start adapting the curriculum.

As you plan the professional development sessions that will roll-out this new requirement, you are careful to make space to share technical knowledge. You ensure that educators get to know the platform and how the platform can adjust for students with disabilities or different device preferences. You also talk to educators about accessible ePortfolio design. You include topics from the *Web Accessibility Initiative WCAG2.1* resource, such as alternative text, meaningful sequence of content, and accessible design principles (non-text contrast, spacing, etc.). You have educators practice viewing example ePortfolios on multiple devices and with a screen reader. You then provide educators with local and online resources. You plan to review platform accessibility in your ePortfolio professional development workshop each year.



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## **Principle 10: Consent for Data Usage**

*ePortfolio platform providers need consent to collect and store data from ePortfolio creators.*

**ABSTRACT:** ePortfolio platform providers should explain their data collection, storage, and use policies in clear and accessible language. These policies should comply with applicable institutional regulations. When these policies change, platform providers should have mechanisms in place for students and staff to review the changes and decide whether they want to keep their portfolios under these changed circumstances.

**Strategies for applying this principle include...**

- Clearly identifying and explaining how ePortfolio platform providers plan to collect and use student data, whether students will be able to opt out of data collection, and how they will inform the institution and platform users of changes to their licensing agreements.
- Making ‘use of student data’ a criterion for platform selection when negotiating contracts or informing students about data use when allowing them to choose among platform options.
- Being aware of and complying with federal and state regulations regarding student data use and privacy.

### **Scenarios:**

**Scenario #1:** You are an undergraduate student. At the start of your studies, you are introduced to the idea of keeping a portfolio to document your learning and progress towards your institution’s graduate requirements. Your institution proposes a platform to use for this purpose.

The Academic Technologies staff member who introduces the platform to all first-year students explains how to use this platform as well as how you can keep your reflections and content private unless you want to share them with specific people.

Before you can use the platform, you are asked to review its Terms and Conditions as well as the Privacy Policy. Unlike with other online sites, you actually read through them in the introductory session and ask the staff member any questions where you do not understand the

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legal language. You learn where your data is stored, who has access to it, who owns the rights on the content, whether there is any advertisement, and how content on the site is used.

Since you have read some articles about multinational corporations using data generated by the people creating content on their platforms, you check with the Academic Technologies staff member whether that's also the case with the portfolio tool that your institution selected. You are assured by them that your data is not stored or used by a company to profit and that private data is private and can only be accessed by you until you decide to make it available to teaching staff, fellow students, or others. They outline why a data analytics tool is used and what sort of information is gathered in reports. Using [Request Map Generator](#), you check which other sites the portfolio tool connects to and ask Academic Technologies if you have any concerns.

**Scenario #2:** You are an educator. To promote digital ethical awareness in licensing agreements, you have asked your students to review the ePortfolio provider's EULA and identify parts of the licensing agreement that will affect their user privacy.

They are happy to see that they can opt out of user data collection and can request the company disclose any personal data collected through their use of the platform. However, there is no visible process for opting out of collection, and users must contact the Data Protection Office to negotiate the opting out process. Students can also remove much of their personal data from the platform server when they delete their account, but the company does not disclose what types of personal data they permanently retain.

As a class, you decide to contact the platform provider to get answers to these questions because the portfolio program office at your institution does not yet have answers for these. You will take the information that you learn through your correspondence and create an opting out resource for other students at your institution in collaboration with the portfolio program office. The institutional stakeholders are now aware of the ambiguity in the EULA and will take further steps with the platform provider to clear these up as part of the contract review.

**Scenario #3:** You are an educator. In selecting ePortfolio platform providers, your institution has made data collection a priority. This gives you relief. However, when you are developing ePortfolios with your students, you see that some features of the ePortfolio platform ask students to use other tools. For instance, to embed a video on their ePortfolio page, students are prompted to upload the media to YouTube and then use a plugin to embed that video onto their page.



When you look into YouTube's EULA, you find it is very different from the platform provider's EULA. Importantly, it collects user data and users have to alter their YouTube privacy settings to opt out of some forms of data collection. You are confused: are your students protected by the ePortfolio platform's EULA, or are they subject to YouTube's EULA because they are using this tool within the platform?

You reach out to your institutional technology resources for clarification and create a short resource for students that explains use of tools within another platform and how that can affect their privacy and data security.

### **Resources:**

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## Glossary of Key Terms

**Access:** The term “Access” in the context of ePortfolios includes access for individuals with disabilities, access to technology, and access to training and information.

**Attribution:** Connecting words, syntax, or ideas to an original source, usually through some form of citation.

**Copyright:** A law within the U.S. Constitution (Article 1, section 8) that protects intellectual property, limiting another’s ability for re-use, reproduction, or distribution. A work does not need to be registered with the U.S. Copyright Office to be protected under copyright.

**Educator:** A term that refers to an individual who instructs a course and encompasses faculty, instructors, and tutors.

**End User License Agreement:** A licensing contract between a software licensor and its users that identifies the terms and conditions of use. These terms and conditions can include proprietary rights (what the licensor owns vs. what the user owns), details related to liability, data collection and storage information, rights to privacy, etc.

**Digital Citizenship:** An understanding that when students enter digital spaces they have certain rights and responsibilities and must consider concepts like security, privacy, communication, collaboration, respect, access, and permission within the contexts of these spaces.

**Digital Literacy:** The ability to use and think critically about using media, software, hardware, and other technologies in digital spaces.

**Fair Use:** A legal defense wherein an individual argues that they have a right to re-use copyright-protected materials. Each instance of fair use is individually interpreted and decided. The individual who wants to argue fair use should do so based on four factors: (1) the purpose of re-use, (2) the nature of the work being re-used, (3) the amount of the original work that is reused, and (4) the effect this re-use will have on the original work’s market value.



**Licensing:** A contract that grants others specific, limited rights for use. These rights vary based on the individual licensing agreement and its terms.

**Plagiarism:** The intentional or unintentional presentation of another's work (including that work's words, syntax, or ideas) as if it is your own without proper attribution. When citing sources, one should follow disciplinary, professional, and generic standards for attribution.

**Universal design:** "Universal design is an approach to design that increases the potential for developing a better quality of life for a wide range of individuals. It is a design process that enables and empowers a diverse population by improving human performance, health and wellness, and social participation" ([Universal Design.com](http://Universal Design.com)). It promotes inclusivity and barrier-free access.



## Full List of Resources

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