



Alternatives to Traditional ePortfolio Strategies

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Introduction

- About me
- Purpose of this talk

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Pop quiz

- Blogging
- Google



Academic goals

- Reflection
- Advancement + placement
- Think beyond the four-year undergrad experience



Modern information literacy

- Web artifacts are “graded” like peer-reviewed papers, not homework (links = citations)
- Online information sharing is a key skill for scholars now
- Students could already teach *us*



ePortfolios are only a starting point

- If it isn't online (and public) it's effectively invisible
- Corollary: Google *is* the portal for everyone else
- Selection criteria may be wrong (in fact, they probably are)



Walled gardens == fail

- Many future interactions will be initiated online
- Requiring extraction/access grant prevents discovery
- Students won't know who may be interested in their work
- It's a question of *relevance*



What's different about the web?

- Metadata is limited and untrusted
- Value is in interaction as much as artifacts
- Permanence is rare, but priceless
- Identity is *hard*



How can this possibly work?

- Massive aggregates have value, even if inputs are untrusted
- Identity and trust are established over time
- Despite all appearances, most people have good intentions



Reputation economy

- Fictional: Whuffie
- Real: PageRank



Changing our expectations

- Any barrier to participation is a deal-breaker
- Default to public; filter after the fact
- Guide students towards rich, productive online participation



Our role as instructors & technologists

- Lower barriers to personal publishing
- Provide examples and role models for emulation
- Assist in building continuity + useful aggregates



Emergent value

- Search engine rankings and indexing depend on link graph
- Communities form around transient loci (i.e., blog comment threads)
- Tags in social tools allow casual discovery of related resources



Long-term benefits

- Taking the long view: value may take years to materialize
- Academic record is less important and approachable than presence
- Reputation will build over time



Next steps

- Provide some sort of open institutional publishing platform
- Help students document + discuss their experiences
- Lead by example: faculty + staff should also be participants



End

- Discussion