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# E-Portfolio Case Studies

## E-Portfolio Case Study



How OSPortfolio made advising better, with a little help from Serensoft

**C**laremont Graduate School (CGU) started pursuing an e-portfolio approach originally to help as a student-advising tool, and is now considering expanding its use as a general-purpose e-portfolio solution.

### The Problem

*“How can we use technology to enhance and improve advising for our graduate students?”*

The original impetus for the advising-tool-support technology was a study from an internal team called the Faculty Learning Community (FLC). Their findings:

- Students need to be more in control of their programs in graduate school than they were as undergraduates; this involves educating them on how to develop and implement their goals... *e-Portfolios can help with this.*
- Faculty advisors need to help graduate students develop goals and plans for their graduate education; this involves educating them on advising procedures... *e-Portfolios can help with this.*
- Students and faculty must develop a communication plan; students receive needed guidance that faculty have content to “advise” about... *e-Portfolios can help with this.*

Given the FLC’s conclusions, CGU opted to try e-portfolios as a tool to make the advising process more effective. The student would sit down with the advisor and go over requirements, and

the advisor would use the e-portfolio as a guide to giving the student feedback: “I can see you’ve contributed significantly on subject X, so you certainly meet or exceed this requirement...”

### The Challenge

*“How can we implement e-Portfolios effectively?”*

Once they had the goal in mind—e-portfolio as advising support—CGU set about finding the right technology to implement it: since they were already using Sakai on campus, it seemed natural to try the Open Source Portfolio (OSP) tools that are built in to Sakai. After exploring the tools CGU opted to look for a team that had OSP experience and skills in order to implement their e-portfolios on schedule and under budget.

### The Solution

*“Who has the OSPortfolio abilities we need and can help us implement five pilots on time?”*

Sue Roig, Director Academic Technology at CGU, chose Serensoft to implement five “e-portfolios for advising” in early December of 2007. By the end of January, all five were active: each e-portfolio had a matrix with

criteria and requirements, and each involved a portfolio template for presenting the student’s work as a web-page for easy review. Plus, each was distinctive—totally unique.

At first CGU had specific graduate students in mind for each e-portfolio; now, since many of those students have earned their degrees, CGU is currently considering an expansion of the implementation beyond just an advising tool



History Ph.D. Standards	Submissions
Curriculum Vitae	1
Personal Philosophy	1
History 300 (Required)	3
300 Level Courses (6 Minimum)	3
Two Substantive Papers (Required)	2
72 Units Total (Submit Transcript)	1
T-Course (Required 2004-on)	1
Language Exams	1
Qualifying Exams	1
Dissertation Proposal	1
Teaching Experience	1
Other Higher Ed Experience	1

*Some of the criteria required for the History Ph.D. program as seen in the OSPortfolio matrix tool.*



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## E-Portfolio Case Study *Cont'd*



and towards a more general e-portfolio tool for students, using them for peer-to-peer review and for external evaluations.

Speaking of her experience with Serensoft, Roig says “Serensoft went above and beyond as we developed the matrices and portfolio templates,

and above and beyond again in helping us diagnose some internal Sakai issues we were having.” She gives talks on, and demonstrations of, her e-portfolio implementation at meetings and conferences across the country, and gladly touts the experience she had with Serensoft. “Serensoft helped us at every turn.”

### Where can I get more information?

Serensoft produces “Wonderings” with the hope they will help higher education professionals as they explore subjects of interest. An electronic copy of our “Wonderings” can be found at the Serensoft web site (<http://www.serensoft.com/>). In addition Serensoft posts Webinars on related topics to the website—and, below are additional resources for electronic portfolios.

- Dr. Helen Barrett’s Electronic Portfolio website (<http://electronicPortfolios.org/>) provides what may be the most exhaustive treatment of the subject on the web. The website includes Dr. Barrett’s ongoing blog, writing and presentations—and links to numerous other resources.
- As e-portfolios are becoming more prevalent, many publications are devoting more and more space to the subject. Online articles for e-portfolios can be found at publications such as Educause (in particular Educause Quarterly at <http://connect.educause.edu/Library/EDUCAUSE+Quarterly/>) and Campus Technology (<http://www.campusTechnology.com/>).
- *Handbook of Research on ePortfolios* by Ali Jafari and Catherine Kaufman. A comprehensive treatment of the subject. It includes contributions from over 100 authors and addresses major aspects of rationale, technology, and implementation. Dozens of case studies detail current usage.
- *Electronic Portfolios: Emerging Practices in Student, Faculty, and Institutional Learning*. Barbara L. Cambridge, Susan Kahn, Daniel P. Tompkins, and Kathleen Blake Yancey, editors. Thorough treatment of major portfolio categories—student, faculty and institutional—using many case studies to examine and illustrate e-portfolio considerations, issues, and solutions.
- *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education* by Catherine A. Palomba and Trudy W. Banta. Focused on the larger question of assessment, this book does devote a few pages to how portfolios can be a useful assessment tool.
- Assessment Institute (<http://planning.iupui.edu/574.html>). Held annually in Indianapolis, the Assessment Institute is the United States’ oldest and largest conference focusing on outcomes assessment in higher education.
- Making Connections (<http://www.eportfolio.lagcc.cuny.edu/conference/>). Organized by LaGuardia Community College’s Center for Teaching and Learning, this conference provides an opportunity for thought leaders, practitioners, and newbies to gather and exchange information on their e-portfolio research and experiences.

### How can Serensoft Help?

Serensoft is a higher education services firm, meaning our goal is to use technology-based services to assist colleges and universities in meeting their teaching, learning, and administrative objectives. We have helped several institutions work through issues associated with electronic portfolios. From developing a more complete understanding of electronic portfolios

in general to focusing on how they might fit with a particular institution, we can help with education regarding e-portfolios. From designing a best-fit solution for your electronic portfolio needs to developing a pilot implementation, we can help.

From training faculty on the use of electronic portfolios to helping your IT staff support them, we can help.