Project Implementation:
In late January 2008, my class of eight students attended a workshop presented by Heather Cleary on how to create e-portfolios. I spent many hours researching existing e-portfolios on the Otis website. I made suggestions to students about how they might want to structure their portfolios based on what I observed to be the more successful examples. Students were then instructed to create an e-portfolio, or update existing ones. By mid-February, everyone had a new or updated e-portfolio on O-Space. I also created an e-portfolio for myself for the first time.

Specific project activities included the following:

* Attendance at workshops presented by Heather Cleary (two for me; one for students in class)
* Researching e-portfolio offerings on O-Space and identifying best practices
* Helping students troubleshoot e-portfolio creation/updates
* Monitoring student e-portfolio activity
* Creation of my own e-portfolio
* Researching Fine Arts Department presence on e-portfolios
* Sharing project with Fine Arts Department Assistant Chair, Christine Reynolds
* Surveying student satisfaction with e-portfolios
* Compiling survey data and writing report

Links:
To access the e-portfolios from my class, please click on the following links.
Holly Tempo, Instructor
Daniel Field, Fine Arts Senior
Flora Kao, Fine Arts Senior
Nina Mathis, Fine Arts Senior
Amanda McGough, Fine Arts Senior
Krysta Olson, Fine Arts Senior
Ajax Stevens, Fine Arts Senior
Dolores Udave, Fine Arts Senior
Christina Ybarra, Fine Arts Senior

Findings:
By doing this project, I have increased the Fine Arts Department presence on O-Space, specifically in the area of electronic portfolios. My research indicates that only three other Fine Arts faculty (two full-time and one part-time) have e-portfolios posted. I was only able to find portfolios by 10 other current fine arts students and 20 alumni (in some cases, there were duplicate postings). What this means is that faculty and student/alumni presence in the e-portfolios has increased by approximately 25%.

Student Survey:
I asked my students to complete a survey about their experiences creating an e-portfolio on O-Space. They responded to the questions below.

1. Were you aware of the e-portfolio service on O-Space prior to taking this class?

   Seven were aware of the e-portfolio and one was not

2. Did you have an e-portfolio on O-Space prior to taking this class?

   Five students already had an e-portfolio; and three did not.

3. If no, why not?

   The reasons included concerns about user-friendliness, ability to access system, and lack of interest.

4. If yes, when was the last time you updated your e-portfolio prior to taking this class?

   Those students who already had e-portfolios had not updated them for over one year (in some cases, as far back as 2006).

5. Did you find the training workshop on how to create an e-portfolio helpful? Why or why not?

   Students universally found the training helpful. They liked the step-by-step walkthrough format that Heather provided. They also felt that the workshop demonstrated the ease with which one could create an e-portfolio. Those who had already created e-portfolios felt that the system was easier to use now than during their previous experience.

6. Do you believe that the e-portfolio will be useful to you? If yes, how (e.g. job search, marketing, archive, etc.)?

   All of the students now believe that the e-portfolio will be useful to them. They anticipate using it to archive and organize images of their work and to refer potential employers/clients.

7. Do you plan to regularly update your e-portfolio?

   Seven plan to regularly update their e-portfolios. One student was unsure.

8. Do you plan to refer people to your e-portfolio?

   Six students plan to refer people to their e-portfolios. Two said no. One of those who said no prefers to send people to her blog spot.

9. What difficulties did you encounter in creating and/or updating your e-portfolio?

   Students cited the following difficulties:

   * Editing menus
   * Inability to change page templates after the page is built
   * Inability to label thumbnails individually
   * Hard to upload videos (maximum file size too small for most)
   * Hard to resize photos
   * Hard to edit page header

10. What improvements could be made to the system?

   Suggestions included the following:

   * Make it possible to change template after the page is built
   * Make system more user friendly
   * Offer more interesting layout options

11. What features do you like about the e-portfolio?

   Students liked the following features:

   * Variety of ways to search for portfolios (e.g. by person, category, etc.)
   * Variety of templates
   * Pre-existing layouts
   * Easy to manage
   * Offers an organized way to show artwork
* Offers another online venue to show artwork

12. Other comments?

A couple of students stated that they were pleased to have e-portfolios.

I, additionally, would comment that in general the system was simple to use. However, I had problems trying to edit text (system kept crashing—very frustrating and time consuming). I was also unable to change the order of my top and side menus and had to call in for assistance. Heather was able to make the changes for me remotely, but I still cannot do it myself for some reason.

**Conclusion:**

I believe that the creation of e-portfolios has been useful to my students. I recently had a marketing professional visit my class and talk about online marketing strategies for artists. I see that several have updated their portfolios after her talk, presumably to incorporate her suggestions. This is important since many artists have websites or e-portfolios, but do not always make good use of them. This information regarding marketing strategies will support the students’ efforts to create an effective online presence and, ultimately, encourage them to keep their e-portfolios updated and relevant to their practice.

I, personally, have found it useful already. I have referred several professionals to my site and note that I have already had over 2,100 hits since I first posted it publicly in mid-February. I have shared my findings with the Fine Arts Assistant Chair and will continue to encourage students in my department to create digital portfolios.

The e-portfolios are a great augmentation of other O-Space activities students participate in (e.g. class blogs and wikis). The e-portfolios provide them with a means to track and showcase their work. This is especially important for seniors about to graduate.