

# EEL... ENERGISE, ENTHUSE, INSPIRE

EEL gives a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals. If you have any suggestions or topics for this column, please contact the column co-ordinator Lesa Maclean at [maclean.lesa@gmail.com](mailto:maclean.lesa@gmail.com)

## Sustainability to go

*Freya Lucas asks what can an e-portfolio do for you?*

In my ever hopeful quest to break into the competitive and tightly held world of the librarian, I have been doing a lot of reading about the most successful ways in which to market oneself as a job seeker. Recently I read a quote, from Randy Nelson (Dean at Pixar University) who spoke about "...the proof of a portfolio versus the promise of a resume..."

In light of this quote, I'm sharing my thoughts and tips about creating an online portfolio, which I believe is a key part of maintaining your sustainability as a professional. More and more, performance reviews call on us to "prove our worth" and I believe e-portfolios offer a way for us to do this, which is portable, personal, innovative and easy to maintain.

Firstly, why a portfolio? Are they not the domain of the starving artist? I would argue that, as library and information professionals, having an online portfolio shows an understanding and recognition of the importance of having a professional online presence, as well as the technical skills required in building and maintaining a portfolio such as basic web design and coding. Additionally, an online portfolio can be viewed as an extension of one's resume and cover letter – the proof in the pudding. Your portfolio allows you to expand on aspects touched on in your resume. For example, as well as stating you are competent in the development of presentation materials for targeted audiences in a resume, your online portfolio allows you space to link to any presentations, along with any comments which may have been made about them.

Much like a tangible binder, an online portfolio allows you to store documentations and examples of your work in a location not linked to your personal

or professional servers. Sadly, jobs don't last forever. Having an up-to-date portfolio with examples of past and current projects means that you are always ready to compete in what is an increasingly unstable employment market.

So, you know why you need one – but what should go into a portfolio? As an extension of your resume, your portfolio should include your journey. Where have you been as a professional and student? What professional development opportunities have you undertaken? Do you have an active personal learning network (PLN)? Have you written

online articles, or been published in industry relevant magazines such as *INCITE*? These are the things that belong in a portfolio.

Including only your best pieces of work seems like a no-brainer, but it's important to remember that the person looking at your portfolio has only your portfolio as a frame of reference. Including the pieces you're particularly proud of with some short explanation will establish the importance of the inclusion not just for yourself, but also for the reader.

I believe it's also important to include any professional organisations you've been involved with – this shows commitment to the profession as a whole. Being involved in professional organisations shows time management skills, discipline, and a desire to make the profession in which you work a better one.

Any blogs, Twitter feeds, LinkedIn profiles or similar activities you may have should go into your e-portfolio. I find that *about.me* is a useful resource for this. Of course, in building your portfolio, it is important to be mindful of ownership and intellectual property considerations – even though you have published something, it may not in fact be yours.

Another thing to take into consideration is to remember to spend time to spell-check, proofread, and then proofread again. Less is more – fewer images, fewer words, and fewer font and colour changes. Consider ALT tags to make your portfolio more accessible. Check periodically for broken links. Do not play hide-and-go-seek with your page navigation tools. Picture your least tech-savvy friend using the site, and then design it for them.

It's helpful to consider e-portfolios as the icing on the professional cake. They are a way of painting yourself in your best light, of putting your money where your resume's mouth is, and of maintaining an active online presence, ready to be produced and viewed at the drop of a hat.

So, what are you waiting for? Ensure your professional career is sustainable today, start your very own e-portfolio.

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*Freya has over 14 years of experience in the field of education with a specific focus on literacy and she is interested in all things witty, wordy and wise. Right now Freya is excited to be embarking on her first 'library land' adventure as a paid professional. Her 2012 goals include being published in *INCITE* (tick), writing her first conference abstract and flying business class. She can be found on twitter (@liber\_ amoris) or on [about.me/liberamoris](http://about.me/liberamoris) and also blogs at [edublogs.org/liberamoris](http://edublogs.org/liberamoris)*

**Editors note: Did you know that you can use your ePortfolio for the ALIA PD scheme?**



FREYA LUCAS: AN E-PORTFOLIO IS ALWAYS READY WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY COMES ALONG

