



The Future of Digital Portfolios

00:04–00:39

Andrew Coletti: Hello and welcome back to this episode of The T in Teaching. This episode is focused on digital portfolio. In this episode, our host, instructional designer Kaitlyn Beck, interviewed Associate Professor of Tourism and Hospitality Management Christine Cleaver, who teaches a course on digital portfolio creation and the importance of creating a digital portfolio for employers. Thank you so much for listening and please enjoy.

00:39–00:50

Kaitlyn Beck: Hey, Christine, thanks for joining. Today we're going to talk a bit about digital portfolios. Can you tell me what a digital portfolio is and why they seem to be on the rise in higher education?

00:50–01:13

Christine Cleaver: Absolutely. So, a digital portfolio is an online showcase of your work right now. People are so visual. I mean, look at, you know, social media and everything going on. So, people want to visually see what you're doing. I don't know what you're doing. What you're talking about, your projects. They want to see the whole thing rather than a line on a resumé.

01:13–01:34

Christine Cleaver: So, the digital portfolio really enhances everything that an individual is doing because it's visual and people can intake it. I talk in my classes all the time. You know, experiences through the five senses and being able to see something and almost like really be able to touch it really enhances the experience of the product.

01:34–01:42

Kaitlyn Beck: Awesome. So, can you like, maybe break down what specific aspects that you typically see in a digital portfolio?

01:42–02:04

Christine Cleaver: Sure. So, you know, definitely, you know, the opening page, which is kind of, you know, your statement of originality and you know what you're all about and you know what, what's happening. And then, you know, you're going into your academic work, you can go into your, you know, your field work, you know, and then, you know, any, any specialty things that you're doing.

02:04–02:22

Christine Cleaver: You can also make pages for that as well. So, it really, it's like the overall package. And what's great about it is if you do this correctly with your brand, people will really be able to understand who you are and have it resonated.

02:23–02:36

Kaitlyn Beck: Wonderful. you mentioned the course that you teach. Can you tell me a little bit more about the rationale in creating that course and, well, what went into designing STM 4401, digital portfolio creation?

02:36–03:00

Christine Cleaver: Absolutely. So, when we started really heavily working with the industry in designing, you know, our event and entertainment curriculum, we had about 35 individuals that we kind of called our advisory

committee, and they really worked with us. And one of the things that kept coming up is we want to see what they're doing; we want to see what they're doing.

03:00–03:30

Christine Cleaver: And, you know, I and these meetings, I'm like, what about a digital portfolio where you can actually, you know, if they have videos or if they have photos or even hands on projects, you can see that. And it resonated and they were like unanimous unanimously, we want that. So, I was like, okay, we will create this class. And ultimately, we really like the students to take it in their junior and senior year when they have the most content to put on there.

03:30–04:03

Christine Cleaver: You know, anytime I'm teaching. So, like if I'm teaching, the event and entertainment operation class, they actually do an operations plan. And I will say in the class, this is something that should go on your digital portfolio or in like the business of social events and weddings. They entered the CMA Global Student Competition. This is something that should go in your portfolio, because they're actually coming out with 40-to-50-page documents that are very, very relevant to the industry and industry needs to see how they're what they're doing and how they're doing these things.

04:04–04:27

Kaitlyn Beck: For sure. I mean, by the time they're done with their degrees, they're producing so much content that they forget to relate back to it and to let that be a highlight point for what they've accomplished up to this point. So I really think it's a good idea to kind of put it all in one place and just really showcase what they've done thus far, because otherwise they're thinking, oh, I'm just coming out of school.

04:27–04:32

Kaitlyn Beck: What do I have to offer? It's like you have all of these skills that you can now apply. Show them.

04:32–05:08

Christine Cleaver: Off. And that's the thing I think I really think this to this class builds their confidence. So, it's an asynchronous class. So, there's videos and things that they watch. And then there's a delivery every week. And one of the one of the first things I have them do is an outline because you know, right. Like writing down all the things that you have done, you know, your entire career, whether even to it'd be at Temple or you're transferred in or, you know, an internship or an excellent like any of those things, write it all down so that you know what goes in each area.

05:08–05:29

Christine Cleaver: And I see like this transformation, once they hand that in that, they're like, oh, wow, I really did a lot. I just, you know, each semester I think after that they hit a reset. After each semester, they hit a reset button and then they're like, oh, I forgot about that. But as they build on it, they, you know, they realize, wow, this is really this is impactful.

05:29–05:31

Christine Cleaver: And they're really proud at the end.

05:31–05:46

Kaitlyn Beck: As I should be it. They're doing a lot of work. They should show it off so, is that kind of how the structure of the course goes? You start with them by doing the outline, and then every week they slowly build their digital portfolio. And then by the end they will have that as a full-on deliverable.

05:46–06:14

Christine Cleaver: Yeah. So, what happens is first, you know, we go through what a digital portfolio is and then they establish actually their brand. So, I in the first couple of weeks actually in the second week I have them

actually go out and investigate other portfolios kind of to figure out what they, they want. Then they establish their brand. So, I make them come up with the colors, the look, the font, all of those things.

06:14–06:35

Christine Cleaver: And they actually do a brand, a brand document, I love that. So and with this brand document, then they have to carry that through. So when you're grading you're always going back to their brand document and to they also do peer evaluations twice during the semester. And they have to load up their brand document because I, you know, want them to evaluate on their brand.

06:35–06:57

Christine Cleaver: So, they do their brand. Then they come up with their outline. And then each week they're actually creating one area of the portfolio. And then that's what's do. So, it really it breaks it down because you know in the beginning, they're like, oh my goodness. There's so much I'm like, no, it's fine. Each week it will, you know, it will add and progress on.

06:57–07:12

Christine Cleaver: And then at the end I actually because of where it falls, I have them actually then put the portfolio on their resumÃ© and actually apply for a job using that resume with now the updated portfolio on it.

07:12–07:31

Kaitlyn Beck: Awesome. Yeah. I mean, I think that's a wonderful way to structure it. So that way they're hitting these milestones, they're getting valuable check ins with you, valuable check ins with their peers, and feeling good about the progress that they're making with it. So that way at the end, they have a full-fledged portfolio. I think that's a really awesome applicable class.

07:31–07:41

Kaitlyn Beck: Like it just shows what they've learned and taken out of their not only the course but the college experience. So, who doesn't love that?

07:41–07:44

Christine Cleaver: Yeah, exactly.

07:44–07:50

Kaitlyn Beck: How did teaching this course go from your perspective? Were they into it? Did you find it was hard to guide them?

07:50–08:19

Christine Cleaver: Actually, no. They really kind of took to the class because it's also asynchronous. They can work at their own pace. I just I'm like, you can gladly work in advance. I have no issue with that. I will just grade when the actual item is due. And some students worked way far in advance. Some worked week to week, but they've really enjoyed being kind of able to kind of, you know, do things in segments.

08:19–08:40

Christine Cleaver: And it really it was really neat to see it grow because I could see that, like, I don't know, in the like the fourth area that they were adding to the portfolio, that if they wanted to change things, then they would kind of go back and change. So and I said that all along, I will grade the element at that time.

08:40–09:00

Christine Cleaver: But then I'm going to grade your portfolio overall in the end, which I'm, you know, looking for you to update some feedback I gave you, you know, per feedback. And I could see as we went through that they would go back and update things as to, oh, you know what? That should go there. Or maybe I'm going to move this there or I like this layout, or I will find more photos.

09:01–09:19

Christine Cleaver: So, they really, they really in the end it's amazing products I actually so I think this class is 4 or 5 years old. I still have a list of all the portfolios, and I'll go in and check from time to time. And there's still even individuals who have graduated and they're still updating things.

09:19–09:20

Kaitlyn Beck: Oh wonderful.

09:20–09:39

Christine Cleaver: Yeah. So, and that's the thing. So I have them design it that it this is this is longevity. Like make sure that you're designing this even you know I'll say perhaps put a non-Temple email on this so that, you know, once you're no longer using your template email, you know, you're able to to go back. And they still do.

09:39–09:58

Christine Cleaver: I mean I, I have an individual that works for Encore in Boston and she's constantly updating hers. And it's which is really cool and I'm very proud of. She actually even has another LinkedIn profile. So yeah, so they, they once they understand kind of the, the brevity of it, they really. Yeah. Yeah. They take to.

09:58–10:16

Kaitlyn Beck: It. Oh that's incredible. Because like you never see students take a project and bring it into the real world and maintain it. That's pretty, pretty impressive that they latched on to the idea so thoroughly and that it is that they're finding benefits with it.

10:16–10:31

Christine Cleaver: And I think part of that is the industry has said, oh, I love seeing this or oh, that project that you work on, I saw it on your digital portfolio hearing, hearing not only just for me, but from people in the industry, I think really is what solidifies it for them.

10:31–10:50

Kaitlyn Beck: Oh for sure. And I think also having the flexibility during the course to kind of segment it out, however, works for them. I mean, that's the beauty of async is that they can act how works best for them and make sure that they are hitting their milestones, but also, fitting it into their lives because as we know, life's crazy.

10:50–11:15

Christine Cleaver: Exactly. And I actually when I designed it, they actually go through all of the modules via my digital portfolio. So, and then, you know, I, I say, you know, in the beginning I do a video for each semester and I'm like, look, my portfolio has progressed as well. So, you can see the progression in mine as well. So, and they really I think they really enjoy that as well.

11:15–11:17

Kaitlyn Beck: I mean, nothing better than showing what you expect.

11:18–11:19

Christine Cleaver: Yes.

11:19–11:27

Kaitlyn Beck: All that good stuff. Are there any that has really stood out to you over time? and what aspects would you say were why they stood out?

11:27–11:58

Christine Cleaver: So yeah, so some of them that have stood out or the ones that in the beginning were so super shaky that they were really having a hard time. And at the end they realized how to showcase

themselves amazingly. So one individual, all this, this individual, I think graduated last year and he how he was trying to find his path of where he wanted to go, but he was also in a band but was in like event and entertainment and he wasn't sure kind of how to weave that.

11:58–12:23

Christine Cleaver: And at the end, what he did was amazing. Like the pictures he showcased, his internship that his senior internship was. It was not in entertainment, it was in sport, but it was in like he was working with a running club, but he wove that in because he was a former runner. He just he did a really nice job with things that in the beginning were I'm like, I'm not sure how this is going to come together.

12:23–12:33

Christine Cleaver: They were all over the place and in the end he then like the, the yarn that he wove through to tell the story was really impactful and amazing.

12:33–12:47

Kaitlyn Beck: As the students are going into the field, have you seen with the job market and career shifting, do you believe that recruiters and hiring managers have an increased desire to receive some form of digital portfolio?

12:47–13:13

Christine Cleaver: I absolutely do, because we preach this to the students all the way through. Employers are going to do research on you. So, provide them with research. So, one of the whole one of the pages in the portfolio is social media, like your social media showcase. And I talk about showcase what you want to showcase. So yes, I do because this is another this is another point for employers to be able to do the research.

13:13–13:30

Christine Cleaver: And the platform that I use for them is also one that does really well with search engine. So a lot of times, even if a if an employer is going in and just typing in their name, their digital portfolio is popping up within the first page. So that is very helpful for recruiters as well.

13:30–13:31

Kaitlyn Beck: What platform do you have?

13:31–13:55

Christine Cleaver: We have I have them use GoDaddy. I have them use that because they have really good customer service. And they, they do they, they have a lot of products within the, the website builder that the students can do that you know, they can insert videos. They, they have great carousels for photos. They have a great contact page.

13:55–13:57

Christine Cleaver: So, and they just do a really nice job with it.

13:58–14:17

Kaitlyn Beck: Great. yeah. I mean, I think it's super beneficial for the students to have something to leverage as they're entering the workforce, as opposed to just being a name on a piece of paper that they won't get to know you unless you make it through the door. And sometimes having that extra piece is what gets you through the door.

14:17–14:49

Christine Cleaver: Exactly. And the other thing too, that's interesting is we like to promote a lot that so our students have to do 250 volunteer hours, two internships. So, when they're when they're kind of, you know, at the end of their, the under their academic process, they do have a lot of experience, but that does not

necessarily translate very well on a resume where this they can see a lot of everything that they're doing for sure.

14:49–14:54

Kaitlyn Beck: Wonderful. Well, thank you so much for stopping by and chatting with me about digital portfolios and their benefits. Sure.

14:54–14:55

Christine Cleaver: Thank you for having me.