



Pearson
Edexcel

GCSE (9-1) Art and Design

Digital Portfolios





GCSE Art and Design (2016)

Digital Portfolios

The term “Digital Portfolio” is being used here to indicate a project or collection of projects, from inception to outcome, that has been put together using a digital method. It doesn’t mean the work has all been created digitally and can include very traditional methods such as drawing and painting.

How to put it together?

There are many ways to create a digital sketchbook. Students can use software as simple as PowerPoint or Word, or use software more relevant to the design industry like Photoshop, InDesign or Publisher. The nice thing about starting off with Word or other word-processor is they will find these ICT skills useful in anything that they may choose to do in the future.

Does it have to be printed?

Teachers may prefer to assess digital sketchbooks as printed products at the end of a project, but it is also possible to assess them on screen, which gives them a storage and portability advantage. Once they have been created, the flexibility of the format means they can easily be transformed into web pages, parts of blogs or slideshows for presentations.

Coherence of visual style

One of the main reasons students enjoy creating digital portfolios, is that they can give the whole package an overall look that is coherent throughout the project. Pages can have similarly designed titles and the same font can be assigned. Moreover, as the project changes, so too can the entire layout, style and presentation, whereas a traditional sketchbook is more rigid in this sense.

When to use this method?

Many teachers will request digital portfolios where students are using fewer traditional media techniques in their work, as there may be less emphasis on the experimentation with mixed media, textures, marks and surfaces. The fact that the portfolio is a digital one need not have a detrimental effect on the way students work regardless of the specialism, that they should all have some experience of using creative media. You only have to look as far as a textiles sketchbook to be seduced by the amount of experimentation going on with colours, textures and materials flying around the page.

Which students might like this?

Of course, a Graphics student, trained in digital processes, is going to enjoy this method of presenting their work. Students, who have difficulty organising their work in sketchbooks,



may also like this method, as it means they can work on paper, digitise, and reorder things as they go along. However, if the students have had little ICT teaching then they may be daunted, especially if they are not familiar with photographing and scanning their work as they develop the project. These skills can be introduced gradually, starting with the simple setting up of work to be photographed and saving the images to folders or even their phones.

File organisation

File organisation, when producing a digital sketchbook, is key. If a student doesn't realise that everything needs to be organised in coherent folders and doesn't have a method of structuring their development, then things can easily get lost. A simple introduction to how to title images and folders of work at the start should solve any issues and will also be a long-lasting professional skill. There isn't one single file organisation method that professionals use, so be prepared to adapt to the students' needs. However, sticking to some ground rules such as one file per lesson or per week can really help.

Time

It can take time to put something like this together if left until the end of the project so it is advisable to start some of this work earlier rather than later. Images, such as drawings and designs, need to be digitised using a camera or scanner, and filed appropriately on the computer until ready to compile in the digital sketchbook. Students will need to have some forethought about how they want things to look in the final sketchbook so early on they will need a lesson on layout and visual presentation, showing them when it is important to have images that focus in on detail, whether to type annotations or photograph them from the sketchbook, the inclusion of reflective notes/scribbles etc. However, many of these issues are outweighed by the quality of learning that goes into having to present something in this way. Students will learn about visual communication and presentation skills that are really valuable for their future progression aims

Assessment

This format of sketchbook can be a joy to assess, learners can be given formative feedback and hints and tips as it progresses. With the emphasis now on blended learning it is also something that can be shared with the teacher online when face-to-face interactions are not possible. There is the added advantage that it can be backed-up and stored, just in case the original master gets lost.

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