Organising and presenting your learning journals or portfolios of work for modules.

Like many things in education we like you to present your work as a final piece for marking but also want it to be developed over a period of time so showing how you have developed and learnt throughout a module i.e. reflection as you go along with presenting pieces of your work like photographs or other research.

The traditional art and design way of working was through a folder or a pad that you then pasted work in along with your thoughts which accumulated over time. This is still a very good way of working and is an option but can mean for photography a lot of printing of contact sheets of photographs in a shoot along with better quality larger versions of the ones you prefer or want to comment on.

Now with electronic ways of doing things either online or on your own computer there are many ways of doing the same thing but presenting the work electronically.

So we can look at how you organise and present your learning journals or portfolios of work for modules in 3 main ways:

- Traditional folder or portfolio as a hard copy
- Portfolio developed using programmes on your computer
- Portfolio developed online

There are some key issues around each one of these. They all have their advantages and disadvantages and you may want to try different ones for different modules or often students have used a combination of two or even three variations for one module! It really comes down to how you work best and how you would like to work, everyone is different.

Using one technique doesn't mean that is the only one you can ever use, try different techniques for different aspects of work or modules.

Looking more closely at the 2 electronic ways of working even within each of these there is more than one way of working.

Portfolio developed using programmes on your computer

Here is it likely that you will use a programme that you are used to then you can concentrate on the learning activity rather than learning a new programme. Programmes you could use include:
- Word and other word processing programmes also are free versions of Word like OpenOffice (A little old in terms of word version but could be helpful http://electronicportfolios.org/portfolios/howto/WordPortfolios.pdf)
- PowerPoint the presentation tool can be used (Don't forget though that need to reduce the size of any photographs, 1000 pixels wide is more than enough,

other wise PoewrPoint becomes massive
http://electronicportfolios.org/portfolios/howto/powerpoint.html#1)

- Desktop Publishing Programmes (DTP) for example QuarkXpress or InDesign or programmes like Pages on the Macintosh.

- Photoshop you can create a template with your overall information and create a series of pages by doing Save as then can pull them together into a series of pages as a booklet using Adobe Acrobat or a free programme on the PC like NitroPdf.

- Adobe Acrobat itself has the facility to create portfolios from separate files and documents. http://tv.adobe.com/watch/adobe-digital-school-collection/adobe-acrobat-9-eportfolios-01-what-is-an-eportfolio/

One of the key things with any programme is to try to develop your own style whether as a template, choice of template or converting an existing template.

Portfolio developed online

It may sound odd but the first thing you need to think about with an online portfolio is whether you want it to be public or private.

"Hey, everything on the web is public isn't it!" The answer to this is no. There are many tools that are primarily designed so you can share with everyone like blogs and wikis. However, there are many tools that allow you to choose who you share with. There are settings on these tools usually a choice of "Public" so everyone sees or you choose who can see by sending out an e-mail invitation "Invited guests" or if you choose not to invite anyone "Private".

This does mean that you can develop your portfolio online and share it with only those who understand it is a work in progress and so help you with feedback, hopefully constructive. Then when you are ready you can invite others or an invitation through to your tutor for assessment.

So what are the different types of tools and what do they do best?

Tool type	Description and weblink for training video	Examples most sites include demonstrations and tutorials
Blog	One of the commonest. Key features are that you write as you go and your blogs along with photographs are written and viewed in date order. If you add keywords can create subject links. These do allow you to change the look of your template to personalize their appearance. Usually single person. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN2I1pWXjXI	http://www.blogspot.com http://www.livejournal.com http://www.wordpress.com
Wiki	Wikis are like online books that allow	http://pbworks.com/

	you to create sections and add content. Some are more like website creation tools others more like the traditional Wikipedia style site. They can be used for a single person but usually are used collaboratively. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dnL00TdmLY	http://www.wikispaces.com http://www.wetpaint.com/
File sharing	Literally free upload space useful for loading photographs and other content as storage or to share by invitation. Some sites are more sophisticated and include photo galleries. Other offer more collaborative style web spaces. https://www.dropbox.com/tour	https://www.dropbox.com/ http://www.box.net/ http://www.me.com http://www.huddle.net/ http://www.google.com/a/help/intl/en/edu/collaboration.html
Online portfolios	Most of these are designed for traditional photography style websites with galleries. However there are one or two that are more sophisticated and are more like online book or folder tools. The photographers book at wix.com is good for learning portfolios, see http://www.wix.com/lisawilks89/lisa-wilks and http://www.vanessamigliari.co.uk/	http://www.wix.com http://www.viewbook.com http://www.webnode.com/ Booksmart downloaded from http://www.blurb.com
Social Media	These sites allow you to set up your own club online or collaborative organization or what is often called a Community of Practice. Social sites based around photography or art to join. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpIOClX1jPE	http://www.ning.com http://www.wetpaint.com/ http://www.deviantart.com http://www.flickr.com
Visual spaces	Sites that allow you to add photographs as elements along with text onto a pasteboard /noticeboard. Solo or for collaboration.	http://www.stixy.com
Specialist education tools	These are designed more for use in education to support reflection and development to create social hubs and networking linking individuals in an educational context.	http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/ http://www.mahara.org http://elgg.org/

Some of these will make better choices for developing your portfolio but others will be useful for things like storing files and collaborative working. Most of these are free up to a point like everything, also free may mean advertising. Some have education versions so watch out for those links.

"That is just too much. Where is a good starting point?"

One of the new ways forward that some tools allow us to do is to have a traditional looking portfolio but digital so either using computer programmes like InDesign or Booksmart downloaded from http://www.blurb.com available for PC and Mac, which can export to pdf or online with http://www.wix.com both of these give you a book like experience in terms of creation and organisation.

Useful websites for portfolio tools and support

Helen Barrett http://electronicportfolios.org/
Adobe video tutorials http://tv.adobe.com/search/?q=portfolios
http://tv.adobe.com/watch/adobe-digital-school-collection/adobe-acrobat-9-eportfolios-01-what-is-an-eportfolio/
Commoncraft http://commoncraft.com/
Information from the lecturers perspective from JISC
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/effectivepracticeeportfolios.pdf
Interesting online project about photographs and stories
http://www.viewbookphotostory.com/