

5 Tips for Successful Web Projects

1. Choose appropriate software: consider features needed, student technological competency, project goals.

- By far, the easiest tool for building websites and ePortfolios is KSU's Google Sites: it's free, uses tools familiar to Microsoft Word users, runs on both PC and MAC, includes "gadgets" for incorporating multimedia like video or PPT presentations, can easily add documents as attachments, facilitates working in teams, and eliminates having to upload a completed site to a web server (where most students have problems).
- "Professional" web software, like Dreamweaver, is expensive, has a steep learning curve and isn't available in most labs so it's not usually a good choice unless your students are going to become professional web developers.
- Some "old" software that used to be used for web projects, like Powerpoint, Word or Frontpage, are NO LONGER RECOMMENDED... it's far easier to use Google Sites.

2. Provide your students with examples of other students' successful web projects or one you've made yourself.

- The best way to get students started on any project is to start by showing them what a finished project should look like. Here's where "trying it first" for yourself really pays off since the tools you use and many of the problems you encounter will be exactly the same tools and problems your students will face.

3. Provide a list of the elements that should be included in the website with an accompanying grading rubric.

- Elements could include: How many pages are required? What content should be on each page? How should the content be organized on the pages (layout and design considerations)? What site navigation is required? How should the site navigation be organized? Should there be links to external websites? Also, provide the weighting for each for the resulting grade.

4. Provide adequate time to complete the project.

- Time is needed for research, organization, composition, and revision--much the same as you would allow for a typical "paper" assignment. However, for most students, creating a website will be totally new experience. They need time to learn new software and tools and to explore the unique organization of content and material required for a website. "Drafts" of their sites can easily be reviewed by simply sharing the URL for the site.

5. Provide step-by-step instructions, demonstrations, or even a hands-on workshop.

- The SMS has a number of tutorials available online to help students with their web projects. Also the SMS staff can visit your class for a hands-on workshop. Here's a direct link to the SMS' Google Sites Tutorial PDF file: http://www.library.kent.edu/files/SMS_GoogleSiteBasics.pdf There's also a tutorial on an actual Google Site at: https://sites.google.com/a/kent.edu/sms_googlesitetutorials/