CHAPTER 2

Planning Your Web Portfolio

Chapter 1 demonstrated how a web portfolio is a web site displaying an author's collection of artifacts and reflections that are designed to fulfill specific purposes tied to the reader's expectations and standards. Because web sites work by linking together a large number of HTML and graphics files, the design of any web site is complex enough to require careful planning. But planning is even more essential for a web portfolio.

Planning can ensure that your web portfolio presents your work in the best light and that the process of creating the portfolio goes smoothly. Without a clear plan at the outset, it might be necessary to make major changes to the portfolio's structure at the end of the process, when it's more time consuming.

This chapter will help you through the planning process by encouraging you to record your thoughts through three distinct stages:

1. *Keeping a working portfolio.* A working portfolio is simply a consistent place in which to keep your work before you turn it into a web portfolio. It's also a good place to keep all of your planning materials and notes.
2. *Analyzing the situation.* After collecting the material for a web portfolio, you'll examine its situation to determine the portfolio's purpose, audience, scope, and contents.
3. *Creating a web portfolio plan.* Finally, you'll decide exactly what your web portfolio will look, sound, and feel like, as well as how it will be organized.

Writing down a plan is particularly important. Throughout this chapter, each section ends with a task for you to complete, usually by writing responses to a series of questions. These tasks are designed to help you create and document a workable plan for completing your web portfolio.

Keeping a Working Portfolio

It's a good idea to start the planning process by organizing your materials into a working portfolio—an organized collection of artifacts of your work. A working portfolio can take many forms. It can be a large binder or expandable file, a series of computer disks, or a combination of both paper and digital versions of your work. The important thing is to decide on a consistent place to keep track of the artifacts you might want to include in a formal portfolio and your planning materials, such as the ones you'll create in this chapter.

Here are some suggestions to consider while putting together your working portfolio:

- *Keep copies of everything you do.* It's easy to lose track of all your work once an assignment is turned in. As you go through your class, project, or program, hold on to all of your work and add it regularly to the working portfolio. You may decide to keep only final versions of work, but it's a good idea to include drafts as well. Keep even things you're not sure you need—it's better to have extra artifacts you decide not to use than to need something you've discarded.
- *Get organized.* Organize the artifacts in your working portfolio in files (whether digital, paper, or both). Use an organizational strategy that makes sense to you—perhaps according to the class, the type of work, the subject, or the date of creation.
- *Keep a digital version of artifacts.* It's much easier to transfer material to a web portfolio if it's already in a digital format—for example, if you keep papers as word processing files on a disk. Be sure to keep multiple back-ups of digital files in a safe place—floppy disks are notoriously easy to break or misplace, and sometimes they just stop working.
- *Keep your instructors' or supervisors' comments.* Because most portfolios include revised versions of previous work, it's important to keep any feedback from instructors or supervisors. If you talk to an

instructor to get further feedback about a particular project, make notes so you can keep track of that information too.

- *Include a journal.* Buy a notebook or create a word processing file to serve as your working portfolio journal. Write regularly in this journal to record your reactions to and progress on projects. This writing will be useful later when you write reflective statements. The working portfolio journal is also a great place to develop plans for a formal portfolio.

The biggest challenge in using a working portfolio isn't creating it, but keeping up with it. Make a point to look at your working portfolio periodically as you go through your academic or professional career; make sure it's well organized and maintained. One useful idea is to set a particular date two or three times a year to review your working portfolio. For example, at the beginning of every semester, look over work from the previous semester. Keeping this date with your working portfolio will help you see your progress and prepare you for new challenges. This working portfolio review is also a good time to set professional or academic goals. Take it as an opportunity to consider what areas of your professional life you would like to explore more fully. Then write in your working portfolio journal a series of goals to fulfill before your next review.

After you have assembled a basic working portfolio, the following task will help you keep track of its contents.

TASK 1: Create a List of Artifacts

Make an organized list of artifacts included in your working portfolio. Organize your list in the same order the artifacts appear in the working portfolio itself. Update the list regularly so you have a clear reminder of what you've done. When the time comes to create a more formal portfolio, this list will tell you at a glance what items you might want to include.

Analyzing Your Situation

Before deciding what form a web portfolio will take, it's a good idea to analyze exactly to what situation the portfolio will respond. Carefully analyzing the circumstances surrounding the portfolio will ensure that you make good decisions about what it will include and how it will look and sound.

Analyzing Requirements and Standards

As noted in Chapter 1, one key to creating a successful portfolio is to fulfill the requirements and standards the portfolio's primary readers will use to assess it (see "What Makes a Good Web Portfolio" on page 20).

Because the primary readers of academic portfolios are usually teachers or administrators who evaluate the portfolios, they will typically state their requirements and standards clearly. Usually this will take the form of an assignment or project requirement sheet, or it may be included on the syllabus for a class that requires a portfolio. Pay careful attention to such written instructions. If your instructors make verbal comments about the requirements or standards they will use to judge portfolios, take careful notes and keep them in your working portfolio. The requirements and standards for professional portfolios are usually less clearly stated, but if you know your field, you can speculate successfully on what they might be (see the section on audience later in this chapter as well as Chapter 7, "Creating the Professional Web Portfolio.")

Regardless of where the requirements are stated or whether they are written or verbal, it's smart to analyze exactly what those requirements are. The following task will help you do so.

TASK 2: ANALYZE STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Gather together any materials in which the potential readers of your portfolio have stated standards or requirements. Then answer the following questions as fully as possible, recording them in your working portfolio journal:

- What kind of portfolio are you being required to create—developmental or best work? Academic or professional?
- What is the scope of the portfolio? Is it for a single project, a class, or an entire program?
- What content requirements has the reader stated? If the reader hasn't stated explicit content requirements, what do you think the reader would expect to see?

- What submission requirements has the reader stated?
- What quality standards has the reader stated for each type of artifact you might include? If the reader hasn't stated explicit quality standards, what standards do you think the reader will use to judge your work?
- What quality standards has the reader stated for the web portfolio as a whole? If they're not stated, what standards do you think the reader will use to judge your portfolio?

Analyzing Purposes and Goals

You have already analyzed the requirements and standards that will be applied to your web portfolio, but it's also important to state your own sense of purpose. A clear sense of purpose will help you put forward a consistent effort toward creating a successful web portfolio. Most writers have a set of purposes they keep in mind during the writing process, some more important, some less. Writing down your purposes explicitly will help you set priorities, make goals, and determine the tone, appearance, and contents of your portfolio.

Your purposes will be unique to your own situation. But they might include considerations such as these:

- To fulfill the requirements of a class or program
- To impress an audience or several audiences (see the section "Analyzing Audience" below)
- To increase your chance of employment (see Chapter 7, "Analyzing the Professional Web Portfolio")
- To show you have gained a particular skill or experience

You may also want to think about purposes in terms of goals—what you want to happen as a result of your web portfolio. For example, you may want to fulfill the requirements of your program or class so you can get a degree or a good grade. Or you may want to impress future employers so you can get a good job. Another useful way to think about purposes is in terms of your audience: what do you want the web portfolio to prove or show readers about you or your work?

TASK 3: ANALYZE PURPOSES AND GOALS

In your working portfolio journal, make a detailed list of your purposes for creating a web portfolio.

- Write down a list of basic purposes you'd like your web portfolio to fulfill.
- For each of the purposes you wrote down, write a few sentences describing why that purpose is important.
- Number the purposes in order of importance. That way, you'll have a clear set of priorities if any of your purposes seem in conflict as you create your web portfolio.

Analyzing Audiences

Knowing requirements, standards, and your own purposes is important. But it's also important to analyze the attitudes and likely reactions of your audiences. These attitudes and reactions are usually less clearly stated than are requirements and standards, and determining how they will affect your planning will require some reading between the lines. Generally speaking, you want the audience not only to respond positively to what the web portfolio contains but to think well of you as a student or professional in a particular field—that you are thoughtful, competent, and successful at the things you set out to do in the web portfolio and in your academic or professional career. Analyzing the attitudes and potential reactions of your audience can help you tailor the web portfolio so it gives the audience an accurate and positive sense of who you are and what you can do.

Before starting to analyze the audience, it's important to recognize that web portfolios can have several different audiences, all with differing and even competing needs. For example, if a student studying to teach high school health sciences creates a web portfolio on CD for a single education class, its primary and only audience is probably the teacher who will assess the portfolio. But if the portfolio is created for an education capstone course or a teacher certification requirement, a committee of faculty or professionals might evaluate it. Will all the members of that audience read the portfolio the same way? Maybe not; each will have his or her own ideas and agendas about what makes a good web portfolio. If the student uploads the portfolio to the Web, even more people with different agendas and expectations might see it. The student might even want to design the portfolio to appeal to a specific audience on the Web—for instance, people who might be interested in or benefit from the health information the web portfolio contains.

The situation can become even more complicated if the primary audience requires the portfolio to be focused on the needs of some secondary audience. The primary audience might then assess not only how well the portfolio fulfills his or her needs, but also how well the portfolio fulfills the needs and requirements of the secondary audience. For instance, the teacher of a capstone course might ask students to create professional web portfolios that the students can then use to present to potential employers. The teacher would probably evaluate not only how the web portfolios fulfill the course requirements and standards, but also how a potential employer would probably react to the web portfolio.

Sometimes you will have to speculate on the agendas and needs of such audiences. Employers are a good example because you often don't know a prospective employer personally when you are looking for a job. But you can use your professional awareness, training, and experience to speculate on what an employer might want to see in a prospective employee. Although they may not say so directly, employers generally want to hire people who will display a dedication to their profession, valuable skills, and a dynamic attitude. If prospective employers are one of the audiences for your web portfolio, you will want to respond to these expectations by creating a web portfolio that shows you are dedicated, skillful, and enthusiastic. In addition, because you know your own profession, you should be able to speculate with even more detail because the employer will likely hold professional standards similar to those you have learned while training for your profession.

As you can see, keeping track of who is reading a web portfolio is very important because it helps you figure out what the portfolio should say and how it should say it. Different audiences bring different expectations, and understanding those expectations will help you make decisions about how to make your portfolio look and sound so your audiences respond positively to it. But if you put yourself in the audiences' shoes and look at your web portfolio from their perspectives and agendas, you should have no trouble creating a successful portfolio.

TASK 4: ANALYZE AUDIENCES

In your working portfolio journal, follow these steps to create a clear description of your audiences.

1. Make a list of the audiences that might look at your web portfolio. Then label a separate page or section for each of these audiences.
2. On each audience's page or section, write a few sentences describing why that audience might be looking at your portfolio and, accordingly, what expectations it might hold. What is the audience's agenda—what does it want out of your portfolio?
3. For each audience, write a few sentences describing what that audience would expect to see in your web portfolio. Think not just about contents, but about the qualities, ideas, and tone of the portfolio.
4. For each audience, write a sentence or two describing what that audience would not be happy to see in your web portfolio.
5. For each audience, write a few sentences describing what impression you would like that audience to have of you.
6. Number your audiences in order of importance. Who do you want your web portfolio to impress most? At the very least, identify one audience as the primary audience so you can focus on fulfilling its expectations first.

Assessing Your Work

You've developed a lot of background analysis of the situation surrounding your portfolio. Now it's time to start assessing the work in your working portfolio. After you've collected your work, look at it carefully and critically to decide what elements give the best sense of what you can do or what you have accomplished. Giving your work an honest assessment will provide two benefits:

- If you have some choice about what you're going to include, it will help you figure out what you should put in your web portfolio and what you should set aside.

- Perhaps most importantly, it will help you decide what needs to be revised most before you include it in your web portfolio.

Try to think from the perspective of your audiences, as you analyzed them in Task 4. What will they think is good?

Deciding What to Include

Determining the actual contents of your portfolio will depend directly on the elements you've already considered: your audiences, as well as their requirements and standards, and your own purposes. The requirements placed on your portfolio might specify directly what to include. But the rationale behind most portfolios assumes that the author has some choice about what to include. This choice is itself an expression of what you have learned, because it reflects your discretion in deciding what constitutes good work in your profession. If you can, include a variety of different assignments and projects rather than multiple examples of the same type. Doing so will give your readers a sense of your full capabilities.

Whether you have lots of choice about what to include or your audience gave very definite content requirements, what's most important is that you have a clear idea of what's going to go in the portfolio. The task below will help you make a preliminary assessment of your work so you can start making choices. This task is particularly useful if you're creating the most common kind of portfolio, a best work portfolio. It's also a good task to do with a partner: trade working portfolios and assess each other's work.

TASK 5: ASSESS ARTIFACTS

In your working portfolio journal, assess the artifacts in your working portfolio so you can decide what to include, exclude, or revise. There are many ways you can do this, but it's important to find an organized and consistent way to evaluate your work. The following is one useful method.

1. *Make a list of your work.* If you haven't already done so for your working portfolio, create a list of all the artifacts it includes.
2. *Organize your list.* Sort the list according to the type of artifact—for example, put all the essays together, all the research papers together, and so on.

(continued)

(continued)

3. *Using a separate piece of paper, make a list of three to five criteria for each type of artifact.* The criteria for your work might be stated in the standards given to you by the readers who will assess your portfolio. But even if these standards are unstated, it's important to build clear criteria of what is "good" in terms of each type of artifact.

   Criteria are simply rules to determine if something is good or bad. If your field is English, for example, you might use this rule for figuring out if you've done a good job on an essay: "Good essays include clear, assertive thesis statements." If you're in chemistry, you might use this rule: "Good lab reports start with a clear expression of the hypothesis."

   The criteria you choose depend on your field and the expertise you've built in it. Try to make sure that your criteria honestly reflect the way your reader will judge your work, whether that reader is your instructor, a program administrator, or a future employer.

4. *Score your work according to your criteria.* Go back to your list of work and give each assignment or project a score for each of the criteria you've created.

   For example, you could score each assignment as a 1 (not so good), a 2 (OK) or a 3 (great) for each criterion. If you want, you can create a worksheet to help keep track:

	Criterion A	*Criterion B*	*Criterion C*	*Criterion D*	*Total*
Assignment A	2	1	3	3	9
Project B	2	2	2	1	7
Project C	3	3	2	3	11

5. *Add up your scores.* For each assignment or project, add up the numbers you gave so you can see how it stacks up overall, as in the Total column in the table above.

Deciding What to Revise

You want your portfolio to express the best that you can do. So after you've scored your work using the process in Task 5, start making decisions about what to include in your web portfolio and how much to revise your work before you incorporate it.

- *If you have some choice of what to include,* focus on revising the best examples of your work and consider leaving the weaker examples out.
- *If you have to include all of the work in your list,* focus on revising the weaker examples to bring them up to the quality of the stronger ones.

The following task will help you decide not only what to revise, but how.

TASK 6: CREATE A REVISION LIST

In your working portfolio journal, create a prioritized revision list of the contents of your web portfolio.

1. *Rank your contents.* Using the scores you added up on your assessment worksheet from Task 5, list your assignments and projects in order from strongest to weakest.
2. *List revision tasks.* For each element in your ranked list, identify the three or four things that need revision most.
3. *For each element, prioritize the revision tasks you listed.* Write a number in front of each revision task from step 2, giving the most significant problems top priority.

Planning for Reflection

A good web portfolio should not only show your work, but include your reflections on how you created that work. Including reflective statements will help readers understand the context of what they're reading, and it will help you come to a fuller understanding of what you learned by completing your projects or assignments.

In creating your reflective statements, you may be able to draw on previous reflective work—for example, if you were required to keep a journal in your class or if you participated in an e-mail discussion list, look again at what you wrote to remember how you felt about the process. If you have kept a journal for your working portfolio, use the reflections recorded there as the basis of reflective statements in a formal portfolio.

The following task will help you develop your reflections on the work in your portfolio.

TASK 7: ANALYZE THE CONTEXT OF ARTIFACTS

For each artifact you've chosen to include, write a few sentences answering each of these questions.

- *What was the context of this artifact?* For example, describe the course or program in which you completed the artifact and what requirements or background you had to work within.
- *If the artifact was created for a course assignment, what skills were you supposed to demonstrate in creating it?* Describe what this artifact was supposed to teach you to do or to know.
- *How did you feel about the artifact when you started creating it, as you were creating it, and after you completed it?* Were you excited, bored, intimidated, challenged? Why?
- *What problems did you encounter in creating this artifact?* How did you overcome them?
- *What does this work show about you and your capabilities?*
- *What did completing this work teach you about yourself and your field of study or profession?*

Planning for Documentation

Because many of the artifacts you might want to include are probably academic projects or assignments, they may involve references to source materials created by other authors. As a result, you must be very careful to use what you borrow legally and to give those other authors credit for what they have done. This section will help you plan to make sure your portfolio respects other authors' rights as the owners of their work. You may also want to refer to the discussion of copyright issues in Chapter 4, page 88.

In academic writing, giving credit to outside sources is usually called documentation, which typically consists of elements such as references, parenthetical citations, footnotes, and bibliographies. The documentation system you choose will depend on what's most commonly accepted in your profession. Check with your instructor to find out what would be most appropriate in your field. The humanities tend to use Modern Language Association (MLA) style or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The social sciences tend to use American Psychological Association (APA) style, and the sciences tend to use Council of Biology Editors (CBE) style. But other documentation systems are available, and part of learning a profession is using the system that the profession prefers.

In general, most documentation systems provide some way for readers to refer from a citation in the text to someplace else in the document for more information, such as the source's publishing details. This textual citation is most commonly either a footnote/endnote number (as is required by the *Chicago Manual of Style* or CBE) or a parenthetical citation (as is required by MLA or APA) at the end of a cited passage. In both kinds of systems, the marker placed in the text—the note number or the information in parentheses—refers the reader to an endnote, a footnote, a bibliography, or a list of cited works for more complete bibliographic information or further commentary.

Using a documentation system in a web portfolio involves some special considerations—after all, footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographies were designed for use in paper documents, not electronic ones. But with a little ingenuity, most documentation systems can successfully be translated to the Web. Probably the easiest way to replicate these systems in a web portfolio is to create links between the markers in the text (such as footnote/endnote numbers or parenthetical citations) and targets further down on the same web page. When readers want to read a note or find more bibliographic information, they can simply click on the reference marker link and go straight to the information they want. If the text is long enough to be broken into several web pages, it's usually more efficient to create a separate bibliography or notes web page and link from the reference markers to that pages.

If your work includes citations to sources on the Internet, be sure to follow the latest version of your documentation style guide (also see the book web site for links to sites giving advice on how to cite internet sources in a variety of styles). To keep track of URLs for web sites from which you've borrowed, you may want to create a word processing document where you can list these references. However, URLs are often long and complicated, and they're easy to mistype. Here's a good technique for keeping track of URLs accurately:

1. In your web browser, go to the web site from which you're going to borrow information or other materials.

2. Click once on the URL listed in the text box at the top of the window. In Netscape, this box is usually labeled Location; in Internet Explorer, it's usually labeled Address. The URL will be highlighted after you click on it.
3. Copy the URL by pressing CTRL-C (Command-C in Apple OS) or by choosing Copy from the Edit menu.
4. Open your word processing program and record the information required by your style sheet—usually the author, the date of the web site's creation, and the date you accessed the web site. Also type in a few words to describe the content you're borrowing. Doing so will help you keep track of which URL is which; otherwise, you might end up with a long list of cryptic URLs you won't be able to use very efficiently.
5. Paste the URL by pressing CTRL-V (Command-V in Apple OS) or by choosing Paste from the Edit menu.
6. Save the word processing file, and repeat this process for each new reference you need to record.

Following this process consistently will save you from having to search again for the reference information for material you want to borrow.

TASK 8: ASSESS DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

For each of the items on your contents list, assess whether you will need footnote, bibliography, or works cited pages. For artifacts such as reports or papers that are short enough to fit on a single web page, you can probably include the documentation on the page itself. But if the artifact is long enough to break into several web pages, separate pages for documentation are usually more logical.

Creating a Web Portfolio Plan

Now that you've developed a clear idea of the situation and spent some time assessing and reflecting on your work, you'll need to make some further decisions about exactly how the web portfolio should be organized, as well as how it should look and sound. Before making these decisions, review the preliminary notes you've completed to this point—

remember, you want to design a portfolio that responds to your situation, especially to the audiences' expectations and your own purposes. You may also want to look again at the section "What Makes a Good Web Portfolio" in Chapter 1, which will refresh your memory about web page and web site design.

The best way to make these decisions is to write them down in a concrete web portfolio plan. An example of a web portfolio plan appears in Figure 2.1 at the end of this chapter. The web portfolio plan moves from assessing the situation and raw materials of a web portfolio to specifying what your web portfolio will be like. It responds to your situation by detailing the exact features of the web portfolio you're going to create. Writing a web portfolio plan will help you visualize the web portfolio, and it will streamline your creation of the portfolio. However, the plan shouldn't be written in stone. It's just a tool you use to help you create your portfolio. Don't hesitate to reconsider or modify your plan if you have new ideas.

To get ready to create a web portfolio plan, follow the steps in Tasks 9, 10, and 11, which ask you to determine a final list of contents, sketch a site map, and sketch a page design. Then put all these elements together in Task 12 to write the web portfolio plan itself.

Final List of Contents

You've already spent some time considering what artifacts you might include in your web portfolio. Now take a few minutes to make a solid plan for the contents of the portfolio. As you do so, specify not only the artifacts you'll include but also which of those artifacts require reflective statements.

TASK 9: CREATE A LIST OF CONTENTS

Make a list specifying the final contents of your web portfolio, including artifacts and reflective statements.

For each artifact in the list, also make a sublist of the pictures, sounds, or video illustrations you want to include for that artifact. You may want to refer to Chapter 4, "Graphics and Multimedia in Web Portfolios," before making firm decisions about graphics, sound, or video.

Web Site Structure

As shown in Chapter 1, most web sites are organized either in a hierarchy or in a line, although many web sites combine both structures to fit their content. The most important thing is that you create a logical structure that matches what you've decided to include in the web portfolio. For example, in the site map in Figure 2.1, the web portfolio author decided to include both linear and hierarchic elements to fit three short assignments and a longer research paper that has been broken into several sections. Note that the site map includes reflective pages as well as a bibliography page and a notes page for the research paper.

Be sure to account for pages that will include the reflective statements you planned in the previous task. Reflective statements can be placed in many positions in a web portfolio; the only rule of thumb is that it's a good idea for readers to see the reflections before they see the artifacts themselves. Some authors put all of their reflective statements on the home page. If the web portfolio isn't very large, this technique can work well—but if the portfolio includes a good number of artifacts, the home page can become so long that readers won't go through it thoroughly. Other authors use separate reflection pages for every artifact, which can work especially well if the artifacts are of very different types. Combining these techniques, some authors arrange related artifacts in groups and write a reflective statement for each group.

TASK 10: SKETCH A SITE MAP

Using the site map in Figure 2.1 as a model, sketch a site map of your web portfolio's structure. Use a box to indicate each page, and use lines to show how the pages relate to each other logically. Label each page with the file name you will use for that page—for example, you could call your home page index.htm. See the sidebar on Web Site File Names on page 57 for more information on file naming conventions.

Remember that in web site maps, the lines show logical relationships—not necessarily the actual links that will appear on the pages. For example, every page in the site map in Figure 2.1 will probably have a link to home, but indicating those links on the site map would obscure the logical structure of the site.

NOTE

Web Site File Names

Because of the peculiarities of web server software, web page file names shouldn't include spaces or most punctuation marks, such as commas, apostrophes, slashes, or extra periods (other than the one dot before the extension). They can, however, include underscores (_) or hyphens (-), and many people use these to replace spaces (for example, my_main-page.html).

For the file name extension—the part after the dot—HTML files can be named with either .htm or .html, but it's a good idea to choose one or the other and stick with it consistently as you create a web portfolio. The web editor you use may have a default preference—the default in Netscape Composer is .html—so sometimes it's easier just to use what the program prefers.

Image files usually use the extensions .jpg or .gif, but the other naming conventions still apply. See Chapter 4 for more information about image file types.

Page Design

Most people respond to web sites both intellectually and emotionally—but their emotional response to sites can have a very strong effect on what they think about the site's contents and its creator. Accordingly, it's important to pay attention to what kind of emotional impression you want a web portfolio to give to your audiences. You'll also want your page design to reflect who you are and what you want your audience to think about you. Use your imagination when creating a page design; it's your best opportunity to express your own personality and ideas. At the same time, keep in mind the design criteria discussed in Chapter 1.

TASK 11: CREATE A WEB PAGE DESIGN

Explore and create a page design for your web portfolio.

1. Write a few sentences describing how you want the look of your web portfolio to feel to your audiences. Include this information in your discussion of audience in the web portfolio plan. What emotional response do you want your audiences to have to your portfolio? Do you

(continued)

(continued)

want them to think it looks elegant? Technologically sophisticated? Fun? Professional? What colors or images do you think would convey these feelings best? Consider looking at the section on colors in Chapter 4 (page 94) for more information about colors for web sites.

2. On paper, sketch at least three potential page designs for your web portfolio. Think of your sketches as generic pages from your web portfolio, indicating elements that will appear on every page, such as a page title, navigation elements, content, page layout, and common graphics. Eventually, you'll want to choose one of these designs as the consistent layout for your entire portfolio. If you want, use crayons or colored pencils to give a sense of the color scheme you'd like to use.
3. Choose what you think is the sketch that best fits your purposes, your audiences, and your content.
4. Using dashed lines over the top of your chosen sketch, draw a layout table that will organize the contents (see the page design sketch in Figure 2.1). As you'll recall, most web sites use a table with invisible borders to organize the layout of the page. Readers won't actually see this table, but it's important to plan for it now.
5. Estimate how wide the layout table will be. A typical computer screen is at least 800 pixels wide. Most designers try to make their layout tables somewhat narrower than that, however, so the design will include margins. For example, you could decide to make the layout table 600 pixels wide, leaving a 100-pixel margin on each side. You can also specify the width of the table as a percentage of the width of the screen—that way, regardless of what size screen the reader uses, the proportions of the table will come out about the same.
6. Estimate how wide each column of the table will be. The width of all of the columns should add up to the total width of the table (see step 5). For example, if you had a two-column table such as that in Figure 2.1, you could set the left column to 120 pixels and the right column to 480 pixels, which would add up to 600—the width of the

entire table. You can also specify cell widths as a percentage of the table width, as long as the combined percentages add up to 100 percent. However, it's a good idea to choose either pixels or percentages and stick with one method for both the table width and the column widths.

Don't worry about being tied down to the numbers in steps 5 and 6—you can always readjust them when actually creating the site, and you probably will need to.

Write the Web Portfolio Plan

Once you have these plans in mind, formalize them in a web portfolio plan such as the example illustrated in Figure 2.1. You can create the web portfolio plan in your working portfolio journal, but it should be separate from the writing you've done there to this point, which has concentrated on assessing and analyzing your materials and situation. Think of the web portfolio plan as a report that says exactly what your web portfolio will turn out like—and why. The web portfolio plan should include boiled-down versions of some of the situation analysis you've performed, including concise descriptions of the following:

- The audiences of your web portfolio, including their likely standards and expectations
- Your purposes, including why these purposes are important to the web portfolio
- Borrowed information or graphics in your portfolio

Then the web portfolio plan continues by specifying the contents, organization, and web page layout of your portfolio.

Conclusion

At this point, you will have created a well-considered plan for creating a web portfolio. Creating a plan is actually one of the most challenging aspects of web portfolio development. Your web portfolio plan will serve as a guide as you actually put together your web portfolio. But once again, don't hesitate to reconsider or change your plan if you have new ideas or new materials to include in your web portfolio. Part of the reward of doing web-based projects is the creativity that you can bring into play in the creation process itself.

Web Portfolio Plan

Purposes
The main purpose of this web portfolio is to present my work in my freshman comp class to my teacher as part of the course requirements. My primary goal is to revise my work and present it so I can receive a good evaluation. I want to make sure the audiences know what I've learned this semester about writing and doing research papers.

Audiences
The primary audience is my teacher, who will be evaluating the portfolio for part of my grade. He specified the requirements for the portfolio, which are to include at least two of the essays we wrote this semester and our research paper. He'll probably be looking to see that we have revised and improved the papers from the drafts we turned in earlier this semester. He also said that the quality of the web portfolio as a whole will be evaluated, so I want to make sure it looks good and works well.

I'm also going to upload my portfolio to the Internet, so people who are interested in global warming (my research paper topic) could also be a potential audience. They'll probably want to know basic information about global warming, so I should probably make the links to my research paper very clear. I also want to include a page of links to other sites about global warming so people can click through from my research to other places to learn more about global warming.

Look and feel
Because my research paper was on global warming, I think it would be good to have a sort of scientific look to the site. I want people to think that they can depend on the information here, so the colors should probably be cool, like grays and blues. It might be a good idea to use graphics of clouds or maybe a picture of the earth to give the idea of global climate. This look and feel would also work pretty well with the Chopin essay, since The Awakening sounds like something that could be illustrated with pictures of the sky. It doesn't work quite as well with binge drinking—but it might give people the sense that binge drinking can send them to the next world pretty quickly.

Page design
I want to use a left-hand menu, since I have to include several different pages that link to my home page. If I used a top menu, I might not have enough room. Here's my sketch of the layout:

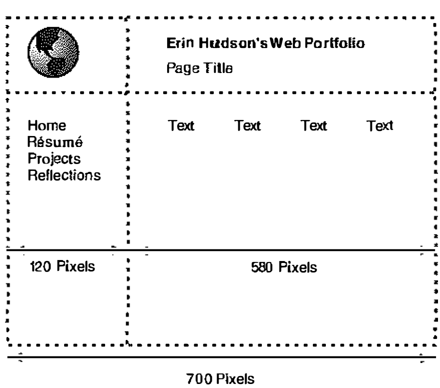

FIGURE 2.1 *Sample Web Portfolio Plan*

Final content list
My web portfolio will include these papers. Since all of the papers are on separate topics, I want to include a reflective statement for each paper. The home page will include a reflective statement on the whole course.
1. Reflective statement on course.
2. Reflective statement about Kate Chopin paper.
3. My essay analyzing Kate Chopin's short story, "The Story of an Hour." I think this paper was a good analysis, and I've been working on it to incorporate the changes my teacher suggested on the last draft. I'd like to find a picture of Kate Chopin to include on this page, but I'll have to see if I can find one.
4. Reflective statement about drinking and driving paper.
5. My essay on binge drinking and drunk driving. This is a big problem on campus, and I think my proposal to have a campus van service is a really good argument. I'd like to include the table I made that shows the number of student drunk driving accidents reported by campus police over the last four years. I also found a graphic from a clip art site of a wrecked car, and I thought I'd also include the logo from MADD with a link to their site.
6. Reflective statement about global warming research paper.
7. My research paper on global warming. The research paper includes some tables of statistics I got from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. I'd like to do versions of those tables in the web site version of my report. Because the research paper is pretty long, I'll break it into three main sections. Linked buttons will let the reader go from one section to the next or let them go back to the previous section.

Borrowed information or graphics
Most of the borrowed information is quotations in my report, so I'm including a works cited page that's linked to the research paper page. I also borrowed a couple of graphics from a clip art web site that said I could use them if I gave the site credit. I'll probably give them credit on the works cited page, as well.

Site map
My site map is arranged so readers can start out at my home page, click to go to reflection pages, and then click from there to go to my papers.