

## **Carbonmade.com – e-Portfolios for Professional Development**

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This year the teachers of the Alberta Conference have been learning how to incorporate technology into their annual professional development plans by publishing these plans and the progress online through an electronic portfolio. For the past several years, teachers at my school have been using a portfolio binder that included our goals, lists of needed resources, a timeline for implementation, and indicators of achievement for those goals. We were able to include samples, pictures and anecdotal comments each month. I have used pizza box portfolios with my students, and had been using the portfolio binder for my professional development goals, but this was going to be a new twist to what we were already doing. As my colleagues and I have been implementing it this year, we have enjoyed positive aspects and struggled with some cons as well.

The format chosen comes from an online portfolio host site called Carbonmade.com. This site allows you to register for a free online website that allows you to build and manage your portfolio as an online website. You may also pay a monthly fee for more space and more features. The free version allows for up to 5 projects and 35 images but does not provide for video clips or tech. support. The paid version allows for 50 projects, 500 images, and 10 videos along with a number of other features and does provide tech support. As far as I am aware, we are all using the free version.

The first section is the images section. When I want to include images, I can simply snap a digital photo or use a document scanner and save the image as a JPEG file that can be uploaded to the application. If I want to include more than one photo and don't want to use up the limited number of images allowed, I create a PowerPoint slide composite of my photos and save it as a JPEG and then upload it.

The second section is the Words section. Here give your project a title and list your goals, strategies, timelines, resources, anecdotal comments and progress reports. At the end of this section is a place to add an external web address if you wish to redirect viewers to a separate site, as well as places for you to include a client, (I used the Alberta Conference and my school), and the type of project.

The last three sections deal with the control you have over the project such as layout, visibility, and the ability to completely delete the project and start over.

The About Me tab allows you to include your name, information about yourself, contacts and availability for work. This section makes your site a type of online resume if you wish. This was not my intention, so I just gave a brief introduction of myself.

A major positive aspect of using the carbonmade.com site has been the ability of the conference education department to access our portfolios remotely. Instead of spending time going through paper copies during school visits, personnel are able to spend the time in classrooms with the teachers. Because our portfolios are on the web, another positive is the ability to share ideas quickly and easily with colleagues.

One of the negatives of using this “free” version is the inability to edit the images uploaded to the site. As a result, I used up one of the images I had available by accidentally uploading the same image twice. Because the online portfolio is “out there” on the web, we have to be careful not to include pictures of our students due to FOIP – freedom of information and privacy guidelines. Some believe this is a limitation. Others have experienced formatting problems when copying and pasting from Word or Pages.

Overall this has been a positive experience. As I have worked to showcase my own professional development goals and progress, it has led me to research possibilities in having my students develop e-portfolios to showcase their learning for the coming school year. When we learn and stretch ourselves in new ways of doing things as teachers, it often leads to new and creative learning experiences for our students.

**Resources:**

- <http://carbonmade.com/>
- [ardynkay.carbonmade.com](http://ardynkay.carbonmade.com)