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ENGL110C 23575

November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

### Profile Essay: Online Services Available to Old Dominion University Students

One of the many services available to Old Dominion University students is called WordPress. WordPress is an invaluable tool for students that offers a versatile and accessible platform for digital publishing and portfolio development. WordPress is important to students who need to create an ePortfolio for their class, for example I am getting my bachelor's degree in Cybersecurity, and it is required for me to have a Cybersecurity ePortfolio to publish all of my research, along with my article reviews.

In order to locate WordPress, you must go to [odu.edu](http://odu.edu) then click on Information Technology Services. Once you have clicked on Information Technology Services, you must then click on the sub-menu tab that is named Software & Services. After you click on that tab, the services that fall under that tab are then listed in alphabetical order, simply scroll down to W to locate WordPress. Another easier way to quickly locate WordPress is to simply go to [google.com](http://google.com), type in ODU WordPress into the search bar, and then click the top link. After you have located this page, there are multiple tabs to help you navigate. If you scroll down to Students, the website states, "Each student is allowed one personal site per MIDAS ID". Along with providing the link to create your own student account. Further down on the page you will see a heading titled, "Tutorials from WordPress.org", followed by links categorized by the type of tutorial, these categories include Beginner, Design, and Web Management. If students were

still having trouble navigating, or having trouble setting up their ePortfolio website, you can book an appointment to have in-person help with the process.

The purpose of this tool is to help students create an ePortfolio that they can gather all their research, essays, article reviews, and any other important work they have done into one place. It allows students to have a sense of creativity and freedom while also keeping their work organized. Students can express themselves and create an ePortfolio that reflects them, as a person, by giving them the tools to add various forms of media, such as text, images, audio, and video to their work. Another purpose WordPress serves is for your professor. Some professors require you to create an ePortfolio, where you publish your assignments onto your website before submitting the link directly to them. Doing so can help your professor to track your progress, helping them identify areas that need improvement and informing any needed instruction. This ePortfolio can also be used to show any potential jobs your knowledge, which may help you secure the job!

ePortfolios can provide a lot of benefits for students, one of the benefits I personally like, is being able to go to my website and view all my past assignments. It's been extremely helpful during open book tests or when a new assignment mentions a topic that I have previously researched and talked about. Another benefit is that it enables students to create a professional online presence, helping them showcase their academic work. This helps students develop a digital portfolio, which is essential for career development and professional networking. The last benefit is that it helps create community building and collaboration. WordPress can help students to collaborate, by sharing their assignments to engage in peer review and feedback. This can help enable the development of essential skills, such as teamwork and critical thinking. However, there are some downsides with this website that I have personally experienced. I personally felt

that WordPress can be a bit tricky to navigate. I found myself struggling to figure out how to add headers or create a new category. Although I would add them when using the customization tool, I was unable to see them on my website even though I had clicked publish. Another issue I had was I accidentally deleted a whole category and sadly learned that there was no undo button, I then had to remake the whole category and repost everything. Therefore, I would say the only downside to using this tool is that it can be a bit tricky to navigate along with the lack of certain tool that could be useful if someone were to make a mistake.

Despite the downsides, I was really fascinated with the website overall. When I first started my semester, hearing about ePortfolios was new to me and I have never heard of creating a portfolio online. I've only heard of it once I started my classes at ODU. I thought it was great tool to have and was excited to be able to compel all my knowledge about Cybersecurity into one place. Once I was able to learn and understand how WordPress worked, I really enjoyed using it. I have since learned how to customize my ePortfolio further by adding video links, or even changing the layout of my categorizes. I've even heard from others who have graduated from ODU, who also used WordPress, that they were able to send their ePortfolios to employers they were applying to, or who still add onto their ePortfolio to this day. Which, after learning that I look forward to doing.

In conclusion, WordPress has helped many students organize, share, and manage their knowledge all into one place, along with offering a wide range of benefits to all students. It has enabled students to publish and/or comment on each other's ePortfolios, encouraging them to develop essential writing and communication skills. It has also allowed students to reflect on their learning, set goals, and track their progress which enables self-directed learning and personal growth. On top of that, WordPress enables students to feel that their work means more

than it being “just an assignment” by providing them with a sense of purpose and authenticity from publishing their work onto their personal websites. Therefore, with its features, flexibility, and accessibility, WordPress has become an indispensable tool for anyone looking to succeed in creating a strong online presentation.

Work Cited

Old Dominion University, updated 2023

“Each student is allowed one personal site per MIDAS ID.”

<https://www.odu.edu/information-technology-services/wordpress>