Electronic portfolios to support the growth of digital identity in the school library

Linda Z. Cooper
Queens College, City University of New York

This paper examines the concepts of identity and digital identity – their similarities and differences – and ways to support their development in youth. Specifically, the use of electronic portfolios, or eportfolios, is discussed as a means of personal expression within the control of a young person. Constructing an electronic portfolio empowers one to create and recreate a changing identity and allows the author to observe and reflect on his or her growth and direction. The school library is an ideal venue to introduce young people to a means of digital presence in a secure environment that supports the creativity, individual exploration and experimentation necessary for shaping identities to flourish.

Introduction

The question of identity - Who am I? - is of critical importance if an individual is to move successfully and happily through life. If we don’t know who we are, how can we know where we are going? Because so much of the way we communicate is now digitally mediated, the concept of a digital identity takes on a real significance. The many facets of digital expression both facilitate and complicate its use to support identity development in youth. Therefore, an examination of the concepts of identity and digital identity need to be addressed in order to move towards a means to best implement the tools we have at hand for young people to shape the presentation of how they see themselves.

Overview of Related Literature

What is Identity?

Perhaps the most influential theorist examining the concept of identity is Erik Erikson (1963) who proposed eight stages of psychosocial development:

1. Trust vs. Mistrust (Infant)
2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (Toddler)
3. Initiatives vs. Guilt (Preschool)
4. Industry vs. Inferiority (Childhood)
5. Identity vs. Role Confusion (Adolescence)
6. Intimacy vs. Isolation (Young adulthood)
7. Generativity vs. Stagnation (Middle adulthood)
While successful negotiation of each level is not necessary in order to move to the subsequent level, unresolved stages are considered as possible problematic issues that may appear later in life. During the period of adolescence, young people struggle to understand who they are and who they might become. They are concerned with how they appear to their peers and to those people they admire and while their identities have been growing and changing since birth, it is at this time that they undergo an “identity crisis” in that they come to the intersection of childhood and adulthood. If they have successfully negotiated earlier stages they will be prepared to establish a stronger and more individual sense of self in relation to their peers (Erikson, 1963).

Marcia (1980 via Buckingham, 2008) builds on Erikson’s stages with four “identity statuses” identifying different states in adolescent identity crisis:

1. foreclosure or avoiding the address of identity by following the expectations of others
2. diffusion or giving up on forging an identity
3. moratorium or an ongoing effort to establish identity
4. achievement or the point at which the adolescent passes through the crisis and has decided on an identity

Identity also plays an important role in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1962). His five levels of needs include:

1. Physiological needs
2. Safety needs
3. Love and belonging
4. Esteem
5. Self-actualization

While these levels are not associated with age ranges as are Erickson’s, they do progress from the very basic needs of a child to the self-actualization of a mature adult. If the more basic needs are not met, the individual may not be able to achieve self-actualization. A sense of identity includes both how a person thinks about his or her self as well as how a person thinks others think of him/her. "Identity is developed by the individual but it has to be recognized and confirmed by others" (Buckingham, 2008, p. 3). Identity needs validation. This places the concept of identity in Maslow’s level of Love and belonging and in that of Esteem. Again the importance of achieving a sense of identity is necessary in order to move to upper levels of maturity (Maslow, 1962).

Buckingham’s (2008) comprehensive address of Youth, Identity, and Digital Media presents perspectives of identity formation from both the areas of psychology and sociology. While the paragraphs above deal largely with psychological aspects of identity development, Buckingham reminds us that sociologists perceive the conflicts of adolescence, including identity development, as they relate to external factors in society such as social class, gender, and ethnic membership. Additionally, sociologists view adolescence as a time period constructed by culture rather than nature and look to societal nomenclatures such as teenager, tween, and Generation X as culturally constructed categories often associated with the marketplace (for example, items specifically designed for purchase by tweens). Identity issues relating to the possession of items designed to visually include members in a category (if I wear this, then I am visibly a member of a group) may weigh heavily on adolescents. Additionally, identity based on possessions implies the possibility of social inclusion or exclusion based on economic status so that economic status impinges on identity development.

Identity, then, is unique to each individual but is also mediated/in relation to the broader culture/social group. Identity varies depending on who you are with. One may have a particular identity/presentation/face in an academic situation such as school and a different identity in a more casual circumstance with friends and yet another identity at home. Weber and Mitchell
identify identity production as a personal and social bricolage (a French term meaning to build using materials that are at hand). They view identity construction as an ongoing process that is both personal and social in nature and which uses aspects of the individual’s life that are best suited to the moment.

**What is Digital Identity?**

Digital identity includes aspects of identity discussed above but speaks specifically to a digital environment or presentation. Technology has provided new ways of forming identity. Turkel (1984) writes that youth uses their digital experience both as "a canvas for personal expression and then as a context for working through personal concerns" (p. 138). Their "experiences with the computer are often made into elements for explicit reflections about themselves" (p. 139), thus, supporting identity development.

Dresang’s Radical Change Theory (1999) was initially proposed to address how readers “identify literature with characteristics of the digital age” (p. 5). Subsequently, Dresang and Koh (2009) examined "how digital age youth think and seek information; perceive themselves and others; and access information and seek community" (p. 26). In this examination they identify a Radical Change Typology of digital age youth information behavior having three Radical Change types:

- **Type One:** Changing forms of seeking information and learning
- **Type Two:** Changing perspectives
- **Type Three:** Changing boundaries

It is within Type Two: Changing perspectives, that we see reference to identity. Characteristics of Type Two include youth expressing opinions for themselves, demonstrating identity by creating information, portraying flexible and multiple identities, and encountering information from various perspectives (p. 29). Within this area of Radical Change Typology, youth are creating their own identities expressed by the information they create and this information is created digitally. Using technology, youth can construct their identity and values by interacting with a wide range of people and information in a diverse and global arena. Dresang and Koh propose that we think of identity as "we are what we know and what we do" (p. 37). When we look for information we are in the process of building identity since the information that we take in will be internalized and become part of our knowledge base.

Prensky (2001) proposed the notion of Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants. Digital Natives being those people who have been born into the digital culture for whom a digital form of communications is their first language - the language they to which they were born. They can think in this language. Digital Immigrants, however, are those people who were not born in the digital age. While they may have learned to speak the language, this skill came later in life and it is, therefore, unlikely that they will speak it as fluently and comfortably as natives. Based on Prensky’s perspective, therefore, for young people, identity formation using digital information and digital tools would be natural manner of exploring, developing, and defining self. This bodes well for the development of digital identity in adolescents.

Weber and Mitchell (2008) note that technology and the formation of identity in youth share the aspect of constant change. Experimenting with different aspects of digital media helps adolescents to explore their own directions, talents, and thoughts using multiple paint brushes, so to speak, to express and develop different aspects of their identity. Aspects of identity take on both visible and invisible becoming. They propose that such activities be labeled "identities-in-action"
to remind us that both technology and identity are in a constant state of flux (p. 39). Shared features of digital production that identity building include:

- **Constructedness** - both involve putting together elements to build an new thing
- **Collectivity and social construction** - both are mediated by our culture and can be tailored to present different faces for different audiences
- **Convergence** - old and new information can be blended to shape a presentation
- **Reflexivity and negotiation** - both digital creation and identity creation invite feedback.

Both mediate, shape, and reshape how we see the world and how the world sees us
- **Embodiment** - digital production provides a means to visibly embody the identity we are attempting to convey.
- **Learning** - digital production affords students a constructivist learning opportunity that is self-motivation and engaging.


### Suggested Means to Construct Digital Identity

Cooper (2007) writes of youth and information as self. Youth creates information and information, in turn, creates and shapes youth. We live in a mediated society (De Zengotita, 2005) in which identities are shaped by a constant and varied stream of sources. Digital production enables youth to experiment with different faces or personas (Kelly et al., 2006). Stern (2008) defines personal home pages as "web sites posted by individuals that generally include an array of multimedia features, including text, images, sounds, links, and audience response mechanisms" (p. 98).

Ongoing construction of a personal website is a way to express, explore, build, and present an identity. This identity can be for others to see and know us and it can also be for the creator to reflect on over time. It can help to document where we have been and suggest where we might go. It is a means to self understanding that is concrete in that we have built it and can see it. Weber & Mitchell (2008) explored personal web sites created by young people to see what features were usually included. They found the following features in almost all of the sites they examined:

- a home page that links to all the other pages;
- a “best friends” section (listing members of one’s circle and often providing links to their sites);
- a personal page revealing a range of information and opinions (favorite music, “my cute dog,” sports, a blog-like posting of snippets of daily experience, love notes to friends, jokes, gossip, candid photos, posed photos, and more);
- a guest book or message board where visitors (assumed to be one’s best friends) can sign in and leave messages;
- an instant messaging chat box;
- a “goodbye—come again” page;
- elements of fandom, participation in popular culture, sharing likes and dislikes—popular movies, sport, music idols, and so forth;
- declaration of their friendship group, their heritage group, and in some instances, their family; in other words, certain elements selected to show where they fit in, where they belong;
- inclusion of friends’ site addresses;
- a bulletin board for friends to leave messages;
- coded “private” messages for certain friends, sometimes inserted within the main text of the site;
personal photos (often downloaded from cell phones) and artwork;
use of the prevailing norms for “cool” language;
photographs (posed and/or candid shots of oneself, pets, and others, downloaded or scanned photos, often of idols);
images—sometimes original drawings, but more often clip art taken from other sites, popular images, and commercial logos. (Weber & Mitchell, 2008, p.28/29).

All of these aspects and others might be incorporated into the development of an electronic portfolio, or eportfolio. Building digital identity using multimedia enables the creator to employ multiple means of expression beyond merely words as demonstrated in the following examples.

Eportfolios

An eportfolio is a type of home page as defined above by Stern (2008). Eportfolios are constructed by individuals for personal/recreational use but for youth are most widely implemented in schools to document student development over time so that students can reflect on where they have been and where they are going. Eportfolios can document specific projects or progress in specific classes or they can present a more global, comprehensive picture of a student’s development across time and study area. Students can also share creations that they are most proud of including, but not limited to, written work, music composed, artwork, books read and opinions shared. The eportfolio can help the teacher to understand the bigger picture that is each student rather than several assignments in one area.

Current research examining eportfolio use by youth largely addresses learning and assessment in schools (Barrett, 2007; Carney, 2004; Zubizarreta, 2004). It is the intent of this investigation, rather, to consider how eportfolio creation might support the development of identity in a digital environment. Eportfolios require the use of higher order thinking skills as per Bloom (1956) including critical thinking, organization, self-regulation, and meta-cognition (Alexiou & Paraskeva, 2010; Cheng & Chau, 2013; Robins, 2006). Buzzetto-More (2010) reports that eportfolios encourage greater student involvement in the constructive process, self-reflection, understanding of goals and thinking about how they have developed. These activities may be construed to support the growth of self-knowledge and, thus, identity in the digital environment that an electronic portfolio provides.

Helene Barrett has been prolific in her research and writing about the use of eportfolios by youth. She states that the purposes of eportfolios can include uses as an assessment tool, use as a resume/marketing tool for employment, and to document the process of learning and growth of the author (Barrett, 2007). During the learning process, “[s]elf-knowledge becomes an outcome of learning” (ibid, p. 238). The concept of self-knowledge is tied closely to identity development as discussed earlier in this paper and the idea of a digital vehicle, such as an electronic portfolio, as a means to support the development of digital identity easily follows. As noted above, use of portfolios in schools has historically been largely to support learning and assessment of learning. If learning can be defined as gaining knowledge or finding out about something (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/learn), from the perspective of this investigation, then, learning about one’s self, i.e. one’s identity, is a valid use of the electronic portfolio in schools.

Barrett (2007) notes the difference between a positivist perspective portfolio and a constructivist perspective portfolio as originally articulated by Leon and Pearl Paulson (1994). A portfolio constructed with a positivist perspective means to assess learning outcomes and these learning outcomes have already been defined by some external standard. A portfolio constructed
with a constructivist perspective means to present individual process over time. Its purpose may change over time as the individual changes. This type of portfolio looks at learning from the student perspective and it is this type of portfolio that will support the growth and realization of identity for the author - who the author is and who s/he is becoming. And while a positivist portfolio, with its contents largely prescribed by a school or teacher is confining, the ability to work in an electronic medium may help the author move towards a more constructivist situation if the author has some control over the mode of presentation of the contents. In this sense, an electronic portfolio may have both positivist and constructivist aspects. Ownership of the eportfolio by the student should "allow the learner to feel in control of the process" (Barrett, 2007, p. 440) and the "authentic voices" (ibid) of the learners should be clear. Barrett (2007) notes the difference between the eportfolio as an assessment of student learning (summative) vs. the eportfolio as an assessment for student learning (formative). It is not the intent of the author of this paper to discuss assessment per se, however, if learning can be construed, as noted above, as learning about self, then a constructivist perspective implementing the eportfolio for student learning may be thought to support the development of digital identity.

Examples of eportfolios constructed on various grade levels

While examples of student constructed eportfolios do not abound on the Internet because of its public nature, Dr. Helen Barrett has done extensive work with youth creating online portfolios and has made material available online at https://sites.google.com/site/k12eportfolios/home and https://sites.google.com/site/k12eportfolios/resources/examples-of-online-portfolios.

Primary level eportfolios

The following examples demonstrate how eportfolios can be used to support growth of digital identity for very young children. These children are at Erickson's stage of Industry vs. Inferiority. They are increasingly able to do things on their own although they still need the help of an adult at times. Large portions of these eportfolios are physically constructed by adults with input from the children whom they depict.

Team One Rock Stars (http://pesyear1.blogspot.com/) is the electronic portfolio of a group of five and six year olds from the Pt England Primary School in Tamaki, Auckland, New Zealand. This eportfolio is in keeping with the developmental levels of the children whom it supports. Some posts are written by the teacher, describing what the children have done. However, some of the posts were dictated by the children, thus giving them a voice to express their growth and the things that were important to them. Children needed to dictate what they wanted to say to their teacher since they did not yet have the skills to construct an eportfolio unassisted. They have yet to develop the fine motor skills needed for key boarding, the language skills necessary to articulate their ideas in writing, or the technological skills needed to interact with an electronic portfolio. The teacher, in this instance, is supporting their identity development through the use of the eportfolio, by helping them to express themselves to their classmates and others via this medium. Photographs enable the youngsters to see their growth over the year even if they cannot read the accompanying text.

Manaia Kindergarten (http://manaiakindergarten.blogspot.com/) is another electronic portfolio constructed by teachers for children. This portfolio does not contain material dictated by the child participants, rather it contains video clips of the children at their school activities and projects. Children are able to visit the site and view their own growth and the things that they have accomplished. This allows children who are not yet able to post for themselves to have a digital
presence and sense of identity. The site includes a Blogging Safely section for parents and guardians.

Ben’s Blog (http://bennybee.blogspot.com/) differs from the two examples above in that it is not posted by a child/children’s teachers but rather his parents: "Mum and Dad have decided to leave it an open blog as an exemplar of how e-profiles can be used to document and assess my learning and life as a partnership between my extended family, my teachers at kindergarten, my dance teachers, and when I get there my school teachers too. Please enjoy and respect my E profile.” It invites “my parents, teachers (including dance teachers), Aunties, Uncles, cousins, Grandparents and family to please contribute.” This eportfolio also differs from those above in that it is a personal portfolio, not a group portfolio. It includes photos, video, and text about Ben and also introduces the viewer to his family via photographs of his parents and siblings as well as short pieces on whole family activities such as holidays. While not physically constructed by Ben, the photographs and text document Ben’s life and support the growth of his digital identity. At some point, Ben will be able to take over his own posting and will have this history - his story - to continue.

Victoria’s Sample Portfolio (https://sites.google.com/site/asbindia2009/home) spans several years and focuses on one child rather than a class of children. The entries are authored by Victoria. Earlier entries may have been made with the assistance of an adult. In the All About Me section, Victoria shares her reflections on her kindergarten school year via a video. This demonstrates how the multimedia nature of the eportfolio allows creators of various skill levels and talents to share their identity digitally, in this case, with the assistant of an adult. The earliest entry that can be associated with a grade level is from kindergarten. The latest entry marked with a grade level was done in grade six. Thus, this eportfolio spans seven years and while the entries are not prolific, the reader/viewer is given a sense of how the child author has grown. The child has established a digital presence in this presentation and, as per Weber and Mitchell (2008) it is both ongoing and embodied via the eportfolio.

Intermediate and middle school eportfolios

Students at the intermediate and middle school levels may be in the later stages of Erickson’s Industry v Inferiority moving towards stage V of Identity v Role Confusion in which peers and role models take on increasing importance. Students more developed physical and intellectual capabilities support their expression as Digital Natives (Prensky, 2001) to establish self in an ongoing effort as per Marcia (1980) and accommodate their own changing perspectives (Dresang & Koh, 2009).

Kim Cofino describes herself as a Technology and Learning Coach in international schools. Her web page is titled Always Learning: Teaching Technology Abroad. Blogs as Showcase Portfolios (http://kimcofino.com/blog/2011/06/12/blogs-as-showcase-portfolios/) describes an assignment for middle school students in which each student created his or her own showcase portfolio describing their learning in grade 6. Students already had individual blogs in place. This assignment took them a step further in articulating a digital identity by sharing goals, reflections, and work they wished to highlight. Additionally, Ms. Cofino communicated with parents about learning at home/away from school. Sophia’s Blog from this group (http://blogs.yis.ac.jp/17hongs/showcase/) is personal and expressive and definitely conveys a digital identity through the writing and art of the student. Even the student's choice of colors, fonts, and placement of text/images gives a sense of the author. Compare this to Harry’s Blog (http://blogs.yis.ac.jp/17smallh/showcase/) and two different identities emerge. Similarly, Ellen’s
Eportfolio (http://ellenseportfolio.blogspot.com/), Nicola’s Eportfolio (http://nicola-eportfolioblogspot.com/) and Cheyenne’s Eportfolio (http://cheyenneseportfolio.wikispaces.com/Home) are comparable in that they are clearly associated with their school work but the digital identities that are expressed are very different. The young authors are in control of text and image so that even though topics addressed may be prescribed, presentation and sense of self are quite individual. They are expressing themselves through their computers and these expressions become reflections on self as per Turkle (1984). While these pages are written and constructed by the student authors, as noted, the content still largely addresses topics assigned by their teacher. The students are able to convey far more about themselves than the children in the previous section but are still guided and cared for in their digital excursions by an adult.

**High school eportfolios**

Students at this level are within Erickson’s stage of Identity vs Role Confusion – moving away from the support of parents and teachers towards a firmer understanding of their own individual identities. They are firmly established as Digital Natives (Prensky, 2001). Being able to articulate using multiple forms of media and having the ability to review their change and growth over long spans of time (Marcia, 1980; Weber & Mitchell, 2008; Dresang & Koh, 2009) helps to clarify direction and/or change of direction and clarify identity. Their more sophisticated interactions with their peers supports Buckingham’s observations (2008) regarding the development of identity as it relates to the social construction of identity, particularly at a time when belonging and esteem become more important (Maslow, 1962).

The Conserve School in Wisconsin (http://www.conserveschool.org/about) is dedicated to environmental stewardship through academics and work with the environment. Students maintain electronic portfolios. Marina’s Homepage (https://sites.google.com/a/conserveschool.org/cs8_marina/home) welcomes the visitor and links to reflective essays by the author illustrated with photographs. Anna attends the same school and Anna’s Homepage (https://sites.google.com/a/conserveschool.org/cs8_anna/home) reflects her personality, her identity as unique from that of her classmate. The electronic medium allows the students to work with text, image, color, sound to shape and present the face/person/digital identity they wish to share with viewers. It may be that having control over this creation supports the student in moving toward the adult they wish to become. Identity becomes embodied through the constructive nature of the electronic portfolio (Weber & Mitchell, 2008).

The Virginia Governor’s Schools program (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/governors_school_programs/) gives gifted students an opportunity to focus on a particular area of study individualized to the learner’s interests and needs. A selection of electronic portfolios presenting senior projects from the Blue Ridge Virtual Governor’s School is available at https://sites.google.com/a/brvgs.k12.va.us/senior-projects-2012-2013/. While these are portfolios to fulfil a project requirement, in addition to the personalized selection and presentation of each project, many contain personal statements such as the ones on Veronica’s Page (https://sites.google.com/a/brvgs.k12.va.us/veronicavoronina/), Rachel’s Page (https://sites.google.com/a/brvgs.k12.va.us/rachellescott/), Jonathan’s Page (https://sites.google.com/a/brvgs.k12.va.us/jonathanbuonomo/) and Michael’s Page (https://sites.google.com/a/brvgs.k12.va.us/michaelmattson/). In addition to these statements, the research topics chosen, the page presentation and ‘voice,’ the photographs included, and the quotes each student chose to include all speak to the identity of each of them. They have the
opportunity to share themselves in this manner because of the digital medium in which they are working.

Eportfolios for digital identity development in the school library

Because most of the exemplars above were constructed within a school context, their contents are more on focused on school projects and situations. Blog sections shared academic progress rather than gossip with friends. Personal statements were more formally presented rather than informal sharing. Many of the qualities noted in strictly personal web sites by Weber & Mitchell (2008) did not appear in these eportfolios. This type of presentation is in keeping with a digital identity posted and shared under the protective eye of a school or teacher. The school library, as the center of learning in the school, can be the ideal place for all components of the student eportfolio to converge in an environment that provides the guidance of a teacher librarian, if necessary, and the intellectual freedom to explore one’s own interests in a safe environment.

While information seeking supporting class assignments in the various subject areas will be an important component of an eportfolio reflecting personal growth, the school library can provide a place where eportfolios can take a non-prescribed direction. Such a direction may be reflective of the personal interests and research of individual students. Students may be free to share their personal writing, art, music, media productions as statements, validations, of their identities and the power they have over them presented in a digital format. A school library is an ideal venue for youth to work with digital tools to construct their own, very personal digital identity.

While many students have access to digital tools at home, many do not. The school library can provide the digital tools needed so that every student has access to this means to explore and develop his or her digital identity. Additionally, for youth who may be Digital Natives (Prensky, 2001) in their facility with tools but may need support regarding their interactions and what personal information they share with a wide population, the teacher librarian may provide assistance when needed. Ferriter (2011) reminds us that digital footprints, or the information about an individual that is left online, can be both positive and negative. Guidance for novices may protect them from misguided choices regarding their online interactions or sharing. Additionally, eportfolios can be shared with a wide or limited range of people depending on the comfort level of children and parents/teachers. The school library can provide a sheltered environment for experimentation in the construction of digital identity until young authors are mature enough to venture out on their own. Roundtable discussions with student portfolio authors can examine the concept of the digital footprint and best practices for personal safety when sharing one’s identity digitally. Maslow (1962) notes that a sense of belonging is important in identity development. In keeping with that idea, a school library based eportfolio club might be well received by students, teachers, and parents.

Shriver (2014) describes an eportfolio initiative undertaken by an entire K-12 school. Younger children learned to construct their eportfolios in their classrooms, middle school children created their eportfolios in their Digital Thinking class, and high school students were the independent curators of their own eportfolios. Shriver reports that the eportfolio initiative at his school supported self-directed learning, critical thinking, collaboration, curiosity, and creativity. These are all important aspects of identity development and are supported as digital identity via student construction of personal eportfolios. It is suggested that a school-wide project such as the one Shriver describes would be well placed in the school library. As children move through the grade levels from K to 12, the home base for eportfolio construction need not change every year.
but rather be situated in the school library - the true learning hub of the school. Because of the electronic format of the eportfolio, classroom teachers would have easy access to student work and students could work on their eportfolios in individual classes. However, they would also have access to their eportfolios in the school library, both to work on classroom assignments and projects and to do their own personal explorations and creations. Initiating an eportfolio program based in the school library would necessitate buy in from the school community. Bartlett (2007) reports that the teacher’s role in an eportfolio project in a school is critical to success. The teacher librarian might begin the leadership role necessary for such an initiative by having discussions with the school principal, grade level teachers, parents and other gatekeepers in the school community. Wider discussions will progress to faculty meetings or committee meetings focused directly on the initiative. The teacher librarian can provide leadership by making resources and templates available such as the ePortfolio Guidelines and Support for Teachers posted on the Gray’s Woods Elementary School Library Page (http://www.scsd.org/Page/20991) and the ePortfolio Template on the Hudson High School Library Website: Infozone (http://libraryinfozone.edublogs.org/eportfolio/). Additionally, workshops presented by the teacher librarian can introduce students, teachers, and parents to the various components of eportfolio construction and support their ongoing development.

**Conclusion**

This paper has presented discussion regarding the nature of identity development in youth and more specifically the concept of digital identity. It is suggested that personal web pages in the form of electronic portfolios are a means to support young people in their quest for digital identity. It is further suggested that the school library is an excellent venue and learning hub for an eportfolio initiative in the school supporting both classroom learning and the creative autonomy young people seek. The school library affords the guidance and expertise of the teacher librarian to support young authors in the digital arena and the sense of intellectual freedom that supports the creativity and growth of individual identity in each student.

**References**


Anna’s Homepage. (nd). Available at: https://sites.google.com/a/conserveschool.org/cs8_anna/home Accessed August 24, 2014.


Marina\textquotesingle s Homepage. (nd) Available at: https://sites.google.com/a/conserveschool.org/cs8_marina/home Accessed August 24, 2014.


Michael\textquotesingle s Page. (nd). Available at: https://sites.google.com/a/brvgs.k12.va.us/michaelmattson/ Accessed August 24, 2014.


Rachel\textquotesingle s Page. (nd). Available at: https://sites.google.com/a/brvgs.k12.va.us/rachellescott/ Accessed August 24, 2014.


Veronica\textquotesingle s Page. (nd). Available at: https://sites.google.com/a/brvgs.k12.va.us/veronicavoronina/ Accessed August 24, 2014.


Author Note

Linda Z. Cooper is Associate Professor, Coordinator of Library Media Specialist Programs and Graduate Advisor for Library Media Specialist students at the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, Queens College, City University of New York. Her background encompasses study in information and library science, education, and art. This, together with her work as a teacher with children in school libraries and with adults at the graduate level, has informed her research and is reflected in her areas of interest which include learning in children and adults, cognitive categories for information, the information behavior of children, and visual information.