


# THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DIGITAL READING

GRAPPLING WITH DIGITAL ARCHIVING,  
READERLY PRIVACY, AND EVIDENCE  
OF OUR READING



After each course I took in college, I accumulated stacks of papers, spiral-bound course readers, and books. Although I was not likely to use most of the materials in the next course, I could not quite part with the records of my learning. Yet I also didn't know *where* to put all of the things I had to store. Because I lived in a small apartment, space was limited, so I did what so many of us do when we don't want to make a choice: we push the problem elsewhere and delay the decision-making. I proceeded to take all of the papers to my childhood bedroom at my parents' house, a conceivably more stable space to store such things.

Eventually, my parents got a little fed up with the stacks of papers towering in my childhood closet. Each time I

returned home, my parents (gently) asked me to go through what I had stored to see what I actually wanted to keep. I found myself spending hours thumbing through the old content, deciphering my notes like a detective for my past self, revisiting what I had learned in my seminar on *The Canterbury Tales* or my critical theory class's discussion of the male gaze. I often couldn't quite track the notes I had taken on my readings or what they meant and, more often than not, I wound up simply throwing away the stacks upon stacks of papers I had stored.

Very little evidence of my learning in college remains, and although it was not exactly practical to keep every single notebook, course reader, and textbook, I regret that I didn't have a better way of storing, archiving, and maintaining a path of my knowledge that I could look at today. Although I'm no longer studying literature in the way that I was as an undergraduate English major, there are, I suspect, many ways of thinking that I developed in college that I'd probably still find useful today. Even if I had not gone into higher education, I may still have found value in archiving what I learned in clearer ways so that I could track the transferable ideas. Even just remembering what ideas made an impression on me or changed my view of the world would have been interesting for me to consider later in life.

Memory has been at the center of concerns with reading since the beginning of reading as we know it. Remember how Socrates's primary concern with writing was that it would undermine our ability to remember what we know? As we've come to accept putting more of our thoughts in writing and relying less on oral modes of transmitting and remembering information, our concern with memory has become all the more acute. Reading for learning involves

being able to recall how a specific fact or moment in a text may impact prior knowledge or may change the reader's assumptions about a particular topic. Further still, reading for knowledge also requires us to have the ability to refer back to particular moments or to put a pin in an idea so we can return to it at a later date. And this all requires that we have ways to remember the totality of important points from a text in order to use and apply that knowledge appropriately. Ways to create mnemonics for improving what we remember from readings are applicable across print and digital spaces. But we may need to be especially attentive to some more specific qualities about reading in digital spaces if we want to retain and also review and reflect back on what we've learned as well.

Specifically, when it comes to storing and keeping track of what we've read in online spaces, we have to be attentive to the infrastructure(s) in which we encounter readings in the first place and we have to know how our practices may align (or clash) with those infrastructures. For example, the ways that we might store reading that we've found on the web may be very different from how we choose to store what we've downloaded from an external hard drive; we make these choices not just because of the technical capacity to store in and across those spaces, but also because of the ways we access information and data on the public web or in private file storage.

Hopefully you have found that the strategies in Part 2 have already offered you some different ways to help students remember what they've read even without the strategies for remembering particular locations or moments that we've come to rely upon with printed books. But mnemonic or pedagogical strategies alone won't help us remember everything. At a certain point, we also need

to make sure that we have mechanisms for recording, storing, and documenting all of the important activities that we have done. It is one thing to have a conversation about what works and what doesn't, and to ask students to reflect and write and keep track of what they've read and consumed. But how do we ensure that all of the work we're doing around a text survives? How do we keep track of all of those notes, readings, documents, and conversations in ways that can make sense to us later? How do we ensure that we all maintain records and archives of our reading so that all of that labor doesn't just disappear? And how do we be deliberate in allowing certain ideas to disappear if we want them to?

Technologies inevitably change over time and so this chapter may eventually feel dated in its approaches to familiarize readers with the critical differences around digital infrastructure that exist at the time of this writing. However, even if the specifics of how we handle and distinguish between different forms of digital infrastructure may change, the goal of this chapter remains to raise some questions and concerns about what it means to archive evidence of reading long-term and to provide some strategies for guiding students through understanding how they can maintain or destroy archives of their learning. After all, what we must keep at the fore of any conversation about maintaining records of our reading is that each individual should have the agency and freedom to decide how and where they want those records maintained. As instructors, we can create spaces to receive and share our students' work, but we ultimately have to offer our students choice in where they decide to take their work after our courses and beyond.

## The Lifespan of Digital Archives

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Long-term compatibility of digital documents and file types with future operating systems or software is a major archival concern. Many digital files have become obsolete with unreadable file extensions and the contents of boutique file types wither into obsolescence. Keeping track of which file types can open in which applications may feel like a struggle, and I can see why many readers may feel reluctant to move their reading practices to digital spaces. After all, nothing is quite as easy (and perhaps even as safe) as storing some notes in a paper filing cabinet or on a bookshelf: look up or pull open a drawer, locate the file or the book with the appropriate information, and voila! You're done. Plus, you can lock a filing cabinet, keep the key in a protected space, and move along with piece of mind. Yet physical space is a precious commodity. We can't assume that all of our students can keep cabinets and shelves of things. Many of them may be in living situations where they are constantly economizing space and only keeping the material goods that they absolutely know that they would like to hold on to forever. In those cases, the value of storing documents from class work may not seem immediately evident and the lifespan of documents becomes rather short indeed. Not to mention that paper itself is also a fragile technology. An accidental coffee spill or a significant tear can render paper documents completely unreadable.

Some file types have become more standardized across platforms, operating systems, and devices over the years, and it's likely that as a reader, you will instantly recognize many of them. You can invite your students to store files in these file extensions. For example, PDFs, or portable document

files, are readable across devices and operating systems and can be read in a variety of software applications. Similarly, files with .html extensions can be read in any browser, since they are file types designed to be read within a universal web interface. If users have the option to download and extract the source code from their files, they have an even more secure solution; although reading source code requires the ability to understand how the language of source code operates, source code itself is the most “original” form a file type can take. The point is that many files don’t necessarily have to be lost and gone forever as long as consumers understand how to save and export their files in a variety of formats. Plus, with cloud-based storage, storing standard archivable files is getting easier than it has been in the past.

Part of our task as educators who are asking students to produce, comment upon, and store their readings is to grow increasingly aware of what steps we all may need to take to preserve and move our documents across different spaces rather than simply expect our digital files to stay the same over time. This is, perhaps, not all that different than the steps we may need to employ to store paper in some ways; if our own paper copy of a handout or article gets damaged by a coffee spill or an unfortunate tear and we have no other backup copies, we lose access to that article. Just as we would rely on a backup to avoid having to rely on the coffee-stained or torn copy, we also need to make sure we have ways to back up and restore digital files from inevitable material wear and tear. To put it another way, museum archivists must preserve papers under glass so they do not degrade entirely; we must become the museum archivists of our digital work. We have to learn about our preservational environments to ensure that the things that really matter to us are preserved and stored in spaces that we can

remember, that we can understand, and that, importantly, we can control as consumers and archivists.

The *control* piece is what gets complicated by the constantly shifting landscape of who or what has access to the spaces and tools for preserving digital documents. In fact, while teaching in higher education, I've noticed an odd paradox in how we talk to students about the permanence and agency of their work. On the one hand, we warn our students that anything and everything they compose online is relegated to permanence. Post a picture of yourself at a wild party? That image might impact your ability to find employment forever. But on the other hand, when we ask our students to turn in work to our learning management system or put it in some other online storage space, we somehow forget that this work is just as permanent. In this case, however, we don't ascribe students with the agency to determine where their work winds up. Many students, I suspect, simply trust that their instructors are making a choice for their benefit about where their work goes. That may often be true, but as educators, we need to understand how to maintain that trust and not unwittingly violate it.

To be clear, I don't think it's a bad thing for instructors to navigate how students submit, share, and distribute their work in the space of a class. In fact, part of creating a learning experience for students is giving them some orientation to how they need to engage in digital spaces to contribute successfully. But what I think we as instructors must do a better job of is (1) understanding the tools our campus has purchased licenses to (e.g., the learning management system, third-party file storage solutions) and (2) giving students options about where and how they can submit and store their work so that they can opt out if they have concerns.

If I think back to what I would have done in college if I had been given a clear opportunity to digitize my reading notes or evidence of my learning, I'm not sure I would have understood the implications of the decisions I would have had to make to do so. Indeed, I imagine that any concerns with privacy or the possibility of my writing becoming data for an educational technology company's profits would not have crossed my mind. Of course, those thoughts wouldn't have crossed my mind partly because conversations about data privacy and online surveillance were not really happening in popular media when I was a college student (or at least not in the circles I was part of). But I think even if those conversations had been happening at the time, the connection may still not have been clear for me.

It's possible that I may have understood some of the implications of my academic data being generalized for company profits. But in all likelihood, I probably would not have wrapped my head around the fact that when I consented to a company's data policy, it often meant I was making my content visible to millions of bots, which then isolate patterns and trends that could be generalized to reduce my own agency in what information I would like revealed about my work (or myself) moving forward. To that end, I also don't think I would have had the skills or insight to decide how I could make choices to store my data in safe ways. Although being online is an activity that, in and of itself, means giving up more privacy about our personal lives than many consumers think it does, there are some ways that we can control where and how our information gets stored, shared, and accessed. Unfortunately, the reality, as of this book's writing, is that consumers themselves bear the burden of educating themselves about what it means to control one's own privacy on the web. That said, if we can



help students recognize some of the small ways that they can reclaim some agency over their personal information online, and particularly the kind of information that aligns with their learning, the better.

You can see, perhaps, that I'm wrestling with a major conundrum about reading online today. I see the tremendous potential in being able to store, track, and archive records of what we read and how we read online, especially when it comes to reflecting on what we've read or how particular moments of reading may shape how we understood what we read. I also think that reading online can be considered an equity opportunity for our institutions, to make sure that students can access the same information across the platforms and devices that we know they have access to. Yet I recognize the potential danger in encouraging students, and anyone really, to maintain records of reading in spaces where those records may be exploited. Understanding how and where that exploitation can happen is perhaps a first step in acknowledging and responding to this potential danger.

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### Understanding How Privacy Matters for Reading Online

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When it comes to reading, concerns with the privacy of our archives and potential annotations therein may not necessarily be at the forefront for either students or educators. In fact, because silent reading is often perceived as an intensely private and internal process, we may not even consider how our reading behaviors can, in fact, be very public, especially when they happen online. Yet online reading can be tracked and remembered in several ways, for better or

for worse. For example, when you read an article on a web browser, the web browser you're using maintains a history of everything you've accessed. That might not necessarily be a bad thing; I've often used the History feature in my web browser to recover the link to an article I accidentally closed without saving.

But accessing what users have read via browser history can be weaponized. In the K–12 education system especially, school districts are increasingly adopting surveillance solutions where students' web browser searches are flagged for disturbing content. Depending on the severity of the flagged content, students' families may be contacted or the system may route the student directly to the police or other law enforcement (Beckett, 2019; Haskins, 2019). Although school systems tend to adopt these surveillance solutions as a "safety" measure, privacy experts and educators alike are concerned that these kinds of surveillance mechanisms could reinforce the many biases that schools may already have toward over-disciplining students of color and/or students with disabilities (Beckett, 2019; Balingit, 2018). Chris Gilliard has pointed out how a web based on surveillance and personalization algorithmically reinforces biased assumptions, particularly about people of color and low-income individuals. In fact, he coined the term *digital redlining* to describe the ways in which "technological policies, practices, pedagogy, and investment decisions . . . enforce class boundaries and discriminate against specific groups" (Gilliard, 2017) He gives several examples of what digital redlining can look like in practice: locking students out behind information paywalls that prevent students from accessing information, "customizing" particular Google search results based on IP addresses from particular regions or devices, and controlling

the visibility of particular kinds of information via platform algorithms in social networks.

Social networks keep careful track of user engagement within the network, down to every individual click that users make, in order to change its algorithms and to “personalize” the kind of content that users see the next time that they log in. Similarly, publishers of online articles (from popular magazines, newspapers, and blogs to library databases and scholarly warehouses) track where users find their articles via small pieces of data, called cookies, which follow users across the web. Although algorithmically generated recommendations can be useful for finding related articles and resources, social networks especially profit off of knowing where, when, and how users interact on their platforms, often selling that data to other third-party ventures to secure more profit. Our reading behaviors, in other words, can generate a lot of capital for others while also impacting what our informational landscapes look like. More importantly, surveillance acts both within school systems and outside of them contribute to algorithmic discrimination, wherein problematic assumptions are made based on what readers are accessing. Reading is not safe to everyone, precisely because of the ways in which simply clicking on and accessing particular pieces of information can shape the kinds of stories that may be visible thereafter. And that should, rightfully, make us feel angry.

Although institutional learning management systems (LMSs) are protected behind institutional log-ins, which is more private than using publicly available cloud storage (at the moment of this writing, name brand examples of this include Box, Dropbox, and Google Drive), even LMSs themselves operate under data policies that may not necessarily keep work entirely within the student’s or even

the instructor's control. When a student graduates from an institution, they lose access to the work that they submitted to the LMS. Instructors, too, lose access to their past course content as they move to a different institution. Many educators argue that the LMS is designed to be an extractive system that creates walls around student data to limit and reduce access to their intellectual property (Beck, Grohowski, & Blair, 2017; Stommel, 2017; Watters, 2014). As data becomes a more valued commodity, many corporately owned institutional learning management systems extract data inputted into the learning management system to engage in machine learning approaches and generate data profiles that may allow the companies to sell said data to third-party educational technology vendors interested in developing ever more digital solutions for student learning (Hill, 2019). Although the field of LMS operations continues to change quickly, I encourage all educators to research their institution's LMS and look for as much information as you can about privacy policies therein.

I'm not going to mince words here: data collection in educational environments is predatory *unless* students and instructors have full and equal access to the data collected. Unless students and instructors can review, revise, and redact whatever they've shared and submitted within institutional learning management systems and have full control over how their data is being used, processed, and disseminated, we have to be extremely wary of educational technology solutions for storing student work. To the extent that we can, we may aspire to building what Amy Collier (2017) calls a *digital sanctuary*, or spaces in higher education institutions where students can be free of constant device surveillance and an invasion into their privacy and intellectual property.

As instructors, we need to be vigilant about protecting our students' privacy, ensuring that they have options for how their work is shared with others and how permanent that work might appear to people outside of the university setting. It is, in fact, law—Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), if you're not familiar—that we keep students' grades and assessments private. But beyond the law, we have an ethical obligation to give students agency over how their intellectual work is shared, disseminated, and stored. I say deliberately that this is an ethical obligation because instructors wield power in a student-teacher relationship; within this hierarchy, instructors must be mindful of that power's impact on how students perceive of doing work for our classes. We must not abuse that power by requiring all students to share their work in public venues or in permanent spaces, even if we think that it will expand their notion of what's possible in terms of producing and sharing valuable intellectual labors. We can't pretend to know our students' relationships with public discourse and, more seriously, we can't make choices for them if casting our students' engagement in broader publics may, in fact, be dangerous to them.

When students are producing academic work, they are often experimenting with new ideas. Regardless of the discipline students are in or the work they're producing, we certainly don't want students to feel like their works in progress or the evidence of their learning process are both immutable and publicly available. Indeed, we want students to feel like learning is, indeed, a *process* where the evidence of that learning can change and the products created from that learning remain under the student's control. Further still, no one moment of learning necessarily needs to be ossified in time and, in fact, it's often better when that

learning is *not* created as or perceived as an artifact completely ossified in time. Nothing is perhaps more paralyzing for a good learning process than feeling as though one's initial, rough thinking is getting scrutinized by someone, or that there's no way to revise work that remains in progress.

We have to show that our perceptions of what's permanent online and what isn't are largely driven by the social contexts of where, how, and why we produce certain kinds of intellectual work. In that process, we also have to help students understand just *how* they can keep track of the evidence of their learning and give them options, should they so value them, for keeping track of their own learning as it's happening. It is our ethical obligation as instructors to help students know how they can collect the work they've done and how they can maintain control over that work in their own spaces.

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### How We Empower Students to Make Choices about Archiving Digital Reading

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For so many of our students, academic spaces, particularly in higher education contexts, are extremely unfamiliar and intimidating; it should come as no surprise to anyone reading this book that colleges and universities are not always welcoming places to all students. Encountering the new technologies that instructors expect them to use can make adjusting to a university environment even harder for some students. Even for those students who have had ample exposure to using technology for learning, their prior learning environments may have approached using technology differently than university classroom environments do. Inevitably, students also have had different levels of exposure to and

experiences with understanding how and whether their data is stored and tracked within different kinds of learning management systems and educational environments. It is important to assume the best in our students because anyone who consumes and shares information online is continuing to learn about the best ways to do so. Given all of these differing experiences, contexts, and orientations to learning in digital spaces, it is all the more important that we begin conversations about storage, archiving, and data privacy by showing that we trust our students. But what does it mean to put trust in our students exactly?

For starters, it means being transparent about why we've built the online learning spaces we have or why we've distributed digital readings in particular platforms. Showing transparency does not have to take a long time: it simply means we acknowledge and name how we've chosen to distribute readings for our students and how, in kind, we've made choices about where they might store and keep track of notes or thoughts on their readings throughout our courses. Describing our rationale for where, when, and why we want students to archive their learning and explaining the value of building that archive is part of how we can build shared understanding and trust with our students. By making our decisions about how we design classes and select reading assignments visible to our students, we also help students more clearly see the value of reading activities.

Another component to building trust around creating archival spaces for reading may also mean being vulnerable and sharing with students what our own practices and decisions are around how we store, archive, and maintain records of our own reading. I think it is easy for our students to forget that, as instructors, we are also often active readers. Even if it is not explicitly our job to do *research* as

part of our job titles or responsibilities, we are all necessarily reading, writing, and exploring new ideas as part of our everyday work as educators (you're definitely one of these people if you're reading this book!). To that end, we can help students better understand what it *looks* like to do this work at the nuts-and-bolts level if we share our own tools, workflows, and practices.

I realize that perhaps the idea of sharing your own reading workflows and processes (digital and otherwise) can strike a pang of anxiety in your heart. "What if my own workflow is messy and unclear?" you might wonder. "What if I don't fully understand the implications of where I store and disseminate my own intellectual work? What if I don't see myself as a model of digital research and writing work for my students? What if I'm still refining my approaches to reading and writing in digital spaces?"

There's a short answer to all these questions that I hope is a comfort: don't worry about it. There remains tremendous value in helping your students understand how you work, archive, and take notes on your ideas no matter how messy, complicated, and convoluted your workflow is. Integrity and vulnerability go a long way toward building trust in pedagogy, so if you feel like your own research and writing workflows could use some overhaul, or you could develop a greater understanding of the platforms you're using and how those platforms handle data privacy, great! Sharing your own uncertainty and your own critical questions creates valuable bonds with your class community and helps raise the kinds of critical questions that students did not even know that they could ask. In other words, simply talking about what it means to archive our own work, including the challenges, the limitations, and the affordances we face, is valuable. If we want our students to



make thoughtful choices about how, where, and why they work in particular ways, we have to model that thoughtfulness ourselves.

Where and how we spend our screen time is an intensely contested issue because it comes down to what our values are and what material conditions are available to us that shape those values. If we are privileged enough to have options about where and how we produce particular kinds of work, we have to weigh the implications of our choices and what they might mean for our ability to complete work in sustained ways. If we are not privileged enough to have these options about where and how we produce work, we *still* have to weigh the implications of our choices while also finding ways to compensate for the inherent limitations of whatever choice we make.

I wish that I had an answer for archiving our work that was as simple as: “Here’s the one surefire way to ensure that your workflow is engaged, sustained, well managed, and well archived.” I’m afraid I don’t really have an answer to that question because our technology continues to change. Plus, the more options we have available to us, the more choices we have to weigh. As long as surveillance capitalism dictates much of the educational technology market, we also have to remain vigilant about researching where and how our data gets used.

Sometimes it’s simpler to ignore the options, to continue tried and true workflows. I’m sympathetic, after all, to the concept that if something is not broken, there is no need to fix it. And I also don’t want to advocate for changing how we work and store ideas just because there *are* other solutions available. With that said, I think that there is a benefit in keeping an open mind to options for learning and working, and for exploring new ways of doing work,

particularly if we recognize that our own methods have critical limitations or if our own methods close us off to an understanding of how our students, colleagues, or collaborators may be working.

The value in exploring new ways of storing, archiving, and tracking our knowledge is simple: it allows us to understand the people who use a diverse array of techniques. When we are in the role of educators, we are, perhaps, in the most critical position of all to examine, evaluate, and experience new ways of working and learning for ourselves so that we can better understand how to help the myriad, diverse students we see in our classrooms.

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### Strategies for Archiving Evidence of Learning and Reading Online

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We've weighed a lot of the challenges and complexities of storing evidence of reading online already, and we've covered some of the ways in which you might empower students to make some of their own choices about reading and archiving evidence of their reading online. I think it is still important, however, to offer some really concrete advice to students who want to carefully track their reading about some ways they can do this without too much additional stress. Let me first say that the student suggestions I provide here about archiving evidence of learning and reading online are very much grounded in the moment in which I'm writing this book. Because our materials can have such a tremendous impact on our techniques, my perspectives and strategies are shaped by this moment in time when cloud-based computing is ubiquitous; files are now available anywhere there's an internet connection. Although we cannot always count

on having documents from the internet at our fingertips, the current conditions seem to suggest that we can count on having access more often than not. What this means is that our perspective toward archives is largely shaped by an understanding that cloud-based storage is a stable way of ensuring that documents can be shared, accessed, and preserved anywhere that internet access is available.

With this perspective on the material conditions (and limitations) in mind, I offer a few suggestions for how we might have conversations with our students about archiving evidence of our reading and learning:

- *Encourage students to come up with a clear and consistent way of storing files, documents, and activities for a particular class context.* How many of us are guilty of downloading files from the internet and then simply saving them to a desktop or to the generic Documents folder on the hard drive? Or how many of us let downloaded documents simply languish in a temporary Downloads file in the internet browser? It is all too easy for us to forget that digital documents often need to be sorted and stored in order for us to keep track of them. The same goes, of course, for any readings and reading notes that we may take over the course of a class. Therefore, at the very beginning of a course term, I'd encourage you to include a specific note to students somewhere that encourages them to label and develop clear and consistent ways of storing and tracking documents. Not everyone necessarily wants to store and file documents in identical ways, but a core digital competency is understanding where files go and how to find and restore usable and productive files. Although it is too heavy-handed and didactic to require students to name and file documents, you can provide a reminder for students, drawing explicit attention to how important it is for

them to develop an organizational file system so they can track the learning they glean from readings in your class.

- *Develop mindfulness around metadata and how that metadata might impact future storage or understanding of the document (and its annotations).* Metadata is often something that we ignore in our documents, especially when we're focusing on the *content* of the document rather than how or when the document was created. For the most part, those most interested in metadata on college campuses are librarians, but as the lifespan of our documents grows longer online, and as the origins of digital documents become of even greater critical interest, spending just a bit more time helping our students identify the metadata of their documents may help them stay better organized. For example, a short amount of time in class might be spent showing students how to access the About information on a word-processed document so that they can see when and how the document was produced and how large the file size is. If students know this information, they may also understand where they want to store the document for their own files or how they want to keep track of multiple versions of a particular document. By helping students orient to the metadata of their documents, we may also help them better understand the metadata of *other* documents, too, a skill that may help them interpret the context for other documents that they may encounter online and in their research.
- *Offer students a list of tools or resources for storing, sharing, and archiving documents and notes.* Our students' reading, archiving, and note-taking practices typically stem from whatever experiences they cultivated during high school. To that end, some students have experienced a wide range of exposure to various tools and technologies for storing

and annotating their readings, whereas others have had limited access to particular learning tools. As an instructor, curating a list of resources that students may use to store, share, and archive documents and notes ensures that students are equally aware of how to access information or resources that may benefit their learning. Whereas tools alone will not necessarily make students good readers, these tools may offer students some avenues for exploring their thinking and deepen their insights in ways that may not have been possible before with the resources available to them. I have a recommended list of tools, current as of the publication in this book, in the appendix, but you may find it useful to create your own. A resource list may be something you include in a syllabus or it can be an additional document you give to your students at the beginning of a term. Just as you might direct students to resources on campus, like a tutoring center, a list of online tools may give them avenues for supporting their work in your class.

It is worth noting that archiving evidence of learning has most visibly taken form in a particular pedagogical framework: ePortfolio pedagogy. ePortfolios (electronic portfolios), broadly defined, take the form of web spaces, like a blog or a website, that students populate with artifacts of their learning from either a particular course or a group of courses they've taken during their college career. ePortfolios empower students to collect, curate, and reflect upon anything from research papers to low-stakes writing assignments to lab reports to problem sets. Exactly what goes into the ePortfolio is up to the student and is often framed by how the instructor introduces and integrates the ePortfolio assignment into a particular course or term. ePortfolios often take the form of a final capstone project in a particular

course, but they can also be used as low-stakes interventions for students, merely allowing them to keep track of what they're producing, reflecting on, or working on throughout a course. Instructors can also use ePortfolios for student advising to help students reflect on how the courses they've taken throughout college may reflect their values, interests, and goals. The possibilities for ePortfolios are many, but primarily, they all invite students to be conscious of what they've learned throughout a course and of how their learning can be transferred to contexts both within and beyond the course itself.

An ePortfolio is but one powerful tool students can use to create a mindful, structured archive of reflections on course readings or other kinds of work they produced throughout a term. Using an ePortfolio is a powerful technique, and for it to be successful, it is essential that you carefully scaffold class activities and frame the value of ePortfolio as a project (see Eynon & Gambino, 2017; and Penny Light, Chen, & Ittelson, 2011, for more on this). Regardless of how instructors encourage students to archive their work, whether it is through ePortfolio pedagogy or through smaller technical interventions, one thing is clear: encouraging students to keep records of their work and to look back on it is critical to making learning experiences memorable, transferrable, and, above all, accessible to diverse groups of learners.

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## Looking Ahead

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Students learn and remember content in a variety of ways and, as instructors, it is not up to us to dictate the terms for how students retain and transfer understandings that they glean from particular reading assignments. What

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we can make space for, however, are a variety of avenues through which students can work to apply, reflect upon, and remember what they learn from their readings. By opening up options for reading, storing, and archiving ideas in digital spaces, we move students closer to participating in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) pedagogy, a framework that invites flexible learning environments for our neurodiverse students. It is simply not possible for every pedagogical strategy we take to reach every single learner, but the more options that we can reasonably provide to our students, the more equitable we make our educational practices and the more students we can reach. Helping students understand how they can archive their work is but one way to reach more of them where we are. As we continue to think more about the possibilities of reading in digital spaces, we get even closer to finding more ways that students can become engaged in reading.