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Reviewing the progress of a campus-wide e-portfolio rollout

Sarah R. Lambert
University of Wollongong, slambert@uow.edu.au

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Abstract

This poster updates the community on the progress of the campus-wide e-portfolio rollout at the University of Wollongong, since it was reported on at the ASCILITE 2006 conference. During 2007 additional Faculties have come on board to develop a Faculty or program customised template and to release this to their students, and additional Careers Service programs have also developed e-portfolios. By August 2007 around 1200 eportfolios have been released to students and around 150 have been released to staff. 2 early adopters (teachers) have been interviewed to discuss how they integrated the eportfolio into the context of their particular subjects, and reflecting on how this could be improved. Plans for further development and dissemination are discussed including links to the Carrick funded national e-portfolio study.

Keywords

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Reviewing the progress of a campus-wide e-portfolio rollout

Sarah Lambert
Learning Design Unit
Centre for Educational Development and Interactive Resources
University of Wollongong

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Keywords: e-portfolio, evaluation, assessment, professional skills, graduate skills

Background

The history, context and drivers of the campus-wide e-portfolio implementation at the University of Wollongong (UoW) was reported on at the ASCILITE 2006 conference. This work included a substantial literature review and framed the project in the context of tertiary institution assessment practices, introducing take-up models evident in the e-portfolio community ranging from optional usage to fully assessed. (Lambert & Corrin, 2006).

The UoW e-portfolio campus-wide rollout was launched in March 2007 receiving wide media coverage. The new Graduate School of Medicine was the first to use the tool – all 83 inaugural students were given access to e-portfolio as part of their program requirements. A range of Faculty and discipline based e-portfolio templates have subsequently been customised for different cohorts of students within Faculties. Graphics and learning outcomes are also customised for each cohort.

E-portfolio template: Standard features plus customised elements

A common set of items have emerged as being broadly useful for most academic integrated uses of e-portfolio. These include a reflective journal tool, a CV folder, folders for university and work/community materials, a "How to" folder of support resources including self-running movies, and a demonstration 'binder' encouraging students to present selections of their work for particular audiences. Other items including customised folders and 'binders' can be added, that meet particular discipline or assessment needs.
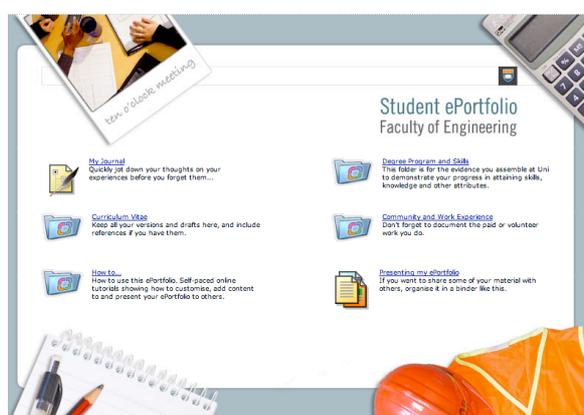

Figure 1: e-portfolio template showing common items

2007 e-portfolio cohorts at UoW

The following table shows information about the 2007 cohorts of student e-portfolio users.

Subject no and name	No of students	Links to assessment
MARK270 Services Marketing	300	Requirement of 2 assessment tasks (a skills-check and final group project reflective report) with strong encouragement to put items in e-portfolio.
MECH311 Mechanical Engineering Design	80	Required to upload final project report (assessed) to e-portfolio. Weekly design log task was put online in eLearning Space and students encouraged to save best postings to e-portfolio. Students prompted to use the presentation 'binder' in e-portfolio for final project presentation assessment ie used to house a sequence of drawings in progress, docs, and the final reports as a permenant record of the entire development of the project. Useful for showing to prospective employers.
ENVI391/491 Environmental Science and Systems	15	Students are required to prepare an e-portfolio as part of the overall course requirements. A final individual reflective report asks students to discuss how the e-portfolio demonstrates their progress towards the work-related skills or 'goals' attributed to a Science graduate. In addition, students are prompted to upload a major report for the subject to the e-portfolio.
MACS337 Hollywood in Context	108	Use is optional, but prompted by lecturer in the context of career and skills development discussions as part of the course.
MACS219 Cinema In Australia	174	Demonstrated in a lecture, and use encouraged for students developing a reflective portfolio of online participation.
GHMB950 Reflective Practice 1	25	Optional use, but subject has a strong professional skills development focus so seen as relevant especially as e-portfolio pre-loaded with Nurses official professional skills inventory used for accreditation of nurses.
ARTS301 Arts internship	25	Assessed and integrated into entire subject requirement to document outcomes of workplace internship experience. Assessment items include e-portfolio and resume with requirement for external review by internship supervisor, ongoing online journal in the e-portfolio and internship report posted to e-portfolio.
Practical Legal Training (postgraduate units for law graduates who want to register as solicitors.)	60	Compulsory 'hurdle task' at end of program - used to review sequence of legal documents and files prepared as a part of the 4 subjects taught in the program. Marked as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Additional uses for career development prompted but optional.
Graduate School of Medicine	80	Some assessments involve specific entries to the e-portfolio. Students map e-portfolio entries to the course's predefined learning outcomes. Students expected to use e-portfolio during their clinical placements.
Careers Service Programs	300	Whilst use is optional, students are trained, supported and prompted to use e-portfolio to document project and program outcomes, which are heavily graduate skills focussed.

Evaluating with staff: Video interviews

The project is in a phase of iterative review. Dr Kate Bowles from the Faculty of Arts, and Ms Joanne Joyce from the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Science were interviewed to canvass their experience of teaching with e-portfolio, the pros and cons of optional versus assessed take-up models, and how each might be improved.

In Dr Bowles' video interview she discussed the problems of asking students to do e-portfolio on top of their already busy workload. While there would always be a small percentage of highly motivated students who would utilise the e-portfolio of their own accord, and the small percentage of students who would not use the e-portfolio due to personal preferences to minimise technology, Dr Bowles reflected that the majority of students are open to it if we show them it is important, and valued as part of the teaching. Dr Bowles reflected that: "There is a broader middle ground of students who are not saying I

don't want this, they are saying that unless it is compulsory, I don't have time to figure out if it is useful. If we think that it is useful for them, we have to find ways of making time for them to do it. The only time that we can give them is class time or assessment time, that's the only time that is ours to share with them." (Bowles, 2007).

Figure 2: Dr Kate Bowles in her video interview

Ms Joyce's video interview highlighted a different perspective, that optional student-driven use in the context of her skills and careers-focussed post-graduate students was a viable and preferable option to mandating or assessing it. Ms Joyce reflected that*:* "It was pleasing to hear the positive feedback from the students in GHMB950 about the opportunity to use the eportfolio tool this session. It appeared that they were appreciative of the tool and its relevance to their professional development." (Joyce, 2007).

Future plans

To generate good practice examples of e-portfolio use by different disciplines a student e-portfolio competition is being held and will be judged in November 2007. As the word spreads on campus via various presentations and workshops, media, and website additional unforseen uses in support of staff development programs have also emerged for e-portfolio and are being explored. A review of other e-portfolio projects has been undertaken, and cases identified that are focused on assessment and learning outcomes integration. Linkages to other universities and their e-portfolio projects have also been made, in particular involvement with a successful Carrick funded national and international scoping study for e-portfolio which is underway and will be completed by July 2008.

References

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