



The Role of Electronic Portfolio in Education

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ABSTRACT

Electronic portfolio as a tool of educational technology helps for learning. Everyone can use it to improve especially teachers, professors and students. Universities and schools should apply it for progressing of their staff and students. This article speaks about it and its advantages.

Keywords: electronic Portfolio, education, educational technology, visual tool

Introduction

An electronic portfolio, e-portfolio or digital portfolio, is a collection of electronic evidence assembled and managed by a user, usually on the Web. Such electronic evidence may include inputted text, electronic files, images, multimedia, blog entries, and hyperlinks. E-portfolios are both demonstrations of the user's abilities and platforms for self-expression, and, if they are online, they can be maintained dynamically over time. Some e-portfolio applications permit varying degrees of audience access, so the same portfolio might be used for multiple purposes. The web serves as an ideal home for electronic portfolios to be shared with all different kinds of audiences. The main purpose is to provide a platform where people are forced to communicate concisely. This communication is vital in a portfolio so that others are easily able to see the energy, passion, and focus of an individual. In the digital age where there is a wealth of knowledge at one's fingertips, the e-portfolio is just one more way that we are able to spread information. The speed and ease in which e-portfolios can be viewed is just one more example of crowd accelerated innovation. Traditional portfolios used to be mostly written. Electronic portfolios are composed of writing, as well as pictures, audio and videos. Therefore, more than just words are being communicated. One is now able to see gestures, tone, and design. First, the e-portfolio helps a person find a crowd where they can share a common interest. Next, it provides light and visibility, focusing on what that individual is capable of helping to focus on individuals' capabilities. Finally the e-portfolio fuels passion and desire in those that are viewing it. According to Anderson (2010), e-portfolios can then go viral and be passed on to be easily viewed by many on the web.

Many students are using multimedia such as: Face book, MySpace, Twitter, and texting. These are all informal settings where students must get their point across. The electronic portfolio on the other hand is a more formal setting where students must apply both their knowledge of how the web works and the message that they want to convey. Many universities and schools are currently working to make sure that students are gaining practice and experience with electronic portfolios so that they are able to use them to the best of their ability. An e-portfolio can be seen as a type of learning record that provides actual evidence of achievement. Learning records are closely related to the Learning Plan, an emerging tool that is being used to manage learning by individuals, teams, communities of interest, and organizations. To the extent that a Personal Learning Environment captures and displays a learning record, it also might be understood to be an electronic portfolio.

Students have been taught to create digital identities using presentation software or tools to create web pages. More recently the use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) in schools and universities has led to an increased activity in the creation of e-portfolios for a variety of reasons. Most of these e-portfolios, however, are retained within the VLE and are not easily accessed outside the VLE. This results in problems of exporting data and related interoperability issues. An alternative approach is to use a system externally hosted to any institution. This permits transition through the various stages of education and employments and even into retirement.

Some E-portfolios can be used for presentations, a number of different assignments and most popularly, class studies. Others may be used within an education setting for assessment and accreditation, such as an institutional electronic portfolio. E-portfolios, like traditional portfolios, can facilitate students' reflection on their own learning, leading to more awareness of learning strategies and needs (Moon, 2005). Results of a comparative research, by Wesel and Prop (2008) between paper based portfolios and electronic portfolios in the same setting, suggest use of an electronic portfolio leads to better learning outcomes.

(cited in en.wikipedia.org)

The use of portfolios (or specifically portfolio assessment) in education began in the late 1980s (Barrett, 2007). Lowenthal, White, and Cooley (2011) articulated the use of portfolios did not come into widespread practice until the late 1990s. Since that time; electronic portfolios in particular have become increasingly popular. Some have even gone so far to suggest that e-Portfolios have the potential to change higher education significantly. Educators have identified a number of benefits of e-Portfolios. These benefits include experience using and learning about computer applications, easy access and updates to portfolios, promoting reflection, supporting formative assessment, tracking student learning, and performance for accreditation and program evaluation purposes, improving communication between faculty and students, landing a job after graduation and fostering lifelong learning to name a few. Gathercoal, Love, Bryde, and McKean (2002) suggest implementing an e-Portfolio system is easier when an academic unit already uses a paper portfolio. P. Seldin, Miller, and C. Seldin (2010) contend that it can be harder to transition from a paper-based portfolio to an e-Portfolio system than it is to start from nothing because of the assumptions and ways of doing things that faculty and staff might carry with them. Some have even gone so far to suggest that e-Portfolios have the potential to change higher education significantly colleges and universities are rushing to find ways to use this tool there

are some sound reasons that programs, colleges, and universities express interest in, if not completely implement, an e-Portfolio system.

A teaching portfolio is a factual description of a professor's teaching strengths and accomplishments. It includes documents and materials that collectively suggest the scope and quality of a professor's teaching performance. The portfolio is to teaching what lists of publications, grants, and honours are to research and scholarship. The portfolio permits faculty to describe the unique circumstances of their courses and general approaches to teaching, explain their use of specific strategies and methods, and provide convincing evidence that they are effective (Seldin, Miller, & Seldin, 2010).

Batson (2002) believes that e-portfolio is a new wave of technology development in higher education. Freeing student work from paper and making it organized, searchable and transportable opens enormous possibilities for re-thinking whole curricula: the evaluation of faculty, assessment of programs, certification of student work, how accreditation works. In short, e-Portfolios might be the biggest thing in technology innovation on campus. Electronic portfolios have a greater potential to alter higher education at its very core than any other technology application we've known thus far. This tool brings to bear the native talents of computers—storage, management of data, retrieval, display, and communication—to challenge how to better organize student work to improve teaching and learning. It seems, on the surface, too good to be true. Students seem most interested in the ways e-Portfolios can flesh out their resumes, both before and after graduation. If internship interviewers or potential employers can see an online resume that includes views of a student's actual work, that student may be more likely to obtain the position. Students also want to see where they are in their college career regarding requirements. E-Portfolios can facilitate this. When students study for a test, they can review their own work and read the instructor's comments on their work. E-Portfolios will make this easier to do, especially over multiple semesters. If a student wants to transfer, the e-Portfolio data may ease the process of articulation with another college or university. After graduation, having their work still available to them in a university supported environment will provide ongoing value and help sustain the relationship with their alma mater. Faculty members also have a vested interest in electronic portfolios. Just as students do, professors can use such a tool as their own resume builder, providing more teaching data in their promotion and tenure reviews. Adding access to

the work students have done in the faculty member's classes can better make a case for teaching excellence, an area of review that has been historically under-documented and not sufficiently objective. When a student shows up in their office asking for a letter of reference two years after the pertinent course ended, the e-Portfolio can both help jog memory and provide a link in the letter of reference. Of course the primary benefit for faculty is to provide a tool to better manage, review, reflect, and comment on student work. For this purpose, an e-Portfolio is a major step forward. The educational value was their reflection on their own work, in becoming engaged once more in revising their papers.

Strivens (2007) states that e-portfolios help to foster an independent and autonomous way of thinking. People are forced to reflect on what they have learned and how they plan to build and improve in the future. This helps people to become more critical thinkers and helps them to develop their writing and multimedia skills.

There are three main types of e-portfolios, although they may be referred to using different terms:

developmental (e.g., working) : A developmental e-portfolio is a record of things that the owner has done over a period of time, and may be directly tied to learner outcomes or rubrics.

reflective (e.g., learning) : A reflective e-portfolio includes personal reflection on the content and what it means for the owner's development.

representational (e.g., showcase) : A representational e-portfolio shows the owner's achievements in relation to particular work or developmental goals and is, therefore, selective. When it is used for job application it is sometimes called Career portfolio.

The three main types may be mixed to achieve different learning, personal, or work-related outcomes with the e-portfolio owner usually being the person who determines access levels (en.wikipedia.org).

Conclusion

Portfolios are a step toward a more public, professional view of teaching and reflect teaching as a scholarly activity. There is no better reason to prepare a portfolio than to improve performance. Through this, everyone can see how he/she improves in his/her career and gets motivation and motive others.

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