

Symposium: International perspectives, case studies and collaborative strategies for developing ePortfolio concepts

Facilitators: Caroline Steel, University of Queensland, Gillian Hallam and Wendy Harper, Queensland University of Technology, Cathy Gunn, University of Auckland

Session summary

ePortfolios are a current 'hot topic' across the international higher education community. A study commissioned by ALTC (The Carrick Institute) investigated the range of ePortfolio implementation strategies in operation across Australia and internationally. The study report summarises the implications of these developments for institutional and cross-institutional initiatives and makes recommendations about how further development can best be supported.

The aims of the symposium are threefold:

- To raise participants' awareness of the range of ePortfolio strategies in current use across Australasia and around the world;
- To provide a forum for discussion of transferable design and implementation principles, including collaborative teaching and learning strategies, that reflect the cross disciplinary and sector-wide aspects of ePortfolio initiatives;
- To foster the sharing of knowledge and experience of ePortfolio use within a community of professional practice setting.

Three case studies and a summary of the ALTC Report set the parameters for discussion during the event. Case 1 presents an institutional approach to professional development for eportfolio use through engagement in a community of professional practice.

Case 2 presents a design-based research framework to align curriculum design with learning activities and outcomes in the form of graduate attributes using ePortfolios as a vehicle.

Case 3 presents a review of an institution-wide model of ePortfolio practice involving undergraduate, postgraduate, professional and academic staff.

The symposium provides a meeting place and an opportunity for dialog on the characterisation and implementation of ePortfolios for all those with current or potential interest in the application of this type of activity to support their work and that of their students. The exploration of different perspectives and examples will help participants to develop common understanding of the variety of ePortfolio uses, to learn what others are doing with portfolio-like activities, and to discover ways that teachers and students might want to take advantage of ePortfolios. These areas of common interest and strategies for future development, including ways to share experience across the sector, provide the focal point for discussion. The symposium will be highly interactive and conversational.

Those attending the session will be invited to discuss the questions:

- What strategies will encourage interested parties and institutions to work together to develop and implement ePortfolio focused educational approaches?
- What can different stakeholders in Australia/NZ higher education learn from the types of ePortfolio applications and models that are in place and under development around the world?
- Is there scope for collaboration amongst those in attendance at the session and if so, how can this be taken forward?
- Can a central organisation such as ALTC play a significant role in supporting a community of professional practice around eportfolio developments? If so, how would the nature of that role be defined?

The symposium will be advertised ahead of the conference via ascilite and other newsletters and mailing lists in order to generate interest and to encourage attendance and the sharing of experience by those already involved in ePortfolio initiatives in their own institutions.

At the symposium

- Gillian Hallam will introduce the framework and format for the ePortfolio symposium and provide context from the ALTC sponsored investigation and recommendations, in particular, the use of a Communities of Practice model to move forward national/ international agendas (15 mins)
- Gillian, Cathy and Caroline will outline case studies from the University of Auckland, Queensland University of Technology and the University of Queensland as a stimulus to further discussion (30 mins)
- Group activities led by all facilitators will identify areas of common interest and approach, and be invited to propose practical ways to progress cross institutional/ sector/ discipline and international collaborations (30 mins)
- Wrap up – identifying common ground and the methods and means to continue the conversations (15 mins)

Post symposium

An online space will be developed based on collaboratively defined methods to encourage people to continue their conversations

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Please cite as: Steel, C. et al. (2008). Symposium: International perspectives, case studies and collaborative strategies for developing the concept of ePortfolios In *Hello! Where are you in the landscape of educational technology? Proceedings ascilite Melbourne 2008*.
<https://doi.org/10.14742/apubs.2008.2503>

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