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- E-portfolios for learners
- E-portfolios for teachers and trainers
- E-portfolios for information technology and teaching and learning support staff
- E-portfolios for CEOs and managers

Further reading

Joint Information Systems Committee, (2008):

- *Effective practice with e-portfolios: Supporting 21st century learning*
- *InfoKit on e-portfolios*

These are available from <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/e-portfolios>

Acknowledgment

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Contact details

E-portfolios business activity

Website: flexiblelearning.net.au/e-portfolios
Blog: flexiblelearning.net.au/e-portfoliosblog

Australian Flexible Learning Framework

Phone: (07) 3307 4700
Fax: (07) 3259 4371
Website: flexiblelearning.net.au
Email: enquiries@flexiblelearning.net.au
Address: GPO Box 1326, Brisbane QLD 4001

e-portfolios

for employers, professional bodies
and career services



e-portfolios ... are becoming popular around the world as a tool to enhance learning and assist with personal career development. As an employer, a careers service staff member or a professional association officer, you might be considering how you can use an e-portfolio system to enhance your employment processes or the employability and career planning of learners at your organisation, or support professional accreditation activities. This guide will introduce you to e-portfolios, their benefits, and the issues you need to consider when incorporating an e-portfolio into your organisation.

What is an e-portfolio?

An *e-portfolio* is a learner-driven collection of digital objects demonstrating experiences, achievements and evidence of learning.

E-portfolios provide learners with a structured way of recording their learning experiences and work history.

E-portfolios can be developed quickly and easily to capture live evidence through the use of mobile phones and point-of-view devices, and can include a range of digital evidence such as audio, video, photographs and blogs.

Why use an e-portfolio?

The process of creating an e-portfolio can assist learners and employees to:

- develop a holistic overview of your learning, experiences and development beyond individual classes
- understand your learning and experience in terms of work-readiness
- extract evidence to demonstrate your learning and achievements
- identify skill gaps through review of and reflection on your e-portfolio content
- plan, set and review personal development targets.

Work-ready skills and e-portfolios

Our ability to build a competitive Australian workforce depends on our workers being able to apply a range of work-ready skills.

The creation of an e-portfolio encourages learners and employees to consider their training and experiences in a broad career development context.

A clear understanding of transferable skills, such as communication, problem solving, planning and organising, self-management, and teamwork, will assist workers not only in their transition from VET to the workplace, but also with their ongoing professional development and lifelong learning.

Work-ready skills are progressively developed in all formal and informal learning contexts, including paid employment, self employment, formal education and volunteering in the community.

Beyond our own shores, government policies focused on lifelong learning and work-readiness are driving e-portfolio development in regions such as Europe (particularly the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Scandinavia), Canada and New Zealand.

To make the most of these developments, employers, careers services and professional associations need to understand the value of work-ready skills as the lens through which

employees are increasingly viewing their own development and career paths.

Incorporating e-portfolios into your business and recruitment practices can provide a common language to communicate with both new graduates and established workers.

E-portfolios assist your business

E-portfolios can assist with a range of activities, including:

• Recruitment and appraisal processes

By assisting job applicants to contextualise and understand their development in terms of work-readiness, e-portfolios can enhance the quality of job or promotion applications, and streamline recruitment and candidate appraisal processes.

• Training needs and career planning

An e-portfolio can assist in the identification of skills gaps and training needs, enabling the provision of targeted employee development plans and thus a more efficient use of training budgets.

They may also encourage self reflection and longer term career planning and implementation for employees.

E-portfolios can therefore serve as a tool to support staff performance and workforce planning in your organisation.

• Continuing professional development

E-portfolios can be used to showcase evidence of continuing professional development activities for professional accreditation purposes, as well as to identify both short and long-term career development needs.

• RPL (recognition of prior learning)

The process of collecting evidence of learner and employee achievements for formal RPL documentation can be streamlined through the use of e-portfolios.

Skills, abilities and achievements for a particular learner or employee can be generated and aligned with the specific skill sets recognised by organisations, making the RPL process simpler and more efficient.

• Internationalisation of the workforce

With the increasing internationalisation of the workforce, cross-candidate comparisons can be complex, due to differing qualifications and professional requirements across countries.

E-portfolios provide a more comprehensive view of a candidate's abilities, fleshing out their formal qualifications to reveal more clearly the range of specific experiences and skills an individual has attained, thereby providing useful additional evidence on which to base recruitment decisions.

Understanding how e-portfolios work

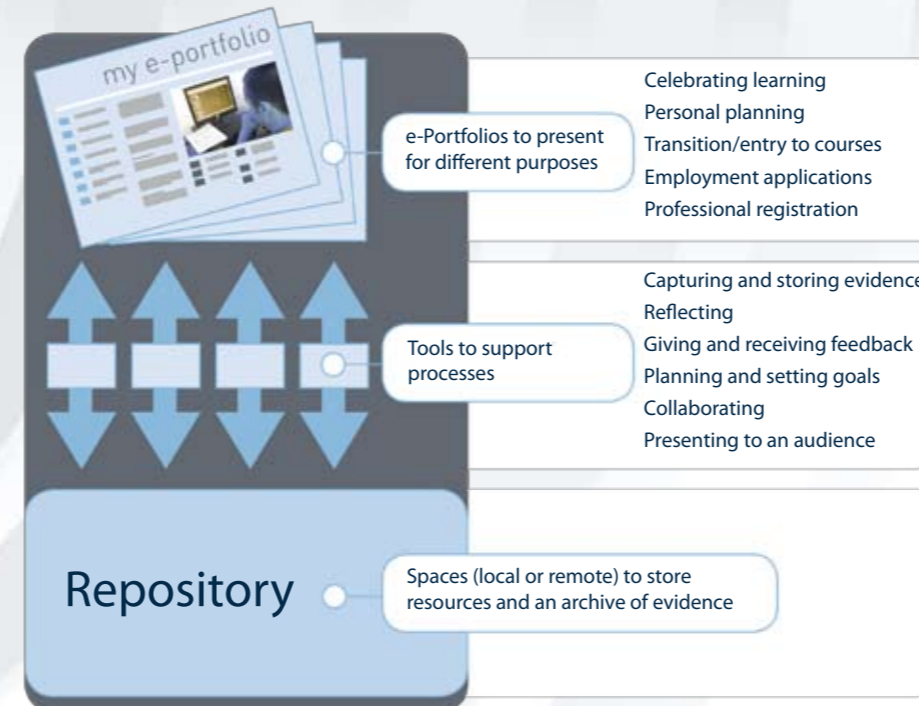


Figure 1 Adapted from Hartnell-Young et al. (2007) Impact study of e-portfolios on learning, Becta 2

Career services

Career services in many Australian VET organisations offer a wide range of information and resources to support learners in gaining employment, and to develop their career management skills.

E-portfolios provide a vital tool for working with teaching and training staff to prepare learners for field or work placements, work integrated learning activities, or employment in their chosen career.

The mission and role of most career services are in principle aligned with the goals of e-portfolio practice - eportfolios offer a way of presenting evidence of skills, reflecting on experiences and planning for future career opportunities. Consequently, many career service advisors are seen to be lead players in the introduction of e-portfolios in their organisation.

Professional associations

A growing number of professional associations are using the e-portfolio process to provide evidence of the attainment of professional standards, as in the medical sciences, nursing and teaching fields.

An e-portfolio allows a person to collate and reflect on their learning activities and work experience to substantiate their application for professional accreditation or for current members to demonstrate active and ongoing professional development to facilitate their reaccreditation as a professional.

Teacher registration processes, for example, encompass the requirement to present evidence of continuing professional development as a critical element of the renewal of registration, with a number of state and territory departments of education mandating an e-portfolio as the format to substantiate the development of critical reflective practice on professional issues.

Incorporating e-portfolios into your organisation

VET organisations around the world are encouraging their learners to develop e-portfolios. E-portfolios can be made available to employers during the recruitment process, providing a tailored view of candidate skills and experiences, aligned with the selection criteria for the position.

E-portfolios can support the staff performance review and career development process, or there may be opportunities to work with professional associations to develop a targeted continuing professional development program.

Use case: e-portfolios for career services

Career and employment services can be instrumental in helping to develop a learner's e-portfolio. Incorporated into any career development program, learners can be assisted to focus on different aspects of career development during their studies.

Career and employment programs which focus on workplace placement preparation, career preparation and management, and building workplace resilience can encourage learners to engage with their e-portfolio, from early in their training, through to maximising its use in the later stages of the course.

These types of programs can support partnerships with teaching and training staff wishing to embed career modules into the learning in order to increase familiarity with realistic career destinations.

This improves learner certainty about their course choice, and demonstrates how the learning develops capabilities and skills that will enhance employability. Learners encouraged to use their e-portfolio to record the development of their employability skills will make their learning more meaningful through its clear career relevance.

Use case: e-portfolios for professional associations

In line with the continuing complexity of the role of professionals, such as teachers and nurses, there is an evolving interest in the potential of e-portfolios to facilitate personal reflections and to document professional development. Many teaching and nursing personnel are choosing to undertake additional training to continue their professional development.

It is becoming popular for teaching and nurse practitioners to participate in a portfolio approach to registration, with candidates asked to provide evidence of their experiences and their reflective self-assessment to gain registration.

Use case: e-portfolios for employers

E-portfolios specifically support the retention of professional staff by clearly articulating career pathways and facilitating staff progression and promotion. An e-portfolio has been acknowledged as a key tool for staff to record evidence of their personal and professional development and to share this with their supervisors or managers as part of the performance planning and review process.