ePortfolios: A bridge from strategy to implementation

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Abstract:
ePortfolios are very much in the spotlight for national / institutional strategy and emergent academic practice initiatives. ALTC (Australia), JISC (UK), SURF (Netherlands) and the TEC (NZ) are among the major investors that signal a high national and international profile for this evolving field. However, recent research in parallel areas of educational innovation suggest that active support from some key stakeholders in strategy implementation initiatives may prove to be a weak (or missing) link. This potential weakness arises from the different perspectives and priorities held by people in positions towards the top end of the hierarchy, such as Dean, Associate Dean, Head of Department, DVC and other senior management. It is often exacerbated by a lack of appropriate structure and coherent process designed to ensure that the institutional context is conducive, in all aspects, to innovation of the kind proposed by the guiding strategy.

Recent research studies have identified tangible support from senior management and positional authority to influence changing practice as critical success factors in the dissemination of educational innovations. My aim in this presentation is to explore models or examples of ways to address this highly significant issue: to share experience of ways that senior academics and managers can be productively involved in the process of innovation around ePortfolio practice within institutions and across the sector. The outcome, I hope, will be at least the beginnings of a bridge that forges connections between strategic intent and front line practice in tangible and supportive ways. There may be more questions than answers at this stage, but the conversation starts here, where collective experience from many national sectors and institutional initiatives has come together with a common aim.