ePortfolios at CSU: exploring the benefits and realities of opensource

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Lesson 1:
Our users are a varied group of people
Some users wanted guidance in how to structure their portfolio…while others wanted to decide this for themselves.
Generally I’m a blank page type person. Even though the product I arrive at could be standard…the process that I go through is the important part. And when that is the case I have greater ownership than starting off with a template and just filling in the areas. That sort of detaches it for me…It’s the thinking process and the ownership.

Educational designer
Some users had a great deal of web design experience…others had none.
Everyone has got different skills in different areas … some people, you just mention eportfolios (and they’ll say) ‘what am I gonna do, I don’t know, I’m not good at this, I only worked out emails last week’…and our students aren’t all 18, they come from a wide variety of backgrounds, skills, capacities, age groups, so they have a wide and varied capacity to take on this sort of experience, so that has to be thought of as well I think. They are not part of the Net Generation.

Academic, Faculty of Arts
Some users wanted a highly reflective portfolio that documented their growth over time...others wanted a résumé.
I think reflection on teaching is important. And I’ve always been a reflective teacher but I’ve never had the need to write down those reflections. Having said that, whenever I’ve had to write down those reflections in order to write a paper or something I’ve found it useful… But taking the time out of my life to do that is really hard…we have to do more and more and more and taking the time to reflect and focus is something I do in the car when I’m driving but not something I do at work when I have 70 emails to answer.

Academic, Faculty of Business
OSP…

- Allowed us to choose from a variety of options – for different users, different purposes and different audiences

- Allowed us to customise within each of these options to suit individual needs
Lesson 2:
Opensource is empowering…once you get started
Our first portfolio: a professional portfolio for academics and educational designers
• Expandable
• Section names can be changed
• Sections can be left out
• Multiple presentations can be made for different audiences – with just a few clicks
A robust digital archive
A wizard guides the user through adding additional information to their archive through a number of forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional ePortfolio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wizard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>This section of your portfolio allows you to document your personal and biographical information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information</td>
<td>The first thing you’ll need to provide are the various ways you can be contacted. You can include more than one address (home and postal) and phone number. If you choose to use it, the ‘descriptor’ field will appear underneath your name at the top of your portfolio presentation. For example:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jim Beam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA, PhD (Sydney)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jim Beam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wine and Food Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career objective</td>
<td>A career objective helps you focus on what you want to want to achieve through your portfolio. For the readers of your portfolio, stating a career objective indicates what is important to you, and where you are heading with your career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each portfolio presentation can contain a different objective. At any one time, you may have 3, 4 or more career objectives from which you can choose. For example you may have one which is tailored for performance management presentations, another for promotion, and others to support specific job applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You might like to change the name of this field to something that is more representative of yourself and your career direction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guiding text

A form that has been created

Opportunities for private reflection and feedback
Sample form

Text boxes

Rich text editors

Attachments
Creating the presentation is a separate step to creating the portfolio archive.
Complete ownership over when and with whom the portfolio is shared

Downloadable as html pages
Lesson 3: Opensource means empowerment …and work!
To create the professional and student portfolios...

- Xml programming outsourced to rSmart – US contractor
- 4 weeks programming, around $10,000
Lesson 4:
Expect a bumpy ride…and ensure you have adequate IT resources to get back on track quickly
Lesson 5: The community makes opensource less alienating than home grown
Other areas we are working on…

• piloting a freeform portfolio with the Faculty of Education and Transferable Skills project
• promoting ‘portfolio thinking’ across the university
• policy issues – graduate attributes, privacy and protection…
• working with academics on developing learning portfolios for students – rural science, education and nursing – based on graduate attributes and industry standards and individual student goals
• professional development – reflective thinking, recognising attributes and critical selection of evidence
Thank you!

Philip Uys and I are here for the next 2 days. Please come and see us and we can talk more about OSP and our ePortfolio strategy at CSU

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