Goal 6: To identify areas in which further development could be supported and provide advice on how this might be achieved

2.1 Overview

In Chapter 1, an introduction was offered to ePortfolios at the broadest level. The question of a shared understanding was discussed, which led into an overview of ePortfolio ‘tools’ and ePortfolio ‘processes’, with particular reference to the teaching and learning points of view. The present chapter continues the prologue, to paint a broad brushed picture of the issues associated with the implementation of ePortfolios in universities. The diverse purposes of ePortfolios should not be forgotten: the term ‘ePortfolio’, as a singular, cohesive entity should be avoided, as stakeholders need to be aware of the different roles that ePortfolios (plural) can play in education in general, and in higher education in particular.

Learning, in theory and in practice, has changed dramatically over the past decade, challenging and enabling universities to consider the opportunities for new ways of delivering their education programs. The focus has moved away from the traditional teacher-centric model of discipline-specific classroom activities to embrace a learner-centred model that offers accessibility, adaptability, flexibility and personalisation and supports individual, social and collaborative processes. Developments in information and communications technologies (ICT) are changing the way we think about learning theories, strategies, activities and outcomes. In July 2008, British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta) the agency responsible for technology in learning and thus for delivering the UK government’s e-strategies for education and lifelong learning, announced that the use of technology in learning was ‘no longer optional’ (Becta, 2008). Becta argues that technology has the potential to transform learning in all areas of formal and informal education, so that:

\[
\text{every type of educational institution [needs to] commit to technology and to adapt it for the needs of their students. Indeed, many are already using technology innovatively and imaginatively. But it is not easy - it requires effective leadership, investment and a willingness to experiment.} \\
\]  

(Becta, 2008)

Indeed, in Australia too, ICT developments represent an important aspect of the eLearning agenda. eLearning is complex: it encompasses — and potentially integrates — the broad spectrum of issues that are fundamental to learning and teaching, including academic policy, technology, pedagogy, organisational and cultural issues. The key stakeholders within the university include the learners themselves, teachers, academic managers, ICT managers, learning technologists and learning designers, as well as careers and employment advisors. Beyond the university, stakeholders include employers and professional bodies who are concerned about graduate qualities and employability skills. eLearning is also seen to be instrumental in fostering a widespread interest in lifelong learning.

In Europe, the development of eLearning technologies and strategies led to the vision of an ‘ePortfolio for all by 2010’ to support the concept of lifelong learning. In the context of higher education, ePortfolios — electronic or digital portfolios — focus on the individual student experience to demonstrate learning not only within the academic setting and in transition to work, but also within community and employment settings. National policy and lifelong learning initiatives in the UK have seen engagement with ePortfolios to guide professional development planning (PDP) and career progression over time.

One of the primary responsibilities to be fulfilled by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC), formerly the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, was to consider the improvement of assessment practices throughout the higher education sector, including the investigation into the feasibility of a national portfolio assessment scheme (Carrick, 2006).
The interest in a possible national scheme was influenced by the concept of the Higher Education Progress File in the UK, which, it was recommended, should consist of two elements: ‘a transcript recording student achievement … and a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development’ (Dearing, 1997; QAA, 2001). The current project, the Australian ePortfolio Project, was commissioned by the ALTC to examine the current usage of ePortfolios by university students in Australia. In this chapter of the report, the critical issues associated with ePortfolio practice in higher education are introduced to develop an understanding of these issues through the lenses of the different stakeholders involved in the educational potential offered by ePortfolios.

The ePortfolio picture is undeniably multifaceted. ePortfolios can be used in many diverse education and employment situations, inevitably with a wide spectrum of purposes and a range of different audiences. They may also be implemented using a variety of software tools. The lack of a common language has led to confusion amongst practitioners about the ePortfolio product and the ePortfolio process. The project investigation identified four individual, yet interrelated, contexts where strategies may be employed to support and foster effective ePortfolio practice:

- Government policy
- Technical standards
- Academic policy
- Learning and teaching.

If the higher education sector is to effectively fulfil its role in producing skilled professionals who will play a significant role in the future success of the Australian community and economy, then the potential of ePortfolios to bring together educational technologies and quality learning processes to provide evidence of individual achievement and employability skills should not be ignored. Policies and strategies are required at both the sectoral and institutional levels to ensure that advantage is taken of the opportunities for connectivity and cohesion in the fragmented world of eLearning, flexible delivery, social networking and mobile technologies.

There needs to be open dialogue and collaboration between the stakeholders across the range of contexts, encompassing the learner (who is central to the field of study), those in the learning and teaching environment, and those involved in the areas of academic policy, government policy and technical standards. These domains are presented as the critical areas in which further development may be required to effectively support ePortfolio practice. This chapter includes a series of recommendations which, when set against the more detailed analysis of the national and international contexts of and issues associated with ePortfolio practice in the following chapters, might serve to provide a reference point for the possible directions for ePortfolios in Australian higher education. Four brief scenarios are presented at the conclusion of the chapter to stimulate thoughts about the type of stakeholder strategies required if the future opportunities are to be realised.

### 2.2 The government policy context

The current Federal Government has, through the creation of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), highlighted the significant relationships between education, training and workforce participation, specifically to support innovation and productivity to ensure ongoing national economic development and growth. The present Review of Australian Higher Education seeks to examine the capacity of the higher education system to effectively respond to the needs of industry by contributing to increased participation in the professional labour market (DEEWR, 2008a). The Government is specifically concerned with establishing a policy environment that will enhance the quality of education, encourage widened access to education opportunities, and support integration between vocational education and training and higher education to develop a highly skilled workforce, committed to lifelong learning.

Issues of concern to Australia include the need to understand the future skills demands, to overcome current and emerging skills shortages and to focus on retraining and up-skilling the workforce to address the factors that may lead to skills obsolescence, under-employment or even unemployment.
The Government has recognised the potential value of ePortfolios to support the Employability Skills Framework by providing funding for an ePortfolio initiative to allow people to:

record their academic, vocational and employability skills to support job applications, career planning, and entry into further education and training ... [and to] assist school graduates to document their academic and vocational training and employability skills gained through community activities, and assist mature-age people to document their skills against the eight employability skills

(Department of Education, Science and Training DEST, 2007)

It has been argued that the development of an ePortfolio is not only an appropriate strategy for students to record examples and make visible the evidence of their employability skills, but it also represents the vehicle for teachers and employers to assess the skills acquired.

Students are encouraged to learn to collect evidence holistically, across the different aspects of their lives. Accordingly, ePortfolios have the potential to support a learner’s conceptualisation of their capabilities and their personal and professional attributes. Knowledge creation and knowledge transfer make a significant contribution to the nation’s capacity for innovation and productivity and, by extension, international competitiveness. Peak employer groups such as Business Council of Australia, the Australian Industry Group and the Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council have underscored the importance of high level, relevant graduate employability skills as a key factor in the future prosperity of Australia. Employers and professional associations represent further significant stakeholder groups. It is apparent that in Australia to date, there has been very little engagement with ePortfolios for recruitment or career planning processes. Professional associations, especially those with a clearly articulated base of professional standards and competencies (such as in the fields of nursing and teaching) are making progress toward a portfolio approach to professional recognition and career development. By focusing on the achievements of the new graduate and their ongoing learning through workforce development and continuing professional development, professional and employer bodies can help forge links with the key dimensions of the Government’s employability policies.

An individual student’s journey from school to work is no longer linear — no longer a direct path from school to training to university. There is increasing evidence of the multiple avenues of transition within and between vocational education and training and higher education; work is concurrent with study, and the former divide between vocational and professional learning has become blurred. Student mobility sees them move not only between the sectors, but also across institutions or even across faculties within the same institution. With a clearer focus on the potential of ePortfolios to record and assess employability skills in vocational arenas, it is essential that students are not only provided with the opportunity to continue their ePortfolio practice if they move from a TAFE into a university, or to ensure that ePortfolio work undertaken at university will be portable if they move into a vocational program, but that they can also migrate between institutions and between programs. As greater emphasis is placed on the value of congruency between the different government policy arenas, ePortfolios offer the potential to be a meaningful medium for convergence and integration of education and training. Importantly, a sound and coherent national infrastructure is required to achieve the desired goals; indeed, the issues of education, training and lifelong learning cannot be isolated from the issue of equitable access to broadband services in Australia.

**Recommendation 1**

It is recommended that the government departments with responsibilities for education engage with peak industry, professional and employer bodies to develop a shared understanding of the potential of ePortfolio practice to articulate employability skills.

**Recommendation 2**

It is recommended that government policy recognise ePortfolio practice as a strategy to build an integrated relationship between higher education and the vocational education and schools sector, in order to support the individual’s lifelong and lifewide learning needs and to increase the potential for career progression.
2.2.1 National Diploma Supplement (Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement)

The project team was asked to examine the potential relationship with the Development of a National Diploma Supplement project funded in 2007 by the then Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), which sought to develop an agreed template for an Australian equivalent to the European diploma supplement currently being provided to graduates by higher education institutions in some 45 European countries. The project was undertaken by a consortium of 14 universities, led by the University of New England, University of Melbourne, and Australian National University in consultation with the higher education sector and other relevant stakeholder groups.

The project recommended the introduction of an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, which will take the form of documentation provided to graduates by awarding institutions in addition to the degree or diploma certificate or testamur. Its purpose will be to make qualifications more portable and their value more transparent by providing descriptions of the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued and completed by graduates, as well as information about the education system to which the qualification belongs.

The concept of the Graduation Statement has the following attributes: it is a secure document containing authenticated information regarding a single academic award conferred on an individual, compiled and verified by the awarding institution. As such, it is conceived as a static snapshot at the time of graduation. The concept of an ePortfolio, on the other hand, is a dynamic, continually evolving resource, containing both authenticated and unauthenticated information about a broad range of academic and non-academic activities and achievements.

While the institution has responsibility for the production of a Graduation Statement, the individual learner is responsible for the development and release of the ePortfolio. It is acknowledged that the Graduation Statement may be referred to and added as an artefact to a learner’s ePortfolio and, in the future, there is some potential for institutions to consider including authenticated aspects of a student’s ePortfolio as an element of the Graduation Statement.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that the higher education sector acknowledge the role of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement as an authenticated document reporting student achievement, compiled and verified by the academic institution at the time of graduation, while further acknowledging the value of the ePortfolio process to articulate the integrative aspects of student learning.

2.3 The standards context

Learner mobility within and between education, training and employment sectors, set alongside the concepts of lifelong learning and the global education market, are significant drivers for the requirement to move beyond static repositories to ensure ePortfolio data is secure, accessible and able to be exported and imported across different systems and services. ePortfolio specifications are the focus of work being undertaken by IMS Global Learning Consortium and the JISC Centre for Educational Technology Interoperability Standards (CETIS) in the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, the emerging Web 2.0 technologies and services bring new perspectives to the standards-driven approach to portability and interoperability. Researchers are arguing that social networking initiatives like MySpace and Facebook encompass, and may even threaten to subsume, aspects of the ePortfolio concept.

A recent document published by the Australian Information and Communications Technology in Education Committee (Croger Associates, 2007) has highlighted the importance of collaboration in the education and training sectors, nationally and internationally. A meeting was held at the Australian ePortfolio Symposium in February 2008 to bring together a group of nationally and internationally recognised experts, broadly representing the various areas of education government. Australia, through DEEWR, is already a party in the international eFramework for Education and Research project,
working with JISC in the UK, the SURF Foundation in the Netherlands and the New Zealand Ministry of Education, which means that there is a strong foundation for technical interoperability within and across the education sectors.

The standards expert group operates as an example of a community of practice that has been collaboratively developing the vocabularies and ontologies that support a shared language to underpin the relationships and mapping of ePortfolio practice across the different sectors and contexts. By participating in the IMS ePortfolio standards initiative (2008a), the working group progresses the dialogue about formal ePortfolio specifications, open standards and the dynamic and evolving web services to review and evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the process. To avoid reinventing the wheel and to encourage innovation, the working group provides an opportunity for ICT managers and policy makers to adopt the IMS standards to facilitate the exchange of information and data across institutional, sectoral and jurisdictional boundaries.

**Recommendation 4**

It is recommended that Australian ePortfolio stakeholders continue to develop the collaborative relationship with partners in the eFramework for Education and Research initiative, in order to ensure that aspects of ICT in education and research are developed and implemented strategically.

**Recommendation 5**

It is recommended that the international information standards for ePortfolio practice be adopted as an Australian technical framework, in order to facilitate the exchange of information and data across institutional, sectoral and jurisdictional boundaries.

### 2.4 The academic policy context

Many of the barriers to effective ePortfolio practice identified in the research activities (discussed in Chapter 6) relate to the perceived lack of support at the policy level within higher education institutions. Effective ePortfolio practice requires academic managers across the university to have a broad understanding of the benefits and value that ePortfolios can bring to the learning, teaching and development processes, so that an ePortfolio culture becomes an integral aspect of the academic environment. All those engaged in the institution’s learning and teaching policy environment need to be conscious of the potential of ePortfolios, when integrated into current and future eLearning strategies, to contribute to student-centred learning strategies, transparent learning outcomes and the relevant employability skills for graduates.

Significantly, the successful adoption and implementation of ePortfolios require strong alignment between the strategic, tactical and operational areas of academic management. Universities need to foster an environment where the conditions are conducive to strong innovative practice supported by:

- clear communication within and across the university to ensure the diverse faculties and divisions speak a common, collaborative language
- strategic and technical leadership that champions exemplars of good practice that may be mapped to institution-wide practice
- cohesive approaches to different and overlapping responsibilities in terms of the management and funding of an ePortfolio infrastructure
- sound investment in staff development, reward and recognition in both the academic and professional areas.

**Recommendation 6**

It is recommended that academic policy in higher education institutions recognise the value of ePortfolio practice as a component of different pedagogies that enhance the quality of learning and teaching across the institution.
2.5 The learning and teaching context

Within universities, an increasing number of academics are introducing ePortfolios into their learning and teaching activities as an enabling process that encourages students to engage with their learning. In particular, the ePortfolio process is found to be capable of supporting authentic learning activities, professional practice, work-integrated learning and flexible models of program delivery, all valuable strategies in the development of work-ready graduates. There are examples of innovative practice across different disciplines, in different faculties and schools, often commencing in a single subject. Early adopters of ePortfolio practice have underscored their initial sense of isolation, realising that they would benefit from opportunities for collaboration and shared practice. However, specific challenges are associated with both sustainability and scalability of projects.

There are many options available in terms of the types and functionalities of ePortfolios, especially when a pilot or experimental project is required to develop beyond the initial implementation to a cross-faculty, inter-faculty or institution-wide system, with new and diverse stakeholders becoming involved. Various areas of the university will inevitably have differing purposes for ePortfolio activities and will not all be at the same stage of preparedness, nor will the staff necessarily share the same level of commitment.

Effective academic policies concerning ICT infrastructure and academic development are critical for a successful iterative process of scaling up ePortfolio projects.

The research team is currently developing a preliminary ePortfolio Toolkit comprising a series of guidance notes designed to inform the various ePortfolio stakeholders in higher education about issues of ePortfolio adoption. The Australian ePortfolio Symposium held in February 2008 successfully offered a forum for ePortfolio practitioners to meet and discuss their understandings and their experiences. Internationally, there are examples of communities of practice that not only provide effective channels of communication between educators with shared interests, but also, importantly, encourage scholarship and research.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that the various stakeholders in higher education who are interested in ePortfolios utilise the ePortfolio Toolkit (under development) to guide and inform their practice.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that ePortfolio stakeholders establish a Community of Practice to share learning and experiences of quality ePortfolio practice in higher education, in order to foster scholarship and research and to provide a forum for dissemination about good practice.

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that a regular Australasian conference be convened to explore and discuss ePortfolio research and practice.

2.6 The context of the learner

The learner is, of course, central to the learning process. Learning takes place in many different situations, both formal and informal, and can be viewed as lifelong and lifewide. Nevertheless, the structural and developmental aspects of formal education programs can stimulate learners to become active participants in their own learning in order to gain a deeper understanding of the knowledge and skills that they acquire and the progress they make. An ePortfolio, as a product, provides a personal space where students can collect the digital artefacts that present evidence of their experiences and achievements, articulating actual learning outcomes. The ePortfolio, as a process, allows students to move beyond the notion of what they have learned to consider how they have learned. It enables students to better understand the connections inherent in the creative process of learning: by identifying and
selecting learning experiences, by reflecting on their skill development, and, by sharing, collaborating and presenting the evidence to others, they are able to make sense of their own complex stories.

The ePortfolio provides an opportunity for linkages between learning and assessment, with the focus changing from assessment of learning to assessment for learning. ePortfolios support pedagogical approaches that foster student motivation for learning and student engagement with their learning by highlighting progress and achievement, as opposed to failure. Effective learning occurs when learners ‘understand what it is they are trying to achieve – and want to achieve it’ (Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA), & Assessment Reform Group, 2002), so through their ePortfolio learners can contribute to the development of learning goals and monitor the progress they make. The ePortfolio can not only be used as a forum for participation, collaboration and constructive guidance in the learning and assessment activities, but also, through self-reflection and self-evaluation, as an environment that encourages the independence, initiative and confidence of the learner. Beyond the direct support for learning, individuals can draw on the ePortfolio to:

- support their transition into employment or further education
- provide evidence of their achievements and competency attainment when applying for a job or for professional standing
- scaffold their career development over a period of time.

### 2.7 Further research

Compared with other countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the United States of America, Australia is in the early stages of ePortfolio practice. The current research activities, through the surveys, focus groups and the Australian ePortfolio Symposium, have not only raised awareness within the higher education sector about ePortfolios as both product and process, but also intensified the interest of academics in engaging with and deepening their understanding of the contribution of ePortfolios to learning, both within and beyond university. There is immense scope for further research into and analysis of the impact and potential of ePortfolios in higher education: the diverse dimensions of knowledge construction, student attitudes, new teacher roles, employer expectations, eLearning-supported pedagogies, emerging technologies, organisational factors, interoperability etc. In the more mature ePortfolio contexts, there are close linkages between research and practice. The Australian Learning and Teaching Council has a vital part to play in facilitating collaborative research in the area, specifically to investigate how ePortfolios might be used to achieve transformation in key areas of educational and workforce policy.

**Recommendation 10**

It is recommended that the Australian Learning and Teaching Council adopt a leading role to foster and support further research into the educational benefits of ePortfolio practice.

### 2.8 Scenarios for the future

In the context of ePortfolio practice in higher education in Australia, one of the big questions to ask is: What might the future hold? While once again, the diversity of purpose for ePortfolios in education is underscored, the project team puts forward four scenarios for the future, to serve as a backdrop to the report and to encourage an enquiry-based review of the issues presented. The four scenarios are:

- A national ePortfolio for all model
- A locally driven ePortfolio model
- A Web 2.0 model
- A zero action model

The structuring device of two scenario-axes is used (Figure 2.1), with one axis representing the continuum of **Freedom to Control**, and the second representing the continuum of **Stasis to Progress**. The attributes of **chaos**, **rigidity**, **strategy** and **innovation** come into play within the scenario framework.
Each scenario is brief and sharply focused, highlighting the main characteristics of each option and some of the key implications that could eventuate from each respective model.

2.8.1 A national ePortfolio for all model

The national model assumes a single ePortfolio system for all learners, and potentially workers and citizens.

Characteristics

This model assumes that it will be government-owned and government-driven, thus supported by relevant policy and strategy at a national level. In terms of infrastructure, it will require top-down implementation and centralised management. This ‘one-size-fits-all’ option assumes interoperability is completely assured.

Implications

The model will require consensus regarding the system to be implemented, with the need to ensure an orderly rollout and the motivation for speedy adoption by the various stakeholder groups. Tensions may exist between the government’s own strategic positioning, state government priorities and the operational realities of individual institutions. There are potentially concerns about a ‘big brother’ approach to education and career development, which may result in some degree of resistance and a reduced sense of ‘ownership’ and commitment on the part of institutions, educators and learners, as well as limited engagement on the part of employers and the professions. Doubts will be cast about the potential of a single system to meet the needs of all players, with concerns about the lack of flexibility and the limited opportunity for creativity and innovation. Inevitably the questions of funding, support, staff development and sustainability will be raised. Civil libertarians are likely to debate the issues of individual privacy, security and access, aligned with the concerns regarding a national identification system for all Australians.

The national ePortfolio model is placed in the quadrant between the ‘Control’ end of one axis and, in terms of the degree of potential innovation, towards the ‘Stasis’ end of the second axis. Rigidity counters the potential for innovation, but the strategic dimension is very strong.

2.8.2 A locally driven ePortfolio model

The locally driven model is developed within the higher education sector but is aligned with cross-sectoral interests. Government policy drivers ensure that incentives are offered for ePortfolio initiatives. The model accommodates both institutional autonomy and the multiple purposes of ePortfolios themselves, with audiences including the individual learner, peers, teaching staff, mentors and employers.

Characteristics

The primary need will be to focus on the educational benefits of ePortfolios to support the process of learning, underpinned by cognisance of student mobility and initiatives in the vocational and employment sectors so that account is taken of technical standards and interoperability. The ePortfolio platform is provided by individual institutions, or potentially by a university alliance, with the understanding that the ePortfolio itself is student-owned.

Implications

The model allows for progressive rollout and adoption of ePortfolio applications. The ePortfolio systems will be flexible to support some degree of creativity and innovation within the required data structures that permit migration of packets of data between systems. Ongoing development is feasible. There is likely to be a wide range of practice illustrating differing levels of maturity within the institution and across institutions but there are strong drivers to share knowledge and experiences through communities of practice. Institutional support encompasses academic policy and support through ICT
infrastructure, academic development and university careers services, with a strong focus on embedding ePortfolios in the curriculum to achieve specific learning outcomes. Student ownership fosters engagement with the process, with increased interest shown by employers and recruiters resulting from staged consultation.

The locally driven model sits about midway along the ‘Control–Freedom’ continuum, and towards the ‘Progress’ end of the second axis. The scale tips towards strategy, rather than chaos, but the potential for innovation outweighs rigidity.

### 2.8.3 A Web 2.0 model

In this model, the focus is on the emerging developments in Web 2.0 and social networking technologies, rather than on any ePortfolio products or tools.

**Characteristics**

The model is characterised by the absence of any formal systems development, which infers that there is potentially a place for overarching policies but there is no actual strategic direction. The Web 2.0 approach offers the opportunity for a very high level of innovation, but this is completely dynamic and unguided.

**Implications**

No official rollout is required, which will mean a broad spectrum of readiness from institutions, although some may consider adopting a portal approach for students and staff to access the different tools. Universities may need to revisit their student internet usage policies to ensure the access limits are adequate (or fully removed). The portfolio activities are totally user owned, with an immense range of approaches and levels of maturity evident, but arguably subject to ever-evolving technological trends. Adoption by student users may be speedy, but not all academic staff may have the required level of ICT skills, so academic development activities need to be considered. Sceptics may be concerned about the commercial goals of the hosting services, especially in terms of data ownership, access and security. An inherent risk exists: the changing commercial environment may actually be antithetical to the needs of the education sector. Meanwhile, the need for interoperability between systems diminishes in importance. However, there is a high chance of a strong level of engagement on the part of employers due to the in-built familiarity with the tools, although there will not necessarily be a clear demarcation between ‘personal’ and ‘professional’. It may be difficult to directly align the portfolio process with specific learning objectives, but peer support and collaboration will be encouraged. This model suits the development of communities of practice.

The Web 2.0 model is situated at the ‘Freedom’ end of the first axis and at the ‘Progress’ end of the second axis. There is the potential for the approach to be highly innovative, but with the danger of being somewhat chaotic in nature. However, Web 2.0 developments will inevitably evolve, with or without any connection to ePortfolios, and ultimately morph into the as yet ill-defined Web 3.0 environment.

### 2.8.4 A zero action model

In this model, the status quo ePortfolio situation in Australia can continue. There would still be pockets of interest with individual academics within institutions developing grassroots initiatives, possibly aligned with professional standards, and with some institutional champions emerging. There would, however, be an absence of policy and strategy locally, with no focus on sector-wide or cross-sector initiatives. There would be little incentive to progress the work on international standards or interoperability.

This model is perhaps a neutral one, one that sits heavily at the ‘Stasis’ end of the first continuum, but with no real connection with ‘Freedom’ or ‘Control’. However, it is unlikely that, in the 21st century, the zero action model would be sustainable. With no institutional or sector drivers for change, Scenario 3, the Web 2.0 model, is likely to emerge, simply due to the nature of social and community activity.
2.9 Summary

This chapter has endeavoured to introduce the different contexts for and stakeholders in ePortfolio practice. The four scenarios are presented as ‘food for thought’, as a background to the topics discussed in more detail in the body of the report. The easiest option is inevitably to adopt the zero action model and do nothing. However, the diverse stakeholder groups, as they read and interpret the report, are invited to consider the position that holds the greatest value to them. While the recommendations made in the report are presented as stimuli for increased engagement in ePortfolio practice, they should not be taken in isolation. The analysis presented in Chapters 4 and 5 provides the current national and international context, as well as the policy and practice issues that are central to higher education in Australia. The next chapter outlines the research methodologies that have been used for the collection of data in the Australian ePortfolio Project. The research findings are presented in detail in Chapter 6. Chapter 8 considers the opportunities for supporting further ePortfolio development through communities of practice, so will also be helpful in informing the interpretation of the recommendations into possible future strategies.