Evaluation and further development of an e-portfolio system (EPS) for initial teacher education

Louise Lenton[1] and **John Woollard**[2]

[1]Curriculum Tutor PGCE Secondary, School of Education, University of Southampton L.Lenton@southampton.ac.uk

[2]Lecturer in Information Technology Education School of Education, University of Southampton J.Woollard@southampton.ac.uk

Abstract

Resulting from the evaluation of the in-house electronic portfolio system which included the development of evaluation forms for trainees and tutors and capturing over 4000 words of comments, recommendations are made regarding the development of an e-portfolio system for initial teacher training. Revisions undertaken to improve the user interface included; enhanced memory, storage, backup and server provision; labelling of links and actions; more icons for file types; file upload and disk usage limits to increase to 50MB; shared folders renamed and repositioned, improved monitoring of emails for tutors; zip files of whole directory structures to be uploaded and easier folder deletion. Implementing this for tutors and for trainees is seen to be an effective way forward to learn about and experience a secure, monitored, flexible and efficient building and sharing of electronic resources.

Introduction

EPS is an electronic portfolio system (e-portfolio) that is used within the School of Education for a number of courses.

http://www.pgce.soton.ac.uk/eps/

The School of Education, University of Southampton invested in the early development and evaluation of an e-portfolio system in 2001.

"EPS started life before the term "e-portfolio" was common parlance. There was a perceived need to enable teachers in training to save, store, present and archive their electronically-based work so that tutors could assess it. In 2001, a TTA Grant was used to design and implement an online system for IT trainees to save evidence of their activities; it was made open to all subject areas and teachers on the Masters programme."

http://www.pgce.soton.ac.uk/eps/CAAreport

The Principle behind the current Electronic Portfolio System is:

"The Electronic Portfolio System, based upon technology used widely on the internet, provides our teacher trainees and students with easily accessible space to save work they wish to submit for examination. EPS enables tutors and mentors to access trainees' and students' work for review and assessment from any computer that is attached to the internet" (Woollard, 2001).

Trainees subscribe to the system providing their own username and password with an email address for correspondence. This mimics many systems they will experience when working on the web and gives an opportunity to reinforce good habits with regard to security and password

management. Trainees are given two URLs to access their portfolio. One enables management whilst the other reveals the contents in the same way as any resource on the web. At the simplest level trainees can create a set of files of any type. Trainees can create a folder structure with each folder and subfolder containing files of any type. A more advanced user can include in the folder an index.htm file. The folder and subfolders would then render as a conventional website - the system can be used to introduce trainees to website publishing.

In 2005, further facilities were introduced:

- trainees could create a website or e-portfolio off-line, zip to a single file, upload and it would be automatically expanded and displayed online;
- the single file size limit was increased;
- a form of RSS that notified the relevant tutor when a trainee had uploaded or changed their portfolio.

Over the years its use and value has changed and, through the support of the TDA, continues to change in the near future.

Subsequent to the recent TDA organised seminar focussing on e-portfolios and new technologies (November 2007) it was noted that a number of sophisticated e-portfolio systems were characterised by having a price tag and a high degree of sophistication. This is acceptable if the clients (learners, trainees, employees, etc.) stay with the system for a long time, become skilled in its use and have little care for the contents of the e-portfolio when they move to other places. On the other hand, if the client values access to the materials afterwards, has little need for or little time to learn a sophisticated system and does not require a highly sophisticated system then the nature of the e-portfolio system can be very different.

The Becta publication (Becta, 2007) and contributions from JISC emphasised the need for interoperability and the need to adopt a universal, uniform, or interoperable system (JISC, 2007).

Literature Review

There is much interest in the development and application of e-portfolios and the literature generally reflects a positive picture of the validity and efficacy of e-portfolios. There are three main themes: identifying the required functionality, building the environments and reflecting upon the affordances.

Functionality

The OSPortfolio website (OSP, 2007) provides a starting point for considering functionality. They identify the e-portfolio possessing: "tools to collect items that best represent their accomplishments, their learning, or their work; tools to reflect upon these items and their connections; tools to design a portfolio that showcases the best selections of this work; and tools to publish the portfolio to designated audiences.

The FDTL (Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning) project first asks who is funding the resource? Funding has important implications for the sophistication, interoperability and long-term sustainability. The FDTL development is a web-based system which provides a tool to capture, track and assess student learning remotely. The system provides students with individual, secure electronic-portfolios that contain web-forms to guide students through any educational process. FDTL is a HEFCE (Higher

Education Funding Council for England)-funded project found at http://www.profile.ac.uk.

Interoperability is the ability of information gathered by a learner to be transferred seamlessly to another e-portfolio system. Guidance, reporting on research and the development of interoperability standards is through Interoperability Centre for Educational Technology http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk and is an important area for discussing the emerging issues. The interoperability issue become most pressing when the very personal learning records they form need to follow the learner as they progress through their lifelong learning and continuous professional development (Horner and Cotterill, 2006).

Another aspect of functionality is the potential to embed the system with conventional VLEs. The OSportfolio system http://osportfolio.org is associated with Sakai http://www.sakaiproject.org and implemented at Kent University http://fpdc.kent.edu/regionalcenter/lc_0708/sakai/index.html whereas the ePET portfolio system http://www.eportfolios.ac.uk/ePET, first developed at Newcastle University in 2002, is associated with Bodington VLE http://www.bodington.org.

Building environments

Creating and developing e-portfolios in new contexts can be one of three types - open source, commercial or bespoke. Each has their advantages and challenges.

Open source: low cost basis with an army of unpaid, enthusiast, developers sustaining the development and increased sophistication through collaboration and free exchange of information and products. Downside - the requirement for technical knowledge and personnel to maintain the system.

Commercial: reliable and sustained applications with the competitive market ensuring the providers continue to develop resources and functionality. Downside: cost and the likely interoperability issues associated with commercial enterprise.

Bespoke: customised to the context and specific needs of the learners and tutors. Downside: cost and lack of further developments without further costs.

Affordances

Affordances are the activities (usually related to pedagogy) that the technology enables to occur. They are the benefits for learners and for tutors arising from the functionality of the system.

Portfolios can…

- evidence learners' prior learning and experience;
- demonstrate current experiences supporting PDP (personal development plans) and CPD (Continuing Professional Development);
- enhance students' communication and organisational skills (Brown, 2002);
- focus learners' thinking (Wade and Yarbrough, 1996) and promoting reflection (Schon, 1983);
- document a learner's progress (Abrami and Barrett, 2005; Challis, 2005; Darling, 2001);

- enhance learning through the process of constructing the evidence (Young, 2002; Winter 2006);

- celebrate achievements;

- help learners understand how their learning takes place (Brown, 2002);

- provide an alternative form of assessment (Maisch 2003).

One particular process is called "Patchwork" which combines a collection of various texts, images, tables, forms, etc. called "patches" that build to an academic or professional theme. They are "stitched together" through a reflective and critical synthesis (Scoggins and Winter, 1999). Patchwork is also described as the integration of "written pieces across the module, which demand critical and personal engagement, and have been the subject of peer and formative feedback, to produce a structurally unified reflective synthesis" (Ovens 2003). The patchwork file is "an attempt to combine the coherent structure of the essay with the openness of the portfolio" (Winter 2006). The importance of critical reflection in education reflects the Vygotskian notion that verbalisation is central to understanding and the development of more 'inclusive' and 'integrative' professional practice (Mezirow, 1990).

Another process is associated with a logbook. The logbook used within the portfolio system can enable tutors to make formative assessments and it can enable learners to reflect upon the learning outcomes (FETL4, 2004, Sarma et al, 2004). They report upon the development of the logbook system available in the Bodington VLE http://www.bodington.org used by universities of Leeds, Sheffield Trent Deanery and Newcastle.

Aims and Processes

The system within the School of Education makes explicit the basic functions of an e-portfolio system. However, it does not reflect the visual sophistication of current e–portfolio systems and therefore it is believed that it does not stimulate and motivate trainees to contribute in a fully engaged way.

Until the all-encompassing, all-embracing, nationally implemented e-portfolio system is established, our trainees will meet an unpredictable and diverse range of e-portfolio systems in their placement schools and their first employment. We have to ensure that they have sufficient experience to equip them for dealing with *any* e-portfolio system in their first and subsequent years of teaching. To that end, we are focussed on a basic, minimal approach.

The School of Education received funding from the TDA Research Awards (T34785P) to enable the development of 'The Electronic Portfolio System' (EPS) and to evaluate the effectiveness of the system, identifying affordances and challenges.

The aims were:

- Identify attitudes towards a current electronic portfolio system

- Specify the features of the new interface

- Design a new graphic interface

- Implement the new design

- Implement the new EPS system with at least 100 trainee teachers

- Evaluate the trainees' use, engagement and attitudes to the new common gateway interface
- Identify the affordances of EPS and communicate them.

The process of development and evaluation had 5 phases which:

- Identified current practice, the motivations, and rationale of tutors and reasons why other systems might be used and identify attitudes, activity, affordances, and improvements by surveying current trainees.
- Identified areas in which EPS could be developed and enhanced by consulting tutors and technical developers.
- Implemented the changes.
- Evaluated the impact of the changes by consulting tutors and trainees.
- Report the process and results to the TDA and writing a report and paper reflecting upon the underpinning theoretical approach to e portfolios, the developments and affordances of EPS and describing actual and potential models of implementation.

The most important question - what are the affordances of EPS identified by trainees and tutors using the system?

The affordances are summarised with this phrase: "*learn about and experience the secure, monitored, flexible and efficient building and sharing of electronic resources*". A most important aspect of the use of e-portfolios in teacher training programmes is that they learn about the functionality and affordances of e-portfolio systems. It is impossible to expose all trainees to all forms of portfolio system because of the curriculum time limits and the financial implications. It is important therefore that the exposure they receive demonstrates the generic features of e-portfolios.

Those features are:

- a container for the resources;
- a location for the container;
- a means of seeing the contents;
- a means of adding contents;
- a means of changing or even deleting contents;
- a method of registration;
- a method of protection (username and password);
- a method of securing (backup).

Methodology

In June and July 2008 a survey of trainees' and tutors' opinions took place to evaluate EPS (Appendix A and Appendix B). The surveys of trainees were from 3 groups: optional users of ICT, expected users and compulsory users.

Analysis of trainees' responses

We gained over 4000 words of response from 42 trainees in the cohort of 240 on which we can draw some conclusions in this case study investigation of e-portfolios. Geography sent 14 responses, History 4 responses, IT 12 responses, MFL 1 response, RE 2 responses and finally Science sent 9 responses.

30 out of 44 questionnaires were from compulsory users and 14 from optional and expected users. There was a correlation with subject specialism and the level in depth of response from the trainees to the questionnaire. In particular Science, Geography and History, where the trainees were compulsory users, gave the most in depth responses. In IT trainees were able to use university web space to publish websites that would act as an e-portfolio and therefore there was limited use of the e-portfolio system. Except for one, IT trainees generally did not use the e–portfolio system giving reasons such as:

"because I uploaded my work to my website"

"not a requirement to use it only to look at the benefits it provides"

Only 2 trainees out of 44 had used an alternative portfolio within their schools for marking pupils work, otherwise the School of Education EPS was the only experience the trainees had of the e-portfolio system.

28 trainees out of 44 felt that they would use an e-portfolio system in their next job and 22 trainees felt that e-portfolio had given them sufficient experience to equip them for dealing with any e-portfolio in your future years of teaching

In answer to the question, "Were the instructions on the website simple to follow or did you require additional support?", all trainees except one, felt that it was simple to follow. One required basic support from another trainee. General responses included:

"It was very, very, very easy to use. I did not see or read any instructions…"

"University did show us but I forgot by the time I came to use it, another PGCE student showed me on placement."

"Simple, no support needed (but a clear link on the PGCE Secondary Notice board would make it easier to find when at school)."

One trainee, who found the instructions confusing, gave a further very useful response, which led to further interesting responses from other trainees to question 6 and 7. Question 6 and 7 asked, "Which functions of this e-portfolio did you find easy to use?" "Was there anything else in particular within e-portfolio that was difficult to use or that you found frustrating?"

There were a few responses regarding folder structure and icons. Just under half found the folder structure difficult to navigate due to the *labels* used. For example; fmanage, directory, index were particularly confusing. Equally the word "list of the portfolios" did not make the action of signing in clear to users. Around a quarter of trainees found the structure of the homepage confusing. In conclusion, although most found it simple to use there were many features that they found frustrating that could be developed further.

"I think quite a few things were a bit confusing: for the 1st time you signed it, it wasn't very clear where you need to sign up/register… signing in can be confusing, because it says "list of the portfolios" at the moment…the viewing and uploading pages are confusing and the labelling of the links are confusing. Because if you click your name (or "index" after you uploaded a file), it goes to viewing only and you can't upload anything. Similarly, to upload a file, you need to specifically click "frmange" (which is not a word that makes sense to the users) or "directory" after you upload a file…"

"I found the structure of the home page on the site and its speech bubbles confusing. A straight forward listing of folders and what you can do in there would have been more efficient."

"Sign in/register and difference between viewing and uploading page confusing."

"It wasn't particularly difficult to use but I found the folder set up wasn't particularly user friendly."

"There is too much in IT language if you want to accommodate the least skilled trainee."

"...the format isn't what people are used to using then it isn't keeping it basic."

Other trainee responses included concerns regarding file types, sizes and navigation. Clearly from the following responses there needed to be a review of file upload, disk usage limits, navigation within EPS and the directory page.

"I could not load movie maker, there was not enough space on EPS. This also meant it was also impossible to share similar resources by my classmates."

"I was not able to upload my moviemaker assignments onto EPS because the file was too big – this was highly frustrating as it took ages trying to do it – and eventually gave up."

"The limitations of the size of document we could upload for example we had to put samples of students work on for an ICT task, they had made PowerPoint's which I could not upload as they were to big."

"lack of space, not wanting to accept large files."

"Finding it, its front page is not very obvious"

"Frustrating that you could not move files between folders you created."

"Only being able to add one file at a time!"

"returning back to directory difficult."

This led to responses to the following questions, "What does the system feel like to use?" "Does it stimulate/motivate you to contribute to it?" "Which is more important to you? An e-portfolio that is simple to use or an e-portfolio that has more features and stimulates and motivates you more to contribute to it in a more engaged way?"

Around half did not find it stimulating or motivating to use, however over half felt it was more important to have an e-portfolio that is simple rather than an e-portfolio that has more features and stimulates and motivates you more to contribute to it in a more engaged way.

"No, does not motivate to contribute because of size limitations, because of obscurity of file names on EPS making it difficult to know its relevance to what you are looking for and because of the overall lack of use and . Most of us communicated by email if we needed something and found that quicker and more relevant to what we needed."

"Feels like a very simple system (but not so simple to use!). No, it's not stimulating nor motivating."

"I find it rather complicated to look at and confusing to try and work out where things are (e.g. Read only/write only). I cannot say whether I feel stimulated to use this program."

"Not stimulating, very functional."

"On the whole simple to use; did stimulate me to contribute work, as could see contributions from other trainees."

"Not really, it's a bit bland"

Importantly, 37 out of 42 agreed with the following statement.

'The principles of upload and presentation is in the most simple format possible and therefore accommodating the least skilled trainee by keeping the core facilities basic.'

These responses were interesting especially with regards to the balance between the importance of functionality of e-portfolio and its need for stimulation and motivational features. It was clear from these responses that an easy-to-navigate uniform user interface was required.

The question as to whether the trainees found EPS more efficient to use than other methods of presenting work, was equally interesting in the responses received. Most trainees indicated that EPS was more efficient than other methods and further improvements in layout would improve this further.

"It was more efficient as we could just put work on there for Tutors to check and it meant that we didn't have to print out everything."

"The idea of EPS is good; it's good to have some where that you can show your work electronically. But the layout of EPS has to be improved to become more efficient."

"Yes, could upload completed work instantly; good way to save printing and paper usage."

"More effective than travelling to university. More effective then emailing work to mentors."

"This was quick and easy to use."

"Useful less hassle than emailing, printing work."

Other suggestions for further improvements included:

"Upload whole folders, rather than individual documents."

"Need an easy way to share files with other students' portfolios."

"There should be a shared area where people can share good examples of work."

One important aspect that arose from these responses was that some trainees were generally unaware of the shared area (named read.access) where they could access and share work. Another important response was the requirement for the ability to upload more than one document.

Summary of Trainee Responses

In general, views on the e portfolio system were mostly positive and accepting of the overall process; however the following analysis identifies those negative responses such as:

"I don't see the point of EPS..."

"Too time consuming."

"A good reason for using it. What are the benefits?"

"I don't really see it as any different from a shared network or drive that all decent companies use already."

Although these were the only real negative responses to e-portfolio it is important to note that a few trainees appeared to under-value the opportunities offered by e-portfolios. In relation to this the teaching standards and therefore statutory requirements are clear:

Those awarded Qualified Teacher Status must provide evidence that they know how to use skills in ICT to support teaching and wider professional

activities [Q17]. For example, using the internet to seek advice, information and resources, using e-mail and intranets to communicate with colleagues, using computer-based technologies to enhance teaching techniques and using virtual learning environments to enable new means of learning.

They need to demonstrate that they can design opportunities for learners to develop their ICT skills [Q23].

They need to know and understand the relevant statutory and non-statutory curricula and frameworks, including those provided through the National Strategies, for their subjects/curriculum areas, and other relevant initiatives applicable to the age and ability range for which they are trained [Q15].

They need to show a "creative and constructively critical approach towards innovation" which includes the use of new technologies to support teaching and learning [Q8].

It was clear that although there were many positive responses there were also several areas needed for development to ensure a flexible and efficient building and sharing of electronic resources.

These include:

- To improve layout of pages and labelling of links e.g. uniform user interface.
- A clear link on the PGCE Secondary Notice board to make it easier to find.
- To include more icons for file type recognition.
- To increase file size and disk usage limits to enable the upload of Moviemaker files and MS PowerPoint files.
- To have more file space to upload resources to share with each other.
- To be able to move files between folders easily.
- To rename shared folders and always show at the top of entry lists.
- To enable zip files of whole directory structures to be uploaded.
- To enable clearer labelling of actions.

There were no correlations between negative or positive responses against subject.

Analysis of tutors' responses

We gained Curriculum Tutor responses from four Foundation subjects. These subjects ensured either compulsory or optional use of EPS.

None of the tutors surveyed used an alternative e-portfolio to EPS and all tutors said they would use EPS next year with their trainees. However other systems to store/share their work were also used such as email and wiki.

In answer to the question, "were the instructions on the website simple to follow or did you require additional support, all tutors felt that it was simple to follow?"

"Fine. Only problem is when trainees lose/forget passwords!"

"I have used EPS for a number of years now so find it straightforward to use…"

"The instructions for general use were easy enough to follow, but latterly the instructions for deleting portfolios have not worked."

Question 5, 10 and 13 asked, "Which functions of this e-portfolio did you find easy to use?" "Was there anything else in particular within e-portfolio that was difficult to use or that you found frustrating?" "How could this e-portfolio be improved? What further functions would you like to see?"

Tutor responses included concerns regarding file types, sizes and navigation:

"Lack of storage space. My write access folder is always way over allowance so turns red colour – off-putting! Even though you can go on adding stuff. Probably I need to learn how to compress the files!"

"Sometimes when EPS doesn't recognise the type of document and refuses to open it especially if it has an unusual file extension name. Very time consuming to find programme to read documents in this case."

"The limit on file size is really frustrating. There were problems in the past with PowerPoint which are largely resolved but Movie Maker files saved will only show the first 10 seconds. I am encouraging my trainees to use a wide range of ICT and these include a lot of visual images and sound so it is important for me that the file sizes are much bigger. I am also aware that my write.access folder and some trainees' portfolios are bigger than allowed, but if I want to build up materials/resources year on year this is going to happen."

"Some of the trainees are using later versions of Windows and whenever they saved files they were saved as .docx files which I was unable to open. I am not why as I don't understand the technicalities."

"Deleting difficult"

Other suggestions for further improvements included:

"Look more appealing."

"Have a drag and drop facility for moving files."

"Be clearer that separate folders can be made to make it 'tidier' to use."

"I think it would also be helpful to re-name some of the sections – I only know that the 'writeaccess' allows you to share materials because I have been told that is where trainees can share materials, so why can't it be called something more obvious like 'shared folder."

Clearly there was a link to the responses given by trainees and those by tutors which reaffirmed the priorities for development e.g. a review of file upload, disk usage limits, navigation within EPS and the directory page.

This led onto responses to the following questions, "What does the system feel like to use?" "Does it stimulate/motivate you to contribute to it?" "Which is more important to you? An e-portfolio that is simple for you and your trainees to use or an e-portfolio that has more features and stimulates and motivates you and your trainees contribute to it in a more engaged way?

All tutors felt it was more important to have an e-portfolio that is simple rather than an e-portfolio that has more features and stimulates and motivates you more to contribute to it in a more engaged way.

"I find that it looks 'old-fashioned' so doesn't have an immediate appeal. It also tends to generate long lists of materials – I think this may be because it is not obvious that you can create different folders within a portfolio..."

"It's just useful because of the accessibility."

"Simplicity"

"SIMPLICITY. I don't know that many of us have the time for more sophisticated engagement."

Importantly, all tutors agreed with the following statement.

'The principles of upload and presentation is in the most simple format possible and therefore accommodating the least skilled trainee by keeping the core facilities basic.'

"Yes. For tutors too. Sometimes less is more and it is better to do something simple well and get all doing it than be overly complex and isolate people."

Tutors indicated that EPS was more efficient than other methods.

"Can access from home with out having to take lots of paper around. However, EPS is not great for e-marking because you can't just mark and save back to EPS – you have to re-upload which takes time."

"I have not tried other means of retrieving trainees' work so cannot comment. I find it works for my needs so don't really see the need to try out alternatives unless there is something obviously compelling about them."

"Blackboard isn't something I've used as it doesn't always meet my needs and the Wiki is just a joke because you can't upload existing documents so compared to both of these 'Yes'."

One important feature of EPS for tutors was whether there was use of the read.access to share authorised documents with the trainees. From the responses it was clear that although this shared area was used it was often underused due to the lack of understanding of its use by trainees

"I use this folder for details of tasks and proforma. It is useful in that they have tasks located in the same place as their portfolio."

"I mainly use this to share course documentation such as lesson plans, lesson evaluations, plus material I use for ICT workshops. As far as I am aware the trainees use this because that is where I direct them."

"Sometimes. If not it was because I chose to put them on the website instead."

Another important feature was the write.access to share documents. It highlighted problems, which contributed to its underuse such as file size and space. Again it became apparent that this function is probably underused and looking back at trainee responses it may have been use to a lack of awareness that these functions existed.

"Yes – this is the most useful part of the EPS for sharing info. Problem is the lack of space!"

"In the past trainees have done this automatically, but this year it wasn't used for this, perhaps because I did not encourage trainees to do so. I feel that I need to 'tidy up' the site and use folders so that trainees can more easily find materials that may be useful to them."

"We did but they didn't tend to. They prefer to e-mail things to each other and use the group e-mail address I set up each year instead."

The use of notification by email of student activity did appear to make the monitoring of e-portfolio more efficient, however that there was a clear need to look at the logging of emails in order for these to be more manageable.

"I can easily keep an eye on who is not uploading work and check their ongoing progress quickly – don't have to go into EPS to know who is completing their work – or more importantly not engaging!"

"It was a useful reminder that I needed to go and check the material being posted. The problem is that my trainees have times when they need to upload

several files and each creates an individual reminder so I would get 50+ reminders at the same time."

"Not always as it just filled my inbox and after an initial period it became easy to predict which trainees were using it and for what anyway."

Lastly it was important to establish how engaged the tutors felt the trainees were in using e-portfolio. From the responses received the engagement appeared mainly positive.

"Mostly positive. Though some said they'd rather just send work to me by e-mail! They liked the sharing and the access after course for first few months at least."

"The main negative comments have been about accessing the platform – as trainees have to remember different user names and passwords – but once they get past this they are usually okay. This year's group have not been fully engaged as they have not used the facility to share (I don't know to what extent this was a reflection on the group as they were less 'together' as a group than previous groups). One trainee seemed to have major problems uploading material and ended up sending me stuff via email instead (I am not sure why he had such problems)."

"No negativity, but some are always a lot more positive about it and extol its virtues more than others."

Summary of Tutor Responses

In general, views on the e portfolio system were very positive and accepting of the overall process; however it was clear from responses that there were several areas needed for development to ensure a flexible and efficient building and sharing of electronic resources. The main areas identified for development were:

- To improve layout of pages and labelling of links to make EPS more engaging and motivating to use e.g. hypertext link back to the list of students in their subject, to re-name some of the sections – 'writeaccess' and 'readaccess' and have a uniform user interface.
- To recognise more unusual file extension names.
- To increase file size and disk usage limits to enable the upload of Moviemaker files, MS PowerPoint files, visual image and sound files.
- More file space to upload resources to share with each other (especially writeaccess folder).
- Log emails to be collected and sent one per tutor per day.
- Easier deleting for tutors through web page.

There were no correlations between negative or positive responses against subject.

Implementing the recommendations

From this research, it was clear that there were several areas of EPS to be developed ready for the cohort of 2008/2009 PGCE Trainees and tutors.

From these key findings the following were then implemented:

1. a uniform user interface; CSS and layout improvements, to be like SOE Wiki;

Electronic Portfolio System
User Functions

Trainee/learner actions:

» Apply for a portfolio
» Manage your portfolio folder
»

Tutor actions:

» List portfolios
» Create a read-only portfolio
» Delete unwanted portfolios

Return to:

| University | Education | Trainees | PGCE (Primary) | PGCE (Secondary) | CBLT | subject1 | subject2 | IT | subject3 | subject4 |

Upgrading EPS Autumn 2008; the recent upgrades have provided the following facilities:

- zip files of whole directory structures can be uploaded;
- email notification to tutors when trainees upload files;
- deletion and amendment of files with non-alpha numeric characters;
- clearer labelling of actions;
- enhanced memory, storage, backup and server provision;

- a uniform user interface;
- easier folder deletion;
- better monitoring emails for tutors;
- more icons for file type recognition;

Archive documents

- Report of survey (2005 onward)
- Tutor facilities (2002)
- CAA Report (2002)
- Overview of EPS

- CAA Proposal (2001)
- xxxxxx
- User facilities (2001)

EPS home · subject list

GeoData Institute

Electronic Portfolio System
Apply for a new Portfolio / Wiki account

First name:
Surname:
E-mail: *University or personal*
Username: *Choose your own - can be your University username*
Password: *Choose your own - advisable not to use the same password for your different accounts*
Subject: Primary (all subjects)
What is building 32 the home of?

Register

Electronic Portfolio System
Subject List

Click a folder to access a subject directory:

📁 **Primary all subjects**
📁 **English**
📁 **Mathematics**
📁 **Science**
📁 **Information Technology**
📁 **Geography**
📁 **History**
📁 **Modern Foreign Languages**
📁 **Music**
📁 **Physical Education**
📁 **Religious Education**
📁 **CBLT**
📁 **MAEd**
📁 **PCP SCITT**
📁 **Working with Children**

Electronic Portfolio System
Create a read-only Portfolio

First name:
Surname:
E-mail:
Username:
Password:
Subject: Primary (all subjects)

Register

2. deletion and amendment of files with non-alpha numeric characters;

| KS3 National Curriculum.pdf | 1421512 | 05-Nov-2008 16:21 | rename · delete |

subject: Information Technology · view portfolio web page · manage portfolio folder

www.geodata.soton.ac.uk/rgse/fmanage/Information_Technology/louise.lenton/KS3%20National%20Curriculum.pdf

3. labelling of links in entry scripts and in FManage;

4. clearer labelling of actions;

5. enhanced memory, storage, backup and server provision;

6. More icons for file types, both generic and SOE specialist;

7. File upload and disk usage limits to increase to 50MB in both cases;

Geography			
📁 Shared access: Read only	1.4 MB	view web page · manage folder · remove	☐
📁 Shared access: Writeable	48.3 MB	view web page · manage folder · remove	☐

8. Shared folders renamed and always show at the top of entry lists;

📁 Electronic Portfolio System

User list: Information Technology

Name	Size	Operations
📁 Shared access: Read only	0.2 MB	view web page · manage folder
📁 Shared access: Writeable	4.2 MB	view web page · manage folder

9. Log emails collected and sent one per tutor per day notifying tutors when trainees upload files; better monitoring emails for tutors;
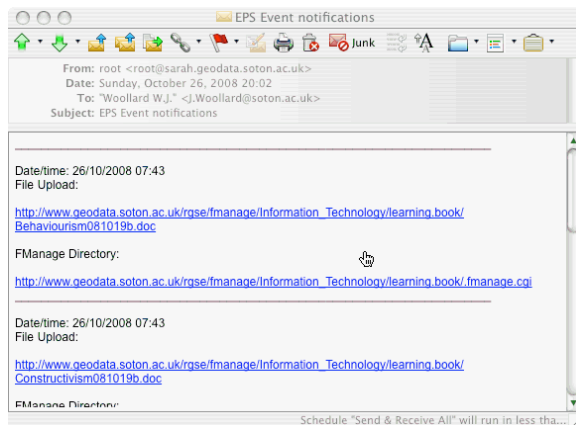
10. zip files of whole directory structures can be uploaded;

🗜 New National Curriculum.zip	2472561	05-Nov-2008 15:49	rename · delete · unzip

11. easier folder deletion.

Tutor actions:

» List portfolios
» Create a read-only portfolio
» Delete unwanted portfolios

📁 Shared access: Read only	0 MB	view web page · manage folder · remove	☐
📁 Shared access: Writeable	0 MB	view web page · manage folder · remove	☐

Remove selected

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Authors

Louise Lenton, Curriculum Tutor PGCE Secondary

School of Education, University of Southampton

L.Lenton@southampton.ac.uk

John Woollard, Lecturer in Information Technology Education
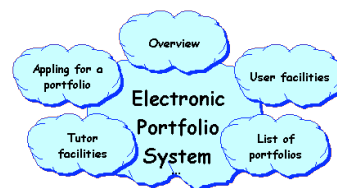
School of Education, University of Southampton

J.Woollard@southampton.ac.uk

February 2009

EPS Research Questionnaire (Appendix A)

EPS is an electronic portfolio system (e-portfolio) that is used within the School of Education for a number of courses.

http://www.pgce.soton.ac.uk/eps/

The School of Education has received funding from the TDA Research Awards to enable the development of 'The Electronic Portfolio System' (e-portfolio) and to evaluate the effectiveness of the system, identifying affordances and challenges. We realise that you may have been a regular or occasional user this year and would very much appreciate it if you could help us with our evaluation. Over the years the use and value of this e-portfolio system has changed and through the support of the TDA and with your help, will continue to develop in the near future.

Participation in this activity is entirely voluntary. The responses to this questionnaire do not form any part of your assessment or training for QTS. Your name will not be recorded against your response. The responses will be analysed and reported upon as "a teacher training group in June 2008" - quotations will not be attributed to individuals. We hope that you will contribute as fully and sincerely as possible in the best interests of future trainee teachers.

Remember, none of your comments will be directly attributable to you personally. There will be no record retained of the names of respondents. For further information regarding this evaluation of the EPS system please email PGCE@soton.ac.uk or telephone 02380 592998 leaving your message and a contact telephone number. In the case of complaint, please write to:

Professor Melanie Nind

Chair of the Research Ethics Committee
School of Education, University of Southampton
Highfield, Southampton SO17 1BJ

If you would like to contribute to further research in the future then please enter your email address:

Many thanks for the time you have taken to construct this response. Please email as an attachment to PGCE@soton.ac.uk or print out, write on your answers and hand to Reception building 32 or PGCE tutor (for the attention of Louise Lenton).

We wish you well in your future career.

Louise Lenton   John Woollard

1. If you did not use e-portfolio could you please comment on alternative portfolios that you may have used? Do you think that this e-portfolio would have been useful to you? If so, how?

2. If you did not use this e-portfolio what were the reasons for this?

3. For which PGCE course did you use the e-portfolio system?

4. Were the instructions on the website simple to follow or did you require additional support?

5. Was it compulsory to use or could you use other systems to store/share your work? If you could use other systems, why did you choose/not choose this e-portfolio?

6. Which functions of this e-portfolio did you find easy to use?*

   [subscribe] [upload] [share] [website] [find] [retrieve] [compression] [speed]

   [folder structure] *delete the ones that were not easy

7. Was there anything else in particular within e-portfolio that was difficult to use or that you found frustrating?

8. What does the system feel like to use? Does it stimulate/motivate you to contribute to it? If yes, how? If not, why?

9. Did you find it more efficient to use than other methods of showing your work? If yes, how? If not, why?
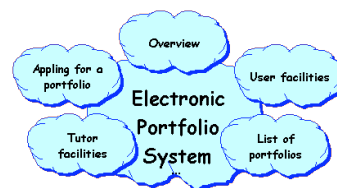
10. How could this e-portfolio be improved? What further functions would you like to see?

11. Do you agree with this statement? If not, why?
'The principles of upload and presentation is in the most simple format possible and therefore accommodating the least skilled trainee by keeping the core facilities basic.'

12. Which is more important to you? An e-portfolio that is simple to use or an e-portfolio that has more features and stimulates and motivates you more to contribute to it in a more engaged way?

13. What do you think about using an e-portfolio in your next job? Would you use one? If yes, why? If not, what would you like to see within e-portfolio to make you continue to use one?

14. Would you be more likely to use e-portfolio if you could move between different e-portfolio systems?

15. Has e-portfolio given you sufficient experience to equip you for dealing with any e-portfolio in your future years of teaching?

16. If there are any particularly positive or negative experiences with using e-portfolio, not mentioned above, then please add your comments here.

Please email back your response to PGCE@soton.ac.uk or hand over your paper copy to your tutor or the Reception for the attention of Louise Lenton.

EPS Research Questionnaire (Appendix B)

EPS is an electronic portfolio system (e-portfolio) that is used within the School of Education for a number of courses.

http://www.pgce.soton.ac.uk/eps/

The School of Education has received funding from the TDA Research Awards to enable the development of 'The Electronic Portfolio System' (e-portfolio) and to evaluate the effectiveness of the system, identifying affordances and challenges. We realise that you may have been a regular or occasional user this year and would very much appreciate it if you could help us with our evaluation. Over the years the use and value of this e-portfolio system has changed and through the support of the TDA and with your help, will continue to develop in the near future.

Participation in this activity is entirely voluntary and you have the opportunity to withdraw at any time. Your name will not be recorded against your response only comments against a subject may be identified. The responses will be analysed and reported upon as "a curriculum tutor group in September 2008" - quotations will not be attributed to individuals.

Remember, none of your comments will be directly attributable to you personally. There will be no record retained of the names of respondents. For further information regarding this evaluation of the EPS system please email PGCE@soton.ac.uk or telephone 02380 592998 leaving your message and a contact telephone number. In the case of complaint, please write to:

Professor Melanie Nind

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Many thanks for the time you have taken to construct this response. Please email as an attachment to PGCE@soton.ac.uk or print out, write on your answers and hand to Reception building 32 or PGCE tutor (for the attention of Louise Lenton).

Regards

Louise Lenton   John Woollard

1. If you did not use e-portfolio could you please comment on alternative portfolios that you may have used with your trainees? Do you think that this e-portfolio would have been useful to you? If so, how?

2. If you did not use this e-portfolio what were the reasons for this?

3. Were the instructions on the website simple to follow or did you require additional support?

4. Did you make it compulsory for your trainees to use? Which other systems did you allow them to use to store/share their work? If they could use other systems, why did you also choose this e-portfolio?

5. Which functions of this e-portfolio did you find easy to use?*

   [subscribe] [upload] [share] [website] [find] [retrieve] [compression] [speed] [folder structure] * delete the ones that were not easy

6. Did the notification by email of student activity make the monitoring of e-portfolio more efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

7. Did you notify mentors in schools that e-portfolio could be "freely" accessible? If yes, do you know if it was useful? If not, why?

8. Did you use the read.access to share authorised documents with your trainees? If not, why? If yes, did you find this useful?

9. Did you encourage trainees to use the write.access to share documents? If not, why? If yes, did you find this useful?

10. Was there anything else in particular within e-portfolio that was difficult to use or that you found frustrating?

11. What does the system feel like to use? Do you feel it stimulates/motivates you and your trainees to contribute to it? If yes, how? If not, why?

12. Did you find it more efficient to use than other methods of retrieving your trainees' work? If yes, how? If not, why?

13. How could this e-portfolio be improved? What further functions would you like to see?

14. Do you agree with this statement? If not, why?

'The principles of upload and presentation is in the most simple format possible and therefore accommodating the least skilled trainee by keeping the core facilities basic.'

15. Which is more important to you? An e-portfolio that is simple for you and your trainees to use or an e-portfolio that has more features and stimulates and motivates you and your trainees contribute to it in a more engaged way?

16. How engaged did you feel your trainees were in using e-portfolio? Was there any negativity towards it? If yes why?

17. What do you think about using an e-portfolio next year? Would you use it with your trainees? If yes, why? If not, what would you like to see within e-portfolio to make you continue to use one?

18. Would you be more likely to use e-portfolio if you could move between different e-portfolio systems?

19. If there are any particularly positive or negative experiences with using e-portfolio, not mentioned above, then please add your comments here.