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An investigation of the factors that influence engagement with CPD within e-portfolios used for accredited Higher Education course

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Growing use of Continue Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios

According to Poon (2012, p.330) "employability is an important issue and has become a major concern by the government, universities and graduates." To increase student's independence learning and employability the use of e-portfolios in higher education is constantly growing (Gibbs, et al., 2009, p.327; Tseng & Chen, 2012, p.163). Students are required to reflect on learning and CPD to provide e-portfolio evidence which may be assessed by either teachers and employers.

Students engagement with CPD e-portfolios

Engagement with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios has been shown to improve graduate employability when e-portfolios are untimed they tend to increase student commitment. For example, a study on e-portfolio engagement Emsen (2011) found that although students were encouraged to use e-portfolios for learning and employability 87 per cent of the students chose not to use the e-portfolio after completing an assessment task. "This suggested that students were strongly motivated by the assessment and not by suggested benefits to learning and employability" (Emsen, 2011, p.114).

Purpose of the study

This research proposes to identify and analyse the factors that may influence engagement with CPD within e-portfolios, focusing on the fundamental disciplines, technology (e-portfolio) and education. In particular the level of engagement with formal CPD and the choices students make are explored.

Research model

For the purpose of this study we develop and use a theoretical model (shown in figure 2) which integrates the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1986) and Task Technology Fit (TTF) (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995). The TAM constructs, student's Self-efficacy (SE), Intrinsic Motivation (IM), Extrinsic Motivation (EM) and Social Influence (SI) factors. The model focuses on 5 different technology engagement aspects that may affect the use of e-portfolios for CPD, including student's perception about the e-portfolio, fit between CPD tasks and the e-portfolio functions, individual differences in self-efficacy, student's intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and social influence. Hypotheses are proposed, based on prior research and the models constructs which can them be used to undertake a study of sample students.

Research questions

What are the factors that influence students to engage with CPD within e-portfolios? Are they: Extrinsic Motivation (e.g. employability)? Intrinsic Motivation (e.g. enjoyment)? Social Influence (e.g. teacher's influence)? Self-Efficacy (e.g. person's capability to use e-portfolios for CPD)? Task Technology Fit (e.g. the match between the e-portfolio functions and CPD task)?

Perceived ease of use and usefulness of the e-portfolio for CPD?

Figure 1, CPD e-portfolio and stakeholders

Figure 2, The proposed integrated research model and hypotheses


