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Abdullah, Fazil, Ward, Rupert, Catterall, Stephen, Hill, Pat and Wilson, David

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

Growing use of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios
According to Poon (2012, p.320) "employability is an important issue and has become a major concern for the government, universities and graduates." To increase student's independent learning and employability the use of e-portfolios in higher education is constantly growing (Gerbic et al., 2009, p.327; Tseng & Chen 2012, p.163). Students are required to reflect on learning and CPD to provide evidence which may be assessed by either teachers and employers.

Students engagement with CPD e-portfolios
Engagement with Continuous Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios has been shown to improve graduate employability, when e-portfolios are assessed they tend to lack student commitment. For example, in a study of e-portfolio engagement Emmett (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 bene fits to learning and employability" Emmett, 2011, p. 114)

Purpose of the study
The research proposes to identify and analyze the factors that may influence engagement with CPD within e-portfolios, focusing on the fundamental disciplines, technology (e-portfolios) and education. In particular the level of engagement with formative CPD and the choices students make are examined.

Research model
For the purpose of this study we developed 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) 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 of 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 influences. Hypotheses are proposed, based on prior research and the model’s constructs which can then 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. employment)?
- Intrinsic Motivation (e.g. enjoyment)?
- Social Influence (e.g. teacher’s influence)?
- Self-Efficacy (e.g. person’s judgment of his/her ability to use e-portfolio for CPD)?
- Task-Technology Fit (e.g. the match between the e-portfolio functions and CPD tasks)?
- 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


