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 CPD e-portfolios

According to Poonn (2012, p. 330) "employability is an important issue and has become a major concern for the government, universities and graduates." To increase student's employability and employability the use of e-portfolios in higher education is constantly growing (Gibbie 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 engaged with CPD e-portfolios

Engagement with the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios has been shown to improve graduate employability when e-portfolios are un-assessed. The concept of self-knowledge is key to student commitment. For example, in a study of e-portfolios engagement Emmet (2011) found that although students were encouraged to use e-portfolios for learning and employability, 87% 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" (Emmet, 2011, p. 114).

Purpose of the study

The research proposes to identify and analyse the factors that may influence engagement with CPD within e-portfolios, focusing on the fundamental discipline, technology (e-portfolios) and education. In particular, the level of engagement with formative CPD and the challenges students are expected.

Research model

For the purpose of this study we develop and use a theoretical model (shown in figure 1) 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. It presents a model that is supported by 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, students’ 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

1. What are the factors that influence students to engage with CPD within e-portfolios? Are they:
   - Intrinsic Motivation (IM)?
   - Extrinsic Motivation (EM)?
   - Social Influence (SI)?
   - Self-efficacy (SE)?
   - Technology Fit (TTF)?
   - Perceived ease of use and usefulness of the e-portfolio (PU)?

Figure 1, CPD e-portfolio stakeholders

Figure 2, The proposed integrated research model and hypotheses


