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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 Continue Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios
According to Poyn (2012, p.33) “employability is an important issue and has become a major concern for the government, universities and graduates.” To increase student’s learning and employability, the use of e-portfolios in higher education is constantly growing (Gelbin 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 both teachers and employers.

Students engage with CPD e-portfolios
Engagement with Continue Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios has been shown to improve graduate employability when e-portfolios are un-assessed. However, they tend to benefit student learning. For example, a study on e-portfolio engagement Emenet (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 suggests that students were strongly motivated by the assessment and not by the suggested beneﬁts to learning and employability” (Emenet, 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-portfolios) and education. In particular, the level of engagement with formative 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) constructs, student’s Self Efficacy (SE), Intrinsic Motivation (IM), Social Influence (SI) and Social Acceptance (TA) factors. The model comprises six 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
What are the factors that influence students to engage with CPD within e-portfolios? Are they: Extrinsic Motivation (e.g. employment)? Social Influence (e.g. teacher’s influence)? 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 CPD?

Figure 1, CPD e-portfolio and stakeholders

Figure 2. The proposed integrated research model and hypotheses

Notes: