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

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

According to Poyn (2012, p.30) “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-portfolio in higher education is constantly growing (Gerlic 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 engage with CPD e-portfolios

Engagement with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios has been shown to improve graduate employability, when e-portfolios are un-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 the suggested beneﬁts of learning and employability” (Emmett, 2011, p. 114).

Purpose of the study

This research proposed to identify and analyze the factors that may influence engagement with CPD within e-portfolios, focusing on the four fundamental disciplines: technology (e-portfolios) and education. In particular the level of engagement with transformative 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), 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, students’ trust in 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., personal belief in her/his capability to use e-portfolios 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


