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Original Citation

Abdullah, Fazil, Ward, Rupert, Catterall, Stephen, Hill, Pat and Wilson, David (2013) An investigation of the factors that influence engagement with CPD within e-portfolios used for accredited Higher Education course. In: Proceedings of Computing and Engineering Annual Researchers' Conference 2013 : CEARC'13. University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, pp. 80-86. ISBN 9781862181212

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Computing and Engineering Researchers' Conference, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield HD1 3DH, UK, December 2013   Abdullah, F.; Ward, R. R.; Catterall S.; Hill, P. A. and Wilson, D.

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

According to Poon (2012, p.430) '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-portfolio in higher education is constantly growing (Gerbic et al., 2009, p.327; Tzeng & Chen 2012, p.163). Students are required to reflect on learning and CPD to provide e-portfolio evidence which my be assessed by either teachers and employers.

Students engagement with CPD e-portfolios

Engagement with Continued Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios has been shown to improve graduate employability, when e-portfolios are un-assessed they traditionally 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 benefits to learning and employment" (Emmett, 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 two fundamental disciplines, technology (e-portfolio) 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), 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' 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 capability to use e-portfolio 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?
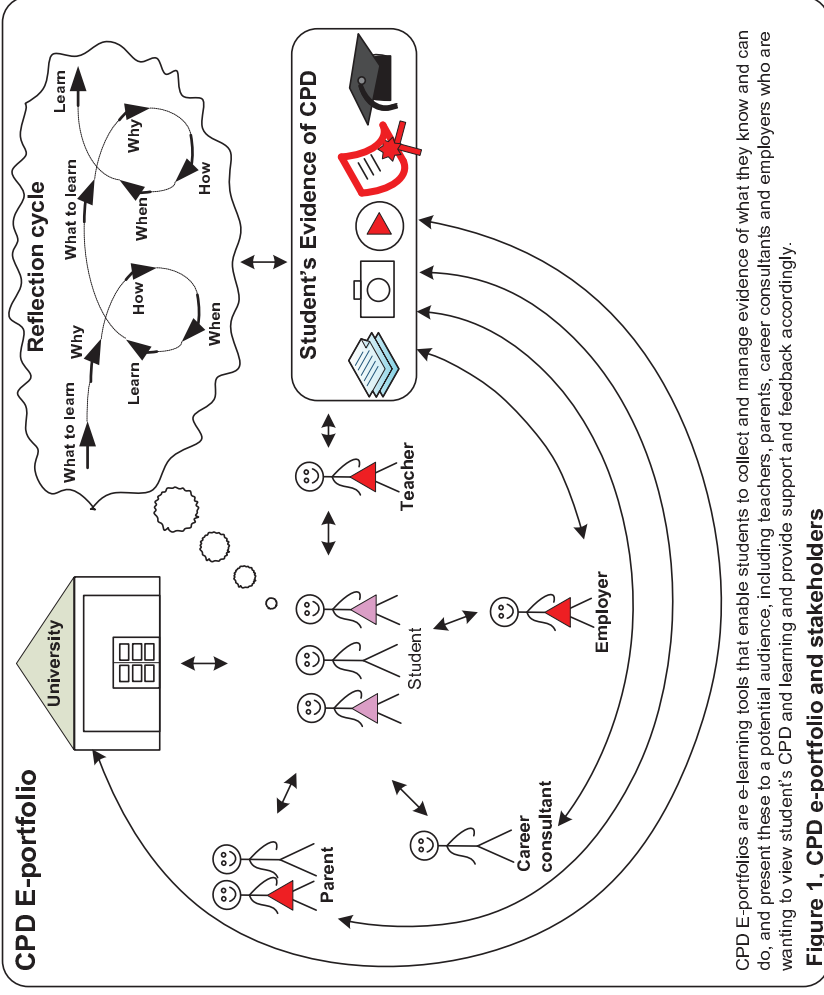
CPD E-portfolio

CPD E-portfolios are e-learning tools that enable students to collect and manage evidence of what they know and can do, and present these to a potential audience, including teachers, parents, career consultants and employers who are wanting to view student's CPD and learning and provide support and feedback accordingly.
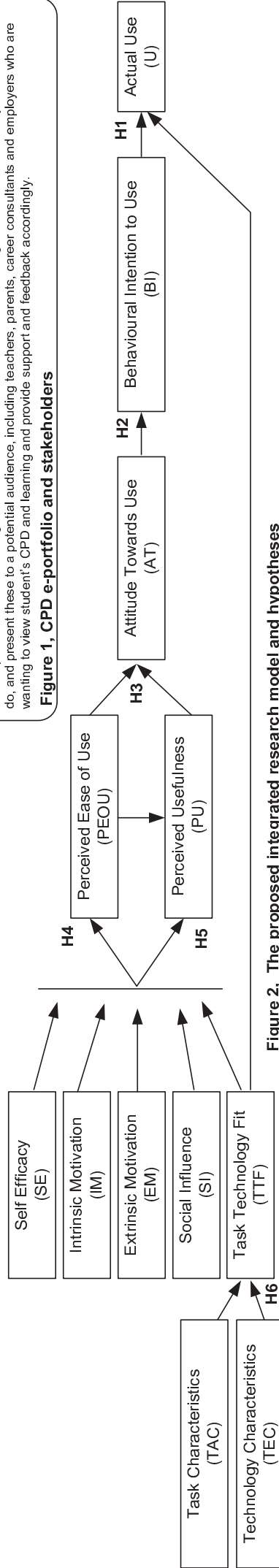
Figure 1, CPD e-portfolio and stakeholders

Figure 2, The proposed integrated research model and hypotheses

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