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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 Continual Professional Development (CPD) e-portfolios

According to Poon (2012, p.330) "employability is an important issue and has become a major concern for the government, universities and graduates." To increase student's independence learning and employability, the use of e-portfolios in higher education is constantly growing (Gallie et al., 2009, p.327; Tseng & Chen, 2012, p.163). Students are required to reflect on learning and CPD to provide evidence which can be assessed by either teachers and employers.

Students engage with CPD e-portfolios

Engagement with Continual 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 suggests 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

This research propose to identify and analyse the factors that influence engagement with CPD within e-portfolios, focusing on two 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 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) 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 five different technology engagement aspects that may affect the use of e-portfolios for CPD, including student’s perception about the e-portfolio, the match between 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. employability)?
- Intrinsic Motivation (e.g. enjoyment)?
- Social Influence (e.g. teacher’s influence)?
- Self-Efficacy (e.g. person’s judgment of their capability to use e-portfolios for CPD)?
- Task Technology Fit (e.g. 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


