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Tinker, Amanda and Kannara, Vidya

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Visual E-Portfolios: a Multi-layered Model to Develop Students’ Professional Identity

Association for Learning Development in Higher Education Conference
21-23 March 2016
Dr Amanda Tinker and Vidya Kannara
School of Art, Design and Architecture
Outline

• Introduction, rationale and background
• Focus group analysis and case study findings
• Presentation of the e-portfolio model
• Discussion, application of model and questions
Tradition of the Design Portfolio
Tradition of the Design Portfolio

“By definition, a design portfolio is a grouping of loose sheets collected in a portable case”

“By the middle of the twentieth century...a portfolio, of a carried case, similar to those that architects produce, became a routine appendage for any aspiring student.”

“Send me your URL’ is fast becoming a more common request than ‘bring in your portfolio’. But according to many design leaders, a website is generally considered an introduction – a preview to the print portfolio that will follow.”

Eisenman (2006, pp.9-10)

“The ‘Exit Portfolio’ - ....the portfolio you [the student] will use when you complete your education and are stepping into the workforce full time...you are exiting the educational phase of your life as an architect, interior designer, or landscape architect. This is when your portfolio will receive the most scrutiny by several, if not many, practitioners”.

Bender (2012, p.28)
To share, map and review current e-portfolio practice, with a view to developing a School Strategy.

- To investigate staff/student perceptions and share current good practice within the School.
- To map current e-portfolio activity within the School and its relationship to the institutional VLE.
- To review current e-portfolio technology, including open source tools and e-portfolio tools/activity in other arts-based universities.
- To develop a School strategy/approach and make recommendations to inform university e-portfolio initiatives.
Method

- Questionnaire
- School event
- Staff and Student focus groups
- Evaluation criteria form
Perceptions and Practices
What, When, Why and How?

- Different ‘definitions’
- Reflection (PDP, blogs)
- Visual showcase (outward facing, exit portfolios)
- Module vs. course level
- Open source solutions
LIZ KIDNER

Texture of Memory.

Texture of Memory is work that I created for my Foundation year at Worcestershire College before my secondary school education. I have been interested in History as a subject and more specifically the history of the World Wars. It was no surprise to me that my subject area began to shape my artistic and creative work in college. As part of this collection I researched and created a series of different aspects of the World Wars, to the atrocities of the Holocaust during the 1930s.
Focus Group - Staff

Characteristics
- Developmental
- Progressive
- Holistic
- Reflective
- Story/Narrative
- PDP
- Digital Identity
- Repository
- Record of Achievement
- Curation
- Collaboration
- Moderation
- Integration (Course, Institutional systems)
- Flexible
- Creative expression
- Sustainable/Portable

Differentiation
- Purpose
- Audience
- Subject discipline
- Time
- Learning log vs. Exit portfolio
- Formative vs. Summative Assessment
- Content vs. Presentation
- Flexible vs. Rigid
- Creative vs. Standardised
- Tactile vs. Virtual
- Supplement vs. Replacement
- Free tools vs. Institutional

Tensions
- Feedback (Student ↔ Staff)
- Assessment
- Audience (Tutor, Peer, Industry)

Motivation

E-portfolios

- issuu
- Google Sites
- WiX
- Mahara

Characteristics of E-portfolios:
- Flexible
- Creative expression
- Sustainable/Portable

Differentiation of E-portfolios:
- Purpose
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Tensions in E-portfolios:
- Feedback (Student ↔ Staff)
- Assessment
- Audience (Tutor, Peer, Industry)

Motivation for E-portfolios:

Focus Group - Staff
Focus Group – Final Year Students

Showing off at the end
Getting that job
Takes time and effort
Stepping stone
An introduction
As fresh as possible, keep it moving
Portrays attitude
Selling yourself
Expected

Reluctant to share early work
Keeps improving
Certain version of yourself
Gets you through the door

Exit Portfolio
&
Professional Identity

As fresh as possible, keep it moving
Ideas
Sketchbooks
Commercial
✓ Professional
✓ Focus on skills and level of ability
Freelance (Designer Maker)
✓ Personal
✓ Character
✓ Focus on the person and product

Interview
Ending with clients

LinkedIn

Pinterest

E-Portfolio
Timeline
Techniques
Progression
Research Journal
Technical File

CV

Press Pack

Vision statement
Physical and/or electronic

“Refined”
Transferrable skills
Extra curricular activities

Snapshot of “the best of the best.”
Our model

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Conclusion and Future Directions

E-Portfolios

Yet, in transition and in tandem....
Currently viewed as a welcome addition (not replacement) to the tactile, physical portfolio.

Students → A means to an end
- Connection to curriculum
- Motivation changes as sense of professional identity develops
- ‘Package’ of different tools

Staff → Holistic view

- Raise awareness of e-portfolio potential amongst staff
- Capture perceptions of first year students
- Identification of an ‘institutional e-portfolio solution’ project
- Pilot model and e-portfolio tool with three courses
Discussion

• How do your students develop their professional identity?

• Which tools/mechanisms are used and what support is needed?

• What would be the main focus of an e-portfolio in your discipline (e.g. reflective learning, PDP, professional practice/exit portfolio etc.)?

Feedback and discussion of our model:
– How might this apply (or be adapted) to your context?
Visual e-portfolio in creative disciplines

Course ➔
Year 1 ➔ Achievements, badges,
Year 2 ➔ ...
Placement Year ➔ ...
Year 3 ➔ ...
...

Content ➔
...
...
...
...
...

Academic - reflective learning ➔

Professional - developing brand identity

e-portfolio repository of artefacts and evidence

Audience ➔
Tutors ➔ Reflective Summary
Peers ➔ Reflective Summary
Public ➔ Reflective Summary
Public ➔ Reflective Summary
...
...
...
...
...

Curated showcase

Dr Amanda Tinker & Vidya Kannara — University of Huddersfield, 2016


