



Outduction: Enhancing the Final Year Experience

Case Study

Title	An Investigation Into The Use of E-Portfolio Tools To Enhance The Final Year Engineering Project Experience
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Keywords	E-Portfolio, Final Year Engineering Project, STEM.
Intended learning outcome	The identification of the degree to which e-portfolio tools can be applied to Final Year Engineering Projects (FYEPs) with a view to supporting and enhancing the experience from the perspectives of supervisor and student respectively.
Problem statement (what did the case study seek to address?)	<p>During the course of a FYEP, students need to apply a variety of skills, including time management, project management and personal reflection. Students can use logbooks to demonstrate progress to their supervisors, who may then provide feedback through formative assessment.</p> <p>In the near-future, it is likely that increasingly students will undertake degree programmes via non-traditional routes. In this respect, regular face-to-face FYEP meetings between supervisor and student may no longer be the norm and alternative means of monitoring progress may prove necessary. There is possible scope for improving the FYEP experience through the use of e-portfolio tools, which enable the sharing of material and the establishment of communication between student and supervisor over the Internet.</p>
Context	The University provides students with access to an e-portfolio tool (PebblePAD) for the duration of their studies. To date, this has primarily been employed for personal development planning (PDP), however, the capabilities, in allowing users to generate, store and share evidence and reflections offer opportunities for other applications.

Activity	<p>The project's research methodology combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with supervisors are planned for over the summer. On-line questionnaires have been completed by supervisors (11 returns) and students (31 returns), respectively. A short pilot project involving electrical and electronic engineering FYEPs will conclude the project.</p>
Issues	<p>The main issue to come out of the on-line questionnaires was the lack of knowledge in the use of PebblePAD among staff and students, alike.</p>
Hot tips/key points for effective practice	<p>If e-portfolio tools are to be employed in FYEPs, there is a need to demonstrate the added value that they would bring to the experience. This needs to apply to supervisors, as well as students.</p> <p>Introducing an element of PDP into the engineering curricula could help to reinforce the value of e-portfolio tools.</p> <p>Broadening the assessment of FYEPs to include a portfolio of achievement based on two semesters of work, as opposed to the current practice of a final report and poster presentation at the end of the exercise, could present the opportunity to employ e-portfolio tools as part of the FYEP's activities.</p>
Web link	<p>http://www.hestem.ac.uk/partners/north-east</p>