Investigation of the Applicability of an E-Portfolio Tool to Support Final Year Engineering Projects

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The Final Year Engineering Project (FYEP) requires students to apply a range of personal, practical and technical skills.

At Bradford, the FYEP spans two semesters and is assessed by a poster and a report.

Progress tends to be gauged through regular face-to-face meetings between supervisor and student.

As study patterns and employers’ needs change, new ways of learning and teaching may be necessary.

E-portfolio tools have the potential to enhance the FYEP experience from the perspectives of supervisor and student.

Objectives

- To identify existing practice among supervisors and students
- To raise level of awareness of capabilities of e-portfolio tools
- To evaluate the performance of e-portfolio tools when used for FYEPs

Methodology

- Apply a mixture of qualitative and quantitative techniques
- Consult both supervisors and students
- Perform initial data gathering through online questionnaires and semi-structured face-to-face interviews
- Conclude with a pilot phase involving PebblePad, the University’s e-portfolio tool

Survey Results: Student Experience

The questionnaire comprised five sections: Background, Meetings, Skills, Assessment and Technology.

On-line questionnaires were made available to FYEP students and supervisors from 20 May to 31 May 2011.

13 FYEP supervisors and 31 students completed the on-line questionnaires.

Responses from students were received from all five of the School’s Programme Teams.

Survey Results: Supervisor Experience

Background and Rationale

- The Final Year Engineering Project (FYEP) requires students to apply a range of personal, practical and technical skills.
- At Bradford, the FYEP spans two semesters and is assessed by a poster and a report.
- Progress tends to be gauged through regular face-to-face meetings between supervisor and student.
- As study patterns and employers’ needs change, new ways of learning and teaching may be necessary.
- E-portfolio tools have the potential to enhance the FYEP experience from the perspectives of supervisor and student.

Aim

- To determine whether e-portfolio tools can be used to enhance the FYEP experience

Future Plans

- Analyse results of on-line surveys and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with FYEP supervisors
- Provide PebblePad training for supervisors and students at start of 2011/12 academic year
- Design suitable e-portfolio experiment for 2011/12 FYEPs
- Write-up results in the form of a Case Study

Further Information

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Elluminate and Ning are not widely used among supervisors and students.

Blackboard is widely used by supervisors and students.

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The project has been subject to Ethical Review Assessment by the University of Bradford’s Committee for Ethics and Research