

Lose the shoebox and get on-line and on course for a successful career

Do you keep stuff about your life and qualifications in a shoebox? A new e-portfolio system has the potential to simplify the process of personal record keeping and personal development planning, promising users the opportunity to present themselves and their achievements efficiently and effectively and to simplify the recruitment process for prospective employers.

The JISC-funded EELLS e-portfolio Project, a first in the UK, is currently in development at the Universities of Hertfordshire and Luton. The project will demonstrate a regional support service for learners which will operate independent of records held only in separate institutional systems. It will explore the benefits of a portal service for lifelong learners within the region through a number of pilots with different learner groups at the partner institutions.

Project Manager Mark Leyland said: “The premise behind the e-portfolio system is that lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important. Nowadays people are likely to have changed jobs several times. They may have dipped in and out of education for academic achievement or professional development. They may have a career that requires ongoing training or continuing professional development - CPD. With an e-Portfolio system there would be no need to keep records and certificates in a shoe-box on top of the wardrobe. Important career and academic information would be organised electronically and could be accessed from anywhere in the world at any time. The system would also show you how and where to upgrade your skills and competencies. It is organisation at the touch of a button.

Nigel Culkin from the Business Partnership Office at the University of Hertfordshire believes there is lots of potential for employers. He said: “For recruiters this goes beyond the traditional CV or application form. It would make all kinds of information readily available to prospective employers or educational recruiters, such as examples of past work, educational certificates, photographs, references. It’s seamless and effective.”

Ben Hodgson, a student at the University of Hertfordshire said: “I can see this is a fantastic innovation. It would mean that when I’m applying for jobs or further study I won’t need to keep collating my personal information. It will all be held centrally in a place that I can access from anywhere in the world that I can get onto the web. I can make it available to whoever I want to see it for however long I want them to see it. It’s also so specific to me that I would be able to spot opportunities for continuing professional development.”

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