

eAssessment Awards Scotland

ePortfolios – Dumfries and Galloway College, DGMySpace

Background

Only 4 short years ago some Dumfries and Galloway College staff were involved in the ISLE (Individualised Support for Learning through ePortfolios) Transformational Project. This project gave the staff an introduction in to how ePortfolios could be used for the benefits of the learners. Unfortunately, staff felt that ultimately the project didn't quite go far enough with the implementation of the project outputs.



Duncan Gillespie and Robert Brown receive the eAssessment Award

Since then the staff involved have taken this on, and are now at a stage where the use of ePortfolios within the college can truly be considered as embedded. This is a huge achievement for those staff involved and has led to Dumfries and Galloway College receiving the eAssessment Award Scotland for ePortfolios/ePDP.

It is all the more impressive when you consider the limited resources that have been used. A borrowed server, some technical support, 1 developer and some enthusiastic staff have taken the college from a small pilot project involving 100 (Computing and Construction) students, to the current year where 1,273 students are actively using an ePortfolio.

It is interesting that student demand was identified as the key driver responsible for moving the pilot on to the next stage. Students who had used portfolios during

the initial college pilot requested that their portfolios were still available to them after the pilot was finished. The combination of student demand, key enthusiastic staff, and Senior Management buy in to what could be achieved has allowed the usage of this developing technology to flourish.

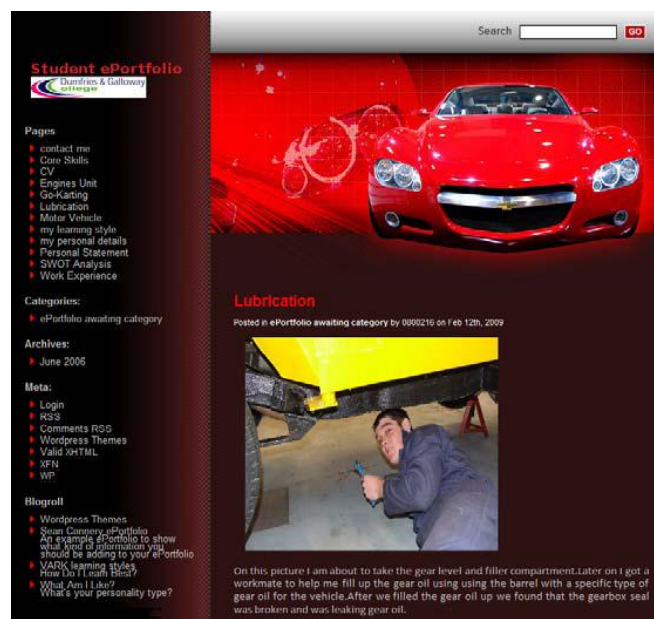
The use of ePortfolios have led to a range of benefits to both the learners and the college. Student satisfaction is very high and an increase in Communication, IT, Reflection skills have been identified as direct benefits as well as ability to use the ePortfolio to improve their chances of gaining employment. As a result the college has seen big improvements in some of Key Performance Indicators (PI's)

Not content to bask in the satisfaction of a job well done, it is pleasing to see that a development plan has been put in place. Recent developments have included:

- the creation of an ePortfolio Manager plug-in that allows Academic Staff to take some of the administration burden from the developer
- the linking in with CEMIS system so that results can be pulled through to the student's ePortfolio
- the ability to load a record of Personal Tutorial Interviews
- increasing the import/export facilities within the system.

Perhaps the most exciting development in this mobile driven era relates to the testing of the system with the Apple iPhone. The trialling of the Wordpress App (available for download from the iTunes store) for the iPhone is currently taking place. If successful, this option will be made available to all prospective students.

Dumfries and Galloway College is to be commended on how well they have embedded the use of ePortfolios. Considering many colleges are still investigating this area it simply shows how forward thinking the D & G staff have been. It is perhaps no surprise that other institutions have been keen to take advantage of the experience/knowledge gained.



Example of Motor Vehicle student ePortfolio

Indeed, a few of the other Scottish colleges have adopted the D & G system, with the college offering additional support for the installation and staff training. There has also been interest from other institutions (both FE and HE) both in Scotland and England as news of the success of this initiative spreads far and wide

It is this kind of commitment and forward-thinking that makes this award for the achievements made already, and the plans for future development, so richly deserved.