

# Chapter 9

## Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of E-Portfolio for Students in Sport and Recreation Internship Placements

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**Abstract** This chapter aims to investigate perceptions regarding the implementation of Electronic Portfolio (e-portfolio) for students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Sport and Recreation Leadership program. Sixty students (Males = 35, 58.3%, Females = 24, 40%) participated in a pilot study by electronically submitting their internship experience portfolio to the Mahara e-portfolio system. A compulsory training workshop was conducted in October 2013. Students submitted their CV, internship information, student reflections and artefacts to the Mahara e-portfolio system during and after the internship in 2014. Students' perceptions and lecturers' comments on e-portfolio implementation were collected and discussed in this chapter.

**Keywords** E-portfolio · Internship · Sport · Recreation

### Introduction

Electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) has been widely used in education and career sectors for the purpose of assessment, reflection on learning process, enhancement of teaching quality and employee recruitment. Temple et al. (2003) defined the portfolio as a systemic and purposeful collection of work and achievement. Weller (2002) stated that applicants could showcase their strengths to the potential employers by the portfolio. Students would be embraced in a constructivist-learning approach which shifts the focus of learning paradigm from teachers to students. The implementation of portfolio empowers students to showcase their learning outcomes and reflect upon their learning experiences (Garrett 2011) which provides a more student-centered and innovative assessment than the traditional examination-centered approach.

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In the mid 1990s, the concept of portfolio evolved into an electronic form (McCowan et al. 2005). The e-portfolio brought along several benefits including storage and greater access to a wider audience for the sharing of ideas and discussion of information (Bruder 1993; Bushweller 1995; Hicks and Nunan 2002). The transformation of e-portfolio from traditional portfolio leads to the increasing popularity of its implementation among higher institutions worldwide, such as Australia and Hong Kong (Cheng 2011; McCowan et al. 2005). Different projects on the use of e-portfolio as assessment or reflective learning have been launched in different higher education institutions with positive feedback obtained from different stakeholders. The e-portfolio allows students to take responsibility for building materials in their own work (McCowan et al. 2005). Students can demonstrate their creativity, their progression in learning, and achievements in the e-portfolio which help them to gain sense of ownership of their own learning. The e-portfolio also allows teachers or outsiders to provide feedback on students' work and with this interactive approach, the quality of the learning experience and outcomes of students can be enhanced.

The use of e-portfolio is still in its early stage of development (Yu 2011) and its benefits are weakened by several factors including the lack of sustainability of students' motivation in completing the e-portfolio, the feasibility for teachers to provide concise comments to all students, and the rigidity of the tool chosen (Rossi et al. 2008). To enhance the effectiveness of e-portfolio, the challenges of implementing the e-portfolio in each institution should be carefully reviewed as each institution is developed with its unique background and structure.

### ***Background of Bachelor of Social Sciences in Sport and Recreation Leadership (SRL)***

The SRL program was commenced in 2005 and over five hundred students graduated from the program within the past ten years. As the SRL program aims at preparing students to provide sport and recreation services for the mainstream as well as different populations, including people with special needs, graduates are equipped with special leadership and management skills in sport and recreation which enable them to develop their careers in different sectors and serve diverse populations.

The SRL program emphasizes the needs on serving specific populations, such as elderly people, people with physical or intellectual disabilities and people who require special attention. In order to better prepare the graduates to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders, the SRL program integrates broad-based academic knowledge in sport and recreation with practical training. The extensive professional placements (500 hours of internship over a period of two years) provide students with work integrated learning experiences in different organizations as a

special feature of the SRL program. Students would gain valuable working experiences in different sport and recreation organizations that serve both the mainstream population as well as people with special needs within the 500 hours internship experience.

Under the supervision of lecturers, students are encouraged to apply the theories that they have learnt in class to the real work situation. Students are expected to work in partnership with their classmates in planning and delivering activities for a specified group of participants. In order to strengthen the learning experience of students, lecturers evaluate students' performances carefully and provide comments on the planning and implementation of the activities. Students are also expected to conduct effective reflection on their own learning experiences by writing reports for all internship activities conducted and compiling all internship reports into a portfolio. The portfolio enables students to showcase their learning outcomes and reflect upon their learning experiences (Garrett 2011). Shroff et al. (2013) investigated the use of e-portfolios in a field experience placement for 77 student-teachers in Hong Kong. The results showed that student-teachers' attitude towards learning on using e-portfolios had significant influence on their perceptions on personal value, feeling in control and taking responsibility in learning. Thus, the aim of this chapter was to investigate the perceptions on using e-portfolios in internship field experiences for students of a sport and recreation leadership program.

## Method

A colleague of the Center for Holistic Teaching and Learning (CHTL) was invited to introduce the "Mahara" software to 60 SRL students in October, 2013 at a computer room. The content of the workshop included basic concept of e-portfolio, and information based on Mahara e-portfolio version 1.7 user manual: Self-help guide for HKBU Mahara users. Students practiced basic design of template, input data, uploading of video, pictures and artefacts on the portfolio during the workshop. Students received a copy of the self-help guide for HKBU Mahara users and they were encouraged to contact the CHTL for inquiry on the Mahara system.

The students' assignment was to design the e-portfolio to introduce themselves to the potential employer of the internship by curriculum vitae (CV) and to record their internship experience. Students started the internship from November 2013 to August 2014. They submitted the CV, internship information, reflections and artefacts to the Mahara e-portfolio system during and after the internship in 2014.

After the submission of the final e-portfolio of the internship course, students completed a questionnaire on their feedback of the e-portfolio in September 2014. In order to gather more information related to the e-portfolio experience, two lecturers and four students were invited to two focus group interviews.

## Results

There were 60 students of the Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Sport and Recreation Leadership program (Males = 35, 58.3%, Female = 24, 40%) taking part in this pilot study. Their age range was from 21 to 25 years old ( $M = 22.22$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ). The contents of students' e-portfolio consisted of the resume which included personal information, such as education and employment history, certifications and awards, career goals, professional memberships, and work skills. Students also uploaded their internship experiences, reflections and artefacts in a multimedia format (e.g. video clips, sound files, electronic documents, etc.).

### Quantitative Result

Survey questionnaires which consisted of 24 items were distributed to students. Students ranked the degree of agreement on each item according to a 7 point Likert scale. The higher the score, the higher the degree of agreement on the statement. The top five and the bottom five feedback statements are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

Students also ranked the overall satisfaction of the e-portfolio experience in a 10 point Likert scale, the mean was 5.64 ( $SD = 1.97$ ). Table 3 shows the percentage of satisfaction score on the e-portfolio assignment.

Students' written comments on the questionnaire revealed that there were diverse perceptions on using e-portfolio at the internship course. The pros of e-portfolio were as follows: "using the e-portfolio is a current trend in the technological era, it is easier to organize materials, it is environmentally save, it is beautiful, it can digitize all materials, it was practical, and I could add artifacts on the e-portfolio". The cons of using e-portfolio to submit assessment at the internship course are as follows: "It was not useful, no one uses it afterward, hard copy is better than digital copy, it is a waste of time, and it was not convenient".

**Table 1** The top five positive perceptions on e-portfolio

Rank order	Item	M	SD
1	My knowledge of technology helped me when creating my e-portfolio	4.73	1.08
2	Control over the e-portfolio content allowed me to showcase my best work in a digitized format	4.64	1.20
3	Overall, I valued the integration of the e-portfolio into the internship course	4.54	1.20
3	I was provided with the appropriate training to assume responsibility for my e-portfolio	4.54	1.13
3	Constructing the e-portfolio helped me to reflect upon my achievement	4.54	1.12

**Table 2** The bottom five perceptions on e-portfolio

Rank order	Item	M	SD
24	Overall, I have a favourable attitude towards using e-portfolio for my field experience	4.19	1.21
23	I would welcome the opportunity to use e-portfolio in future courses	4.20	1.32
22	Overall, I found constructing the e-portfolio valuable to my field experience	4.21	1.21
21	The e-portfolio helped me develop a sense of accountability for my learning	4.25	1.11
19	I enjoyed using the e-portfolio for my field experience	4.26	1.18
19	I acquired useful skills in creating my field experience e-portfolio	4.26	1.25

**Table 3** Satisfaction rate of e-portfolio

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Strongly agree
%	1.67	5	8.33	13.33	13.33	18.33	21.67	10	3.33	1.67

As there were mixed opinions on e-portfolio, focus group interviews were conducted for lecturers and students to investigate the effectiveness and perceptions on e-portfolio.

### *Qualitative Results*

Two lectures and four students took part in the focus group interview. All of them stated that it was the first time that they utilized the e-portfolio to design the CV, the report and the reflection of the internship course.

### *General Perceptions of E-Portfolio*

Lecturer A stated that “the e-portfolio and traditional CV are similar, sometimes, students had difficulties on opening the links and it wasted time for students”.

Lecturer B also found the problems on the linkage of websites and he stated “the e-CV is better than the traditional CV as it looks better and students can add videos, pictures on the e-portfolio”.

Students have different views on the e-portfolio. Student A said “it is a new skill and traditional CV is easier”, while student B said” I learnt how to use the system at

the workshop, it is easier and convenient to change the content of the CV, the system has different template and I can pick a template and input data”.

### ***Difficulties on Using the E-Portfolio***

Students reported difficulties on the Mahara system which are as follows:

Student A: “There was only one workshop and we did not know the system well. I did not know how to use the system well...”.

Student B: “The system has limited choice, we have so many materials and it is hard to present well at the system”.

Student C: “There’s a function on the system needs to be unlocked and it caused problem on opening the web site”.

Student D: “The system has limitation on the length of the words, when I tried to input the name of the award which I had received on my CV, the name of my award was displayed in two lines instead of one. I think the design does not look good”.

As this was the first time for both lecturers and students using the Mahara system to design e-portfolio, they reported difficulties in using the system.

### ***Satisfaction on E-Portfolio***

Both lecturers had fair satisfaction on the students’ E-CVs and lecturer B stated that “the system has low compatibility and students need to spend lots of time...”.

Two students had fair satisfaction on his/her own portfolio, while the other two students commended that they were satisfied with their e-CV. Student B stated that “the e-CV is more beautiful and we can add pictures on the e-CV” and Student D agreed.

### ***Value of E-Portfolio***

Lecturer A pointed out that “The assignment has its value; it encouraged students to reflect their experience during the internship”. Lecturer B stated “Students could use their creativity to present themselves. I am with reservation on the e-portfolio project if it requires lots of time”.

All students commented that the e-portfolio project was very meaningful. Student B stated “It was a good experience for me; I could design and personalize

my CV by adding pictures”. Student D supported this statement and said “We spent time and efforts on this project, the e-CV is better than the traditional CV, we could add pictures and videos on the portfolio and shared with others”.

Student C stated “the e-portfolio provides a media for us to share our experience during the internship, we could add pictures on it, I think it is valuable”. Student A agreed with Student C.

### *Contributions to Graduate Attributes*

Lecturer A stated that “[...] students’ computer skills have improved, they are more proactive in learning”. Lecturer B commended that “this project could enhance the creativity of students...”.

Students C said that “From the HKBU whole person education perspective, this project enhanced knowledge, learning and skills [...] we learnt new skills, although we do not know whether we are going to use it later on or not, it did provide opportunity for us to learn a new skill”. Student A supported Student C and added “It also enhanced creativity”. Student B also supported that this project could enhance learning on computer skills and creativity. In addition, Student D agreed with Student B and pointed out that “It also enhanced communication and team work; it provided opportunity for fellow classmates to work together, to share different opinions and communicate better”.

### **Discussion**

This project is the first attempt to utilize e-portfolio for the internship placement experiences for students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Sport and Recreation Leadership (SRL) program at Hong Kong Baptist University. As students’ computer skills are unlike, the Mahara workshop before the project may not be sufficient for some students, who therefore have difficulties in working on the e-portfolio. More tutorial sections should be arranged to better prepare students with technological skills in using the e-portfolio. More sharing workshops or seminars should be conducted to educate both faculty members and students on the use of e-portfolio as it is a new media to showcase students’ work, encourage reflection, evaluation and enhance students’ future employment opportunities.

Students stated that their technological skills were enhanced, and Wilson et al. (2003) also reported that students’ technological skills had increased after completion of the e-portfolio project.

In the present study, both lecturers and students understood it is a new trend on using the e-portfolio, but with limited skills in technology and the amount of time

needed for creating the e-portfolio, they do have some reservations on using the e-portfolio for assessment. Whiteworth et al. (2011) found that time was the major barrier to the effective use of e-portfolio for school administrators and educators. Hartwick and Mansion (2014) conducted semistructured interviews for principals on using e-portfolio in the hiring process of teachers. They reported that principals' limited time was the major constraint for not using e-portfolio during the hiring process. But 93% of principals indicated that they would use the introductory video in the e-portfolio during the hiring process. Students should learn how to produce a brief introductory video with 3 min to present himself/herself (Hartwick and Mansion 2014).

The use of e-portfolio is common for some time. As the SRL students are required to develop activities plans for different populations in the different courses, such as the "Planning and leading rhythmic activities", the "Planning and leading water activities", and the "Planning and leading inclusive games", students should upload their activities plans by multimedia format (such as video) to their e-portfolios. This will enhance sharing and discussion of the activities plans, thus improve the final produce. In addition, students learn different sport skills at the program, they should utilize the e-portfolio to show case their sport performances and demonstrate their skills to peers and/or the public. Furthermore, the internship placement report should also be done in the e-portfolio rather than in the written format as to better showcase what students have learnt in the 300 hours of internship in an agency. This assessment may also be linked to their CV to demonstrate their rich job experiences, which would be beneficial to their future job hunting.

## Conclusion

Utilizing the e-portfolio is a current trend in the technological era to showcase student's best work in a digitized format. This study supports e-portfolio is a good tool for recording and assessing courses that involves long learning process such as the internship. E-portfolio project can enhance students' computer skill, creativity and even team work. Students are more proactive in learning and the e-portfolio can enhance reflective learning. On the other hand, the major barriers on the implementation of e-portfolio are time and technological skills.

Both lecturers and students have mixed opinions on the implementation of e-portfolio. In order to further promote the use of e-portfolio as an assessment tool for the physical education, sport and recreation programs, more training workshops for faculty members and students is recommended. Finally, further investigations on the effectiveness of e-portfolio and ways to promote e-portfolio in higher education are recommended.



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