

## Researching ePortfolios

In a Lifelong Learning Network



### Lifelong Learning ePortfolio pilots

The Centre is running sponsored trials of the two ePortfolio systems, Nuventive's iWebfolio and PebblePAD with learners and those looking to progress within the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Lifelong Learning Network (LLN). Involving over 800 users by July 2009, we are facilitating ePortfolio use in a wide range of sectors and contexts, working directly with practitioners and eLearning technologists to ensure that the ePortfolio processes best support their learners.

These institution-free pilots primarily involve personal and professional development planning, reflection on progress, action planning, pre-enrolment/transition activities and evidencing for assessment. They are the focus of a wider evaluation concentrating on the challenge of embedding innovative practice, building a community of users, supporting lifelong learning journeys and influencing decision makers.

### What is a Lifelong Learning Network (LLN)?

The UK's Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs), are sub-regional partnerships between post-16 and Higher Education institutions with the remit of increasing vocational learners' progression into Higher Education. Leap Ahead is the LLN for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

### Emerging outcomes

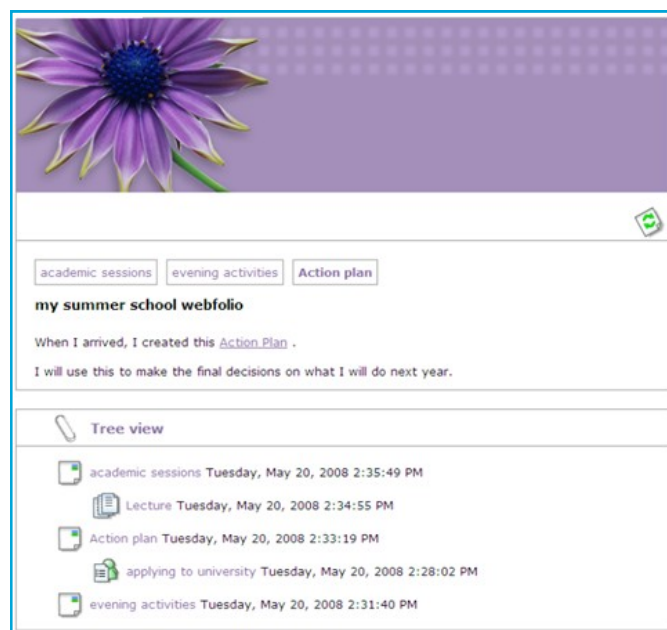
Methods for engagement have involved a move away from the perception of ePortfolios as monolithic systems. Disaggregating ePortfolio functions and preconceptions has meant that direct learner needs and processes can be addressed with specific parts of the technology being used flexibly and imaginatively. Course leaders' reasons for engaging in pilots are varied, affecting their choice of portfolio and ideas on how to use it, which have altered and expanded as they saw how they could use the experience to initiate change to organisational policy.

Work is now in the evaluation and research stage, focusing on which ePortfolio processes are most helpful to vocational learners, and how well the institution-free ePortfolio meets the needs of individuals learning concurrently in more than one institution/location.

### Examples of LLN funded ePortfolio pilots

#### Multiple pilots for organisational change:

**Chesterfield College** are running the CeP@CC project (Comparison of ePortfolios at Chesterfield College) which consists of a range of cohorts, mainly Higher Education computing and also Construction and Access to Higher Education using iWebfolio and PebblePAD. The aim is to enhance the understanding of e-portfolio use for the College so an informed decision can be made as to which way to proceed. Chesterfield are focussing on use of ePortfolio both for learning processes but also to facilitate transition of students, from College to employment/Higher Education, using the ePortfolio as a showcase or as somewhere to gain skills required for Higher Education.



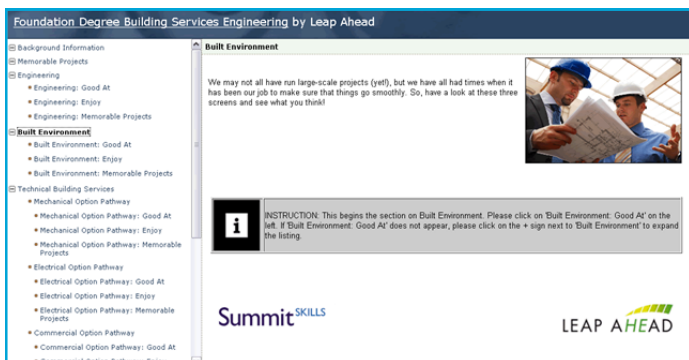
#### Multi-sector pilots:

**South Nottingham College** are running PebblePAD pilots in a variety of sectors including Hairdressing, Media, IT and Sport. They are investigating how an ePortfolio system, particularly one hosted outside of the institution, could be incorporated into their existing learning/teaching practices and Information Learning Technology infrastructure.

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### Impact study of assessment ePortfolio:

New College Nottingham are evaluating the real benefits and issues in implementing an Assessment ePortfolio for work-based learners using OneFile. Working in five sectors, investigations centre around both technological and pedagogical outcomes with an aim to identify where such an ePortfolio can add value to teaching and learning, and also to analyse the support that an institution requires in rolling out a successful implementation, including equipment on digital evidence gathering and Career and Professional Development.



### Stepping stones to learning:

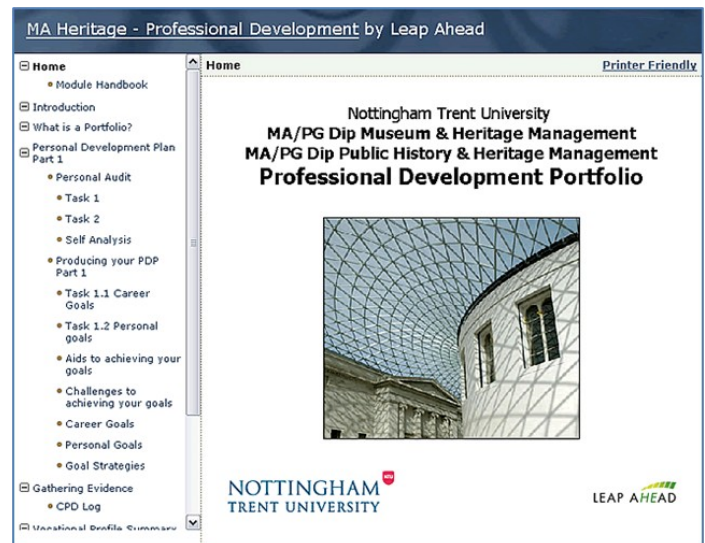
SummitSkills, the Sector Skills Council for Building Services Engineering, are using ePortfolio and related technologies (iWebfolio and bespoke system) to develop 'stepping stones into learning' for employees in the sector to both raise aspiration and match their own experiences to learning outcomes and competences on work-based programmes.

### Who are we?

The University of Nottingham Centre for International ePortfolio Development (CIePD) is funded by JISC, the EU and others to carry out research projects into how eportfolios support:

- learning
- transition into Further Education and Higher Education
- widening participation
- Information, advice and guidance (IAG)

We work with a large number of regional partners including Connexions, schools and colleges, other universities, Lifelong Learning Networks, employers and national agencies such as Becta.



### Heritage studies:

Nottingham Trent University are developing ePortfolio templates for Professional Development Planning in the Heritage Sector using iWebfolio. This replaces a paper system and is being piloted with a cohort of MA Heritage students.

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### References:

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/eportfolio/leapahead/ePFLN.shtml](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/eportfolio/leapahead/ePFLN.shtml)