

Progress Report 2013

As part of my progress report I will outline the following:

- Report description
- Work completed to date
- Ethics
- Target User Group
- Target Journals
- Project Plan

Report description:

My research question is the driving force for my progress report: “Can community education through the deliverance of a Digital Media Technology ePortfolio, bridge the gap between the transitions of further education to employment, from a tutor and students perspective?”

The City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb), have implemented an initiative where eighteen to twenty five year olds are given an opportunity to study in community education with a progression path to higher education qualifications in areas where more employment opportunities are expected to arise as the economy recovers (Behan J. , *et al.*, 2013). The module to be delivered is Digital Media Technology 4N1858. I will be using different elements from this module and establishing an online ePortfolio both from a tutors and students perspective to help bridge the gap between the transitions of further education to employment.

My work that I have completed to date:

I began drafting my research proposal in August 2013, to be submitted to the examination board at the end of August. I received a referral in relation to my research proposal to be re submitted the end of October 2013 to make amendments to my literature review. On reflection I had started to go off on a tangent and with my reading and I was grateful for my feedback. This helped me to refine my literature review specifically towards ePortfolios.

I made contact with Community Links, via Sinead Mc Cann (Project Officer) to submit an application form for community based research projects. This process started as far back as May 2013. I could not submit an application in May, as I had to refine my research question in more detail. The research proposal submission progress in August allowed me to narrow down my research question. In turn this gave me the opportunity to contact Sinead Mc Cann and submit my application form for community based research projects in late September 2013.

Once the application form had been accepted by the community based research projects, a process began to emerge to bring my research proposal on to the next stage.

Liaising with my supervisor Dr Claire Mc Avinia, Sinead Mc Cann and Celia Rafferty gave me the opportunity to have a number of meetings to discuss my research proposal in depth and allow the stake holders a chance to read over what was going to be involved and to voice their opinions. These meetings took place in early October 2013 and were chaired by Sinead Mc Cann (Project Officer). I felt that the meeting helped to validate my research and also gave me a sense of support from all involved. I found that the corroboration process went extremely well due to the fact that I already work for the stakeholder CDET B and that I am at present a student in DIT and also worked for DIT for three years. I have also set up a log book on my ePortfolio page and shared the link with my supervisor to keep up to date accounts of our correspondence.

Ethics:

During this time I have began working on my ethics forms for submission to the ethics committee in DIT. On my first submission to the ethics committee, I received feedback to say that my submission is conditional approval, provided all queries were addressed and re submitted. I re submitted an up to date version of all the ethics forms with the relevant changes requested on the 29th of October 2013 and to date I have not received confirmation of whether or not it has been approved. It gave me a really good insight to be clear in what outcomes I needed for my research proposal. This work might be still ongoing depending on the outcome of approval. Useful Links for Ethics:

Link 1: <http://tel.ioe.ac.uk/research-community/ethics/>

Link 2: <http://www.dit.ie/researchandenterprise/ethicsindit/forms/>

Work that is still ongoing:

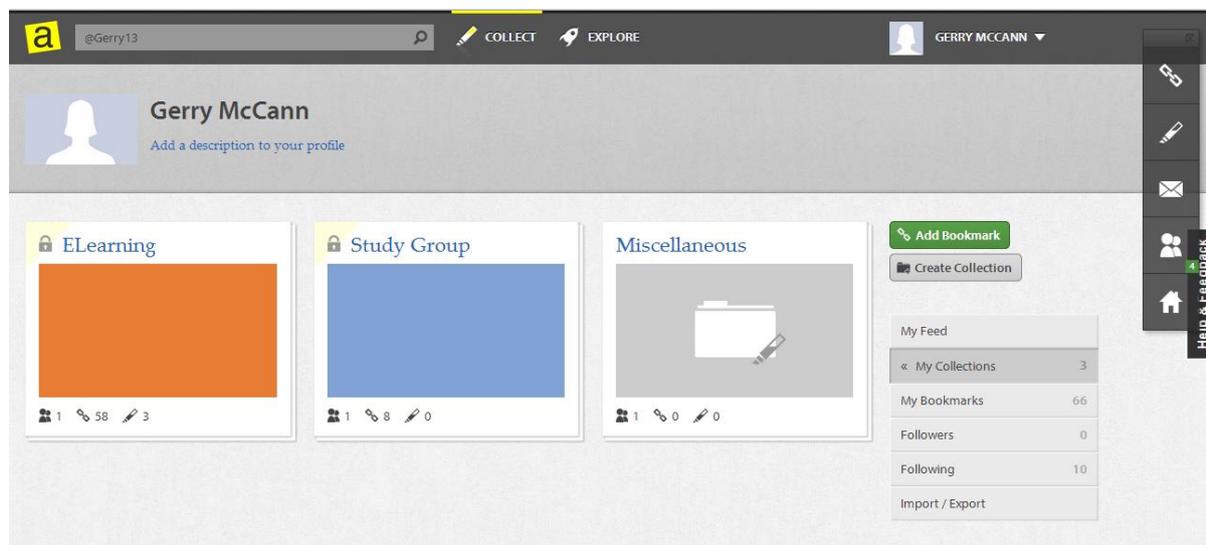
Key elements of my research proposal progression have been supported along the way by my supervisor Dr Claire Mc Avinia through correspondence of email and one to one meetings.

I re submitted my research proposal with the requested changes on the 31st of October 2013.

Results of my re submission are still pending to date.

At present I am working on developing artefacts for my ePortfolio and also updating this section of my research proposal within my ePortfolio. My literature review is ongoing and finding this section, the hardest due to the lack of my attention span with ongoing health problems at present. I am concerned that I am falling behind in my studies and worried that it might hinder my project target projections. I have completed two annotated bibliographies to date and have to renew my books in the library. I have also been researching my subject topics online and keeping up to date with the latest Blogs, Scoop.it, Twitter feeds and current trends in digital media technology. I also signed up for Annotary, which is a social bookmarking tool to organise and collect my online sources as part of my research. Annotary can be used on a public or private setting and can be accessed once there is an internet connection you can login any time to access your sources.

Figure 1 of my Annotary account:



I spoke with my supervisor Dr. Claire Mc Avinia last week in relation to my assignments that are overdue and forwarded on a sick cert from my doctor, to request an extension. I hope to be able to submit my report in due course and deliver my presentation in college next week.

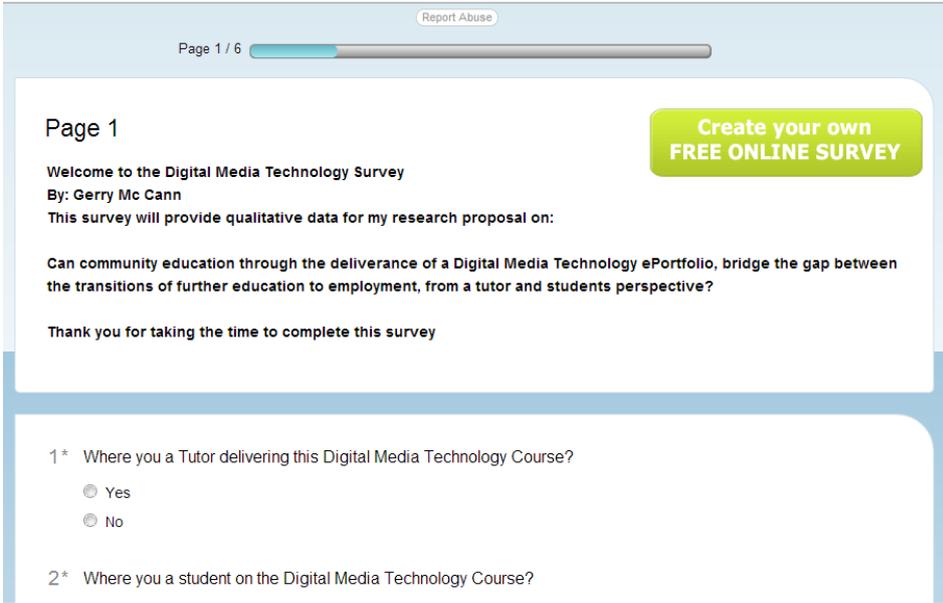
Developing survey questions and choosing which online resources will be compatible for producing qualitative data throughout the duration of my research proposal.

Useful Link: <http://kwiksurveys.com/>

My link for the draft survey:

<http://kwiksurveys.com/app/rendersurvey.asp?sid=3udh820wb54s6bi228038&refer=>

Figure 2 sample of survey:



The image shows a screenshot of a survey page. At the top, there is a progress bar labeled 'Page 1 / 6' and a 'Report Abuse' link. The main content area is titled 'Page 1' and contains the following text: 'Welcome to the Digital Media Technology Survey', 'By: Gerry Mc Cann', and 'This survey will provide qualitative data for my research proposal on:'. Below this is the survey question: 'Can community education through the deliverance of a Digital Media Technology ePortfolio, bridge the gap between the transitions of further education to employment, from a tutor and students perspective?'. A green button with the text 'Create your own FREE ONLINE SURVEY' is located in the top right corner. At the bottom, there are two questions: '1* Where you a Tutor delivering this Digital Media Technology Course?' with radio buttons for 'Yes' and 'No', and '2* Where you a student on the Digital Media Technology Course?'.

Target User Group:

This year under the umbrella of the Employment Services Office Ballymun (ESOB) and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb), they implemented an initiative where eighteen to twenty five year olds would be given an opportunity to study in community education with a progression path to higher education qualifications in areas where more employment opportunities are expected to arise as the economy recovers (Behan J. , *et al.*, 2013). As a tutor I have been employed through the CDETb, in this initiative in order to indentify the difficulties facing lower skilled persons in securing sustainable employment, develop and implement the Digital Media Technology course to the students in the Ballymun area. Students who are unemployed between the ages of eighteen to twenty five ratios appear to be more males than females attending the courses. As part of my research literature review I hope to be able to investigate why this is happening in more depth.

Target Journals:

One of the target journal areas that I hope to be able to submit to is the DIT Arrow repository

Link: <http://arrow.dit.ie/>

My rationale behind this is to allow my research proposal to develop into a journal paper with the hope of being published back into community education. Through Community Links I envisage my journal paper to be of benefit to community education both for tutors, students and other community stakeholders.

I have also been reviewing the following journal papers at present:

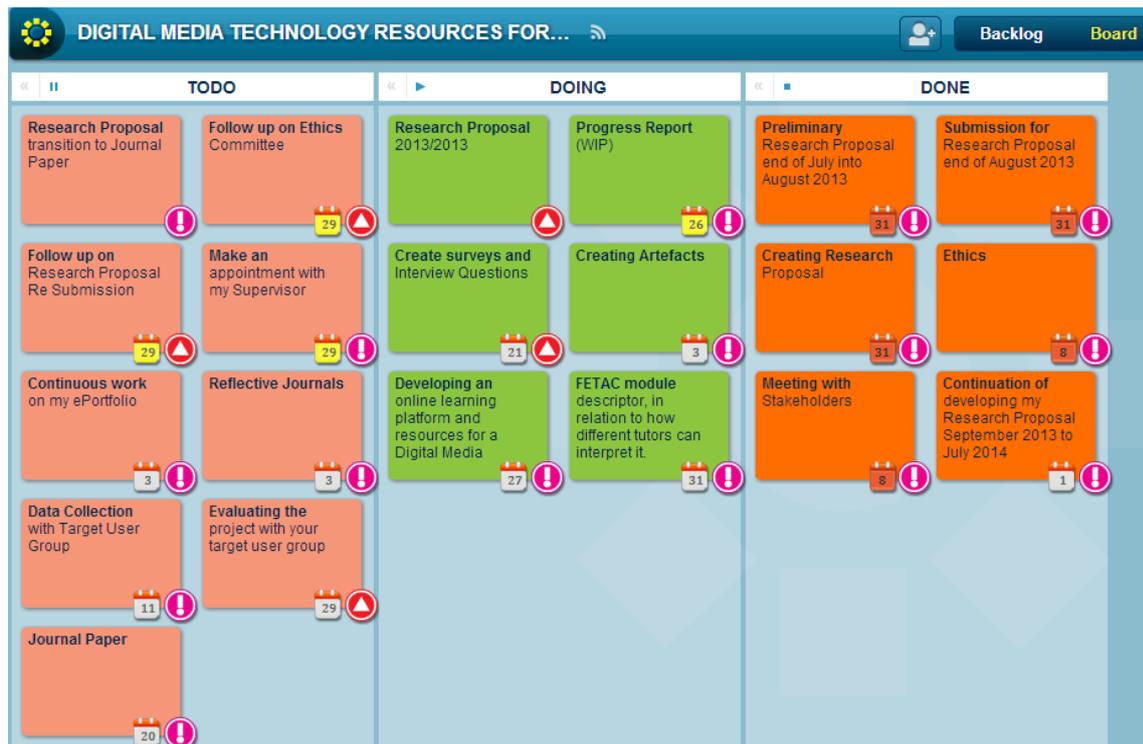
1. Interactive Learning Environments Link:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/nile20/current#.UpQEqcS-2So>
2. International Journal of Emerging Technologies in learning (iJET) Link:
<http://www.online-journals.org/i-jet>
3. ALT-J Association for Learning Journal (Research in learning Technology-ALT)
Link: <http://www.researchinlearningtechnology.net/index.php/rlt>
4. Learning, Media and Technology Link: appears to be down at present
5. Education and Information Technology Link:
<http://www.springer.com/computer/general+issues/journal/10639>

Project Plan:

My Project Plan is displayed below:

Using learnkit Link: <http://learnkit.com/?temp-new-window-replacement=true> to help track and monitor my progression, this will help keep me focused on my target deadlines and will also allow me to share my progression with my supervisor Dr. Claire Mc Avinia and other stakeholders.

Figure 3 of my progression to date using learnkit.com:



Link to my own personal page:

<https://digitalmediatechnolog5100.learnkit.com/Boards/View/77819142> this will be a continuous work in progress. I have sent an invite out to my supervisor Dr. Claire Mc Avinia so that she can be keep up to date with my progression.

Bibliography

Behan, J., Burke, N., Condon, N., Hogan, A. M., McGrath, J., McNaboe, J., et al. (2013, July). *Skills Ireland*. Retrieved August 20, 2013, from Skills Ireland: <http://www.skillsireland.ie/>
 DIT. (n.d.). Retrieved September 01, 2013, from www.dit.ie: <http://arrow.dit.ie/>

Literature Review:

My literature review is ongoing and will continue right through till May 2014. I have narrowed down my reviews to Digital Media Technology ePortfolios and Hybrid online technologies.

See annotated bibliographies below:

Research Question By: Geraldine Mc Cann Cleary

Can community education through the deliverance of a Digital Media Technology ePortfolio, bridge the gap between the transitions of further education to employment, from a tutor and students perspective?

Annotated Bibliography no 1:

ePortfolios: (Flanigan & Amirian, 2006)

Chapter XI ePortfolios: Pathway from classroom to career

By: Eleanor J. Flanigan, Montclair State University, USA

By: Susan Amirian, East Stroudsburg University, USA

In this chapter it covers the basic questions of “why,” “where,” and “how” the development of career portfolios throughout a student’s academic life. It discusses the reasons why portfolios are created, where they are being implemented and how they are of beneficial use to the students. As part of my research proposal question I can use this chapter to encompass Why I choose ePortfolios as part of my deliverance of Digital Media Technology.

Developing ePortfolios at the beginning of a course can help to direct the students towards building their own framework and tracking and monitoring their different levels of engagement and abilities and by encompassing reflective practice and intellectual growth as part of the students’ progressive learning journey. ePortfolios assist both tutors and students as part of their continual assessments of their work. Gone are the days where a traditional paper based portfolio is used. They are now based on the students’ technological skills to congregate and maintain artefacts in an electronic form.

In this chapter it states that “digital portfolios provide a connection or a pathway, moving the student along from the classroom environment into chosen careers”. I believe that as part on my research proposal it is envisaged that the students on the digital media technology course can develop their own pathway to further education, training and industry related work by showcasing their own ePortfolios for interviews and to add to their own professional development.

By using continual reflection to assess the students’ engagement and also complete the learning outcomes of the FETAC assessment criteria, and the students will gain more confidence in their own abilities to becoming an independent learner.

“Examination of their work in the portfolio enables the students to recalibrate (Poore, 2001) and to enhance their growth by analyzing their work objectively”.

One of the key elements of digital media technology is how the students have engaged and developed their technology skills to target job specific industry areas where more employment opportunities are expected to arise as the economy recovers. The ePortfolio can showcase the student’s technical knowledge and validation of their technical competence. “(Satterthwaite & D’Orsi, 2003) state that a portfolio is a collection of easily portable artefacts that serve to validate claims people make about themselves”.

After reading why two professors at Montclair State University in New Jersey and East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania both set up portfolios, although they both taught at different universities and different subjects, the rationale behind why they set it up totally influenced my curation process and directed me using an online learning platform to host the contents of the digital media technology. Students as individuals or within a group could create a digital media technology portfolio as a fundamental part of their learning experience, in addition to contributing to their preparation for internship, cooperative work experience, further education, or job searches upon completion of the course.

This chapter also includes a description of the portfolio development process by using a step by step guide as follows:

- a) Introducing the process to students as part of their course or career would be of huge importance to encourage the students in using an ePortfolio.
- b) Metaphors and Navigation of how the students could be guided around the use of ePortfolios and the key concepts of presenting their ePortfolio visually as well as their technical skills.
- c) Templates can assist me in the delivery of the ePortfolios methods.
- d) Artefacts can be a combination of documents, videos, text, audio and graphics.
- e) Tutorials through practical workshops can help to reinforce the students learning.
- f) Incorporation and Reflection through the use of online journals could be of benefit to the students to meet the learning outcomes.
- g) Grading and Presentations can be used to support continuous assessment throughout the duration of the course and in corporate h) Ongoing Evaluation Methods.
- h) Ongoing Evaluation Methods
- i) Distribution on completion of all students’ work this will be kept electronically and password protected as well as the hard copy to be kept in a locked press.
- j) CD/DVD Enhancement would not be used. Note a memory stick might be in conjunction with it being hosted online.

This section of the chapter allowed me to focus in on the Digital Media Technology module descriptor in-depth to the key elements of how I would curate my own tutor ePortfolio as well as the student learner outcomes. The design considerations gave me the opportunity to research free ePortfolios and other resource tools that could be developed to be used as an ePortfolio. I also had to factor in that the online resource tools all had to be free as there was no budget for purchasing software. The digital portfolios were designed to be hosted online, yet as part of the FETAC criteria the students had to produce a hard copy of their work to present to the external examiner. So I have to also develop a paper based structure to incorporate this to meet the learning objectives.

I envisage that the students could be immersed in the latest digital media technologies and through the host of an ePortfolio that it can help bridge the gap between further education, internships and employment.

Bibliography

Satterthwaite, F., & D'Orsi, . G. (2003). *The career portfolio workbook*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Annotated Bibliography no 2:

Are ePortfolios Still Relevant for Today's Students? By: (Hartman, 2013)

Title:

Electronic Portfolios are no longer just a good idea, that are an expectation and a powerful element of college and career readiness for many.

On reading this online article on the subject of ePortfolios, it has reassured me that ePortfolios are still alive and relevant within digital media technology. This article gives an overall look at how the latest trends in technology from past to present date are still so relevant for the use of ePortfolios in education and employment.

The article asks the following question: Do ePortfolios matter anymore?

“The easy answer to that question is, “yes!” ePortfolios are still a key component to getting into the schools you want and getting hired for the jobs you desire. In fact, it’s safe to say that they matter just as much now as they ever did, if not more”. The reason we’ve stopped seeing as many articles about ePortfolios is because they’ve approached standard practice in the education and employment fields. It’s taken for granted that today’s students will know how to create one by the time they complete their college degrees and seek new employment opportunities, if they didn’t already create one as they prepared to apply to colleges.

On the down side not all students get access to ePortfolios and some of the reasons why can be the cost of software, the tutor/lecturer not implementing them and or the students themselves not being aware how and why they should use them. Being able to share a link from your ePortfolio can give students a significant head start prior to interviews to showcase their abilities and skills in specific disciplines of college and career opportunities.

Key areas such as Information Technology jobs, internships, work placements to graphic design, from business administration to teaching, having an ePortfolio is an excellent way for students in many disciplines to provide prospective employers with a glimpse of their work.

In this article it asks the following question: Bridging the Information Gap on ePortfolios in 2013?

“Today, an ePortfolio can be as simplistic as having a website, blog or online resume. Your academic ePortfolio should consist of your collected academic works and achievements that best showcase your pertinent skill-sets and knowledge which you’ve attained during the course of your academic career. It should serve as a developmental record and personal reflection over that time period. The main themes you want to get across here are personal and intellectual growth and development. Look at it as your opportunity to broadcast all of your accomplishments and selling points to the world by providing a concise visual record of which others can track your progress by”.

Gone are the days when an ePortfolio had to be specific software e.g. Mahara or Pebblepad etc. and in the summary of this article it makes a statement to say that “as the tools and resources available on the web continue to evolve, there are more ways to create and use ePortfolios than ever before”.

Digital media technology ePortfolios can nowadays take many different electronic forms such as Blogs, Websites and Social Media Tools for eLearning. If an ePortfolio has a strong academic theme it will help to ease students into the transition of creating a career ePortfolio. To sum it up in relation to this article can digital media technology ePortfolios, bridge the gap between the transitions of further education to employment as part of my research proposal? And the outcome of reading this article is yes it can.

Bibliography

Hartman, E. (2013, March 24). *Emerging EdTech*. Retrieved October 21st, 2013, from Emerging EdTech: <http://www.emergingedtech.com/2013/03/are-eportfolios-still-relevant-for-todays-students/>