

State of the art „ePortfolio“ in the framework of AVE EXEMPLO project.

Approach

It is widely accepted to concentrate on the informal learning process to realize any added value with an ePortfolio (compared to simple CVs). Additionally it is a common understanding, that the ePortfolio approach is part of a systematic process of learning, reflection and awareness (compared to training sessions that are delivered occasionally).

The reason for this innovative ePortfolio approach lies in the dynamics of the global labour market. This labour market requires constantly improvement of key qualifications such as social competence, ability to take risks, willingness to change, self-management etc. in order to deal with new business or shifting duties. The framework of current jobs and the individual's needs to update competences led to the focus on the informal learning domains, that would connect both areas – through the developments of ePortfolios.

Definition

An e-portfolio is an electronic tool for portraying the employees' skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that she / he has acquired in day-to-day experiences. These could be experiences gained from totally different learning domains at different stages of life e.g. at home, at work, during leisure time activities, honorary posts etc. The ePortfolios sample these experiences, visualise them in meaningful orders, evidence them, connect them with others, proof the individual reflections and showcase the learning processes over time.

In concrete terms, the following content items could be part of an ePortfolio:

- a CV
- a list of skills and competences
- letters of reference or recommendation from previous employers, from volunteer work, from work-study programs
- copies of educational certificates, diplomas, or degrees and references
- academic awards
- copies of positive performance appraisals
- company announcements of promotions, awards or achievements
- workproofs such as documents about self-designed brochures, flyers, pamphlets, report covers, reports, press articles, conference brochures, website designs or other material
- presentations, workshops or seminars that have been attendend
- videos about speeches

- photographs representing projects
- samples of articles
- reports on research
- a list of professional memberships or associations
- personal statements from others

State of the art: European policies vs. project achievements

Today the ePortfolio is more than just a paperless portfolio; more than a mere digital collection of artefacts produced during learning. Nowadays ePortfolios are connected through social networks and exploited as repositories of learning objects created by the learners themselves, learners that are not just consumers of knowledge but active producers of knowledge used by peers, colleagues, clients etc. One of the emerging criteria that now makes the value of an ePortfolio is the value granted to its author by a community of peers. This leads to a new dimension of recognition: the informal recognition of competencies acquired informally which could be a complement, or even an alternative, to existing formal systems of recognition.

In short, the ePortfolio nowadays is embedded into the social computing society. The following table helps to visualize this:

Differences between paper, paperless and electronic portfolios

| | Paper Portfolio | Paperless Portfolio | ePortfolio |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Portfolio repository | A file cabinet with all the evidence in various formats | A computer database with digital representation of evidence | A distributed repository using multiple services, institutional, private |
| Portfolio compilation | A ring binder with manual indexing of documents | A special software can edit a portfolio using the database then export it onto a CD-ROM. | An application running on an Internet server is used to edit a number of pages where a number of artefacts will be aggregated and edited |
| Presentation medium | Mostly paper, but sometimes <i>mixed media</i> , using tapes and video recording — and computer print-outs! | Multimedia, integrating all range of media on a CD-ROM | An Internet Web site |
| Process management | External to the portfolio | An application running locally on the computer can provide some support to the author and the reviewer | Online portfolios offer the possibility to manage workflows, i.e. automatically send messages to the tutor when the portfolio is modified |
| Timing | Once the process during which the portfolio was created is over, the portfolio is usually left on a shelf as a dust collector | The portfolio can continue its life and be used to support further development | It is possible to have a lifelong and lifewide ePortfolio |
| Space | The visibility of the portfolio is limited to those in the immediate proximity | The portfolio can be exported in a digital format and sent to other people | Anybody in the Universe can access the ePortfolio under the control of the user |
| Technology | Paper and mixed-media | Computer, database, publication tools | Blogs, social networks, personal learning environment, etc. |

According to this there is a range of policy activities to be found in several European countries that are connected to the ePortfolio proceedings and thus connected to the AVE EXEMPLO project. The "report on ePortfolio", which has been commissioned to the European Institute for E-Learning (EIFEL) as the leading Europortfolio consortium in Europe, highlighted these developments and emphasised the value of this topic for the consortium. The objective of the report has been to identify the most significant elements in terms of policies and practices for ePortfolios in Europe. Although it is only a work in progress, this report stimulated thematic discussions among the consortium partners.

The partners realised a gap in the quality and in the numbers between the ePortfolios that were realised within the enterprises on the one hand and the findings and recommendations of the ePortfolio report. As there is only a limited number of participants who have established their ePortfolio we, the project partners, have to respect that it has been overambitious to conduct three items in one and the same project: 1) to exploit the tools within the enterprises, 2) to connect it with the concepts of assessing non formal learning outcomes and 3) to transfer it into web technology (which in itself is a fast changing environment). One additional issue of this third item (web technology) is the fact, that people need more time and closer support when they have to use technologies with which they are not familiar.

Nevertheless we think it has been of enormous value that the consortium members analysed the state of the art of using ePortfolios as a tool in the process of life long learning. In brief we agreed on the following maturity matrix for ePortfolios in Turkish enterprises:

| | Not yet started | Awareness | Commitment | Embedded | Advanced |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| Organisational strategy | The organisation is not aware of the potential of the ePortfolio | There is a least one ePortfolio pilot project planned or running. | The ePortfolio is a key component of the organisation's strategy | The organisation has developed an organisational ePortfolio | The organisational portfolio interacts seamlessly with that of external organisations |
| Monitoring | No monitoring or reviewing ePortfolio activity has taken place. | ePortfolio strategy is only rarely monitored, reviewed or evaluated in any detail. | ePortfolio strategy is monitored and reviewed in detail with key stakeholders | ePortfolio strategy is monitored and reviewed in detail in line with the organisation's vision and goals with all stakeholders | The organisation has a well-established, successful and rigorous review framework taking into account sectoral, regional and national priorities |
| Partnerships | No relevant partnership has been identified | A number of potential partners have been identified experts, consultancy, etc. | Partnerships have been established to support the development of an ePortfolio strategy | There is a culture of active, collaborative working and of sharing resources and expertise with other organisations | The organisation is actively involved in a number of partnerships with local, regional, national and European partners |
| Reflective practice | Reflective practice is not part of the organisation's ethos | Some members of the staff are engaged in reflective practice | Every member of staff is actively engaged in reflective practice | Reflective practice is raised at the organisational level | Reflective practice has an impact on the sector |
| Self-directed learning | Self-directed learning is not part of the organisation's ethos | Training remains the dominant model, while there is a certain understanding of the value of autonomous learning | Self-directed learning is encouraged and supported in some sectors/ domains | Self-directed learning is one of the main drivers for individual and organisational development | Every staff member is actively managing their own learning and supporting their peers |
| Staff' ePortfolio (counsellor, tutor, mentor, etc.) | No use is made of ePortfolio for managing staff's competency development. | Some members of the staff have their own ePortfolio, blog or personal web space. | Every members of the supporting staff have an ePortfolio and share their reflective practice | Staff ePortfolios are used for annual appraisal, planning continuing professional development, etc. | Staff ePortfolios interact seamlessly with communities of practice, beyond the boundaries of the organisation |

| | Not yet started | Awareness | Commitment | Embedded | Advanced |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| ePortfolio Authoring Support | Staff is not at ease with technology to support clients | Some members of the staff are able to support the clients most proficient with technology | Every staff member is able to adapt to the level of competencies of their clients and help them to make the best choices | | Staff contribute to the improvement of current systems and contribute to the design of future technology |
| ePortfolio management | Staff is not at ease with technology to support clients | Individual members of staff use ad-hoc technology to manage a limited number of ePortfolios | The organisation has implemented a management system supporting a large number of ePortfolios | The ePortfolio management system is integrated with the main organisation's information system | The ePortfolio management system interacts seamlessly with external information systems |
| Clients' ePortfolio (learner, candidate, etc.) | Clients are not at ease with reflective learning and practice | Technology is used to support ePortfolio practice (e.g. reflective blog) | Clients are at ease with a number of technologies to support the creation of an ePortfolio for a specific audience. | Clients are at ease with a number of technologies to support their ePortfolio practice | Clients use their ePortfolio to engage with their professional community to elicit good practice |
| Information System Architecture | There is no awareness of the consequences of the implementation of the ePortfolio on the existing architecture of the information system. | The ePortfolio is mainly seen as an "add-on" to the existing architecture. | There is a clear understanding of the transformational impact of the implementation of ePortfolios on the information system and the need of its reengineering. | The information system is ePortfolio centric. | The architecture of the information system takes into account the transactions with external entities with which staff and departments interact – e.g. clients, suppliers, professional bodies, regulatory and awarding bodies. |