

EPICS-2 Project Update

October 2008

Introduction

<http://www.epics.ac.uk>

EPICS-2 is a JISC funded project which aims to make a significant impact on the development of support for personalised learning, work-based learning, and life-long learning. It builds on the considerable success and deliverables of the First EPICS project around technology, pedagogy and governance relating to ePortfolios & PDP. The project runs to the end of February 2009.

Breaking News

As part of the theme of personalised learning the project team are currently working with **JANET txt**, a service for sending and receiving mobile phone text messages, as another way to interact with ePortfolios/blogs.

Congratulations to Jamie Thompson on the success of the **ELLI in HE project**, led by Northumbria University, involving the EPICS partners and other HEIs. Jamie also has HEFCE funding for a new study using the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) for retention.

Building on his EPICS-2 work on the technical specifications for lifelong learning, **Paul Horner** has led a successful bid which will help shape national standards, funded by JISC-CETIS.

Simon Cotterill has also led a successful proposal for the "**Dynamic Learning Maps**" project. This 2 year JISC project builds on the concepts for engaging and participative approaches piloted in EPICS-2.

The Information Commissioner's working group on **User-centric Identity Management** is now very close to releasing its final report. Paul Hopkins & John Harrison from Eidentity have played a leading role in this and are keen to promote a large-scale pilot of UC-IdM in the region, in which the EPICS collaborators could potentially play an important role.

ePortfolios, Blogs and Social Networking

The project team have been busy working with programme leaders to get pilots up and running 2008/9. These include the use of blogs and elements of social networking incorporated into the ePET portfolio, with integrated support for evidencing structured outcome/skill sets.

At Newcastle University, the pilots include Combined Studies (promoting cross-module learning in a personalised programme), Speech and Language Sciences (blogs in WBL) and Secondary PGCE (blogs to evidence teaching standards and community publishing).

At Sunderland University the approach is being piloted with overseas nurses and clinical skills programme. PGCE students at Gateshead College have also used ePET in collaboration with the JISC COMPORT project. Northumbria University have also contributed a case study using the Blackboard portfolio.

Personalised learning Pathways for Postgraduates

Martin Edney (Project Officer at Durham University) has consulted with all postgraduate training programmes in the region and run a series of focus groups with postgraduate students. The outcomes of this comprehensive information gathering process have fed through into the ongoing technical work to investigate

the feasibility of a 'regional hub' to support postgraduate training in the NE. The technical work includes:

- Transferring training event information using a subset of the **XCRI** specification (e.g. for amalgamating information from multiple training booking systems).
- Transferring training records of attendance (e.g. into an ePortfolio) using web services – this mechanism has been specified and prototyped.

Regional Forum



The Regional forum was established in 2004 to share good practice and help develop capacity for PDP and ePortfolios in the North East. Forum events are open to those outside the project partners.

Recent Forum events include 'Learning Experiences in a World of Change' (led by **Diane Nutt & Paul Pinkney**, Teesside University, June 2008), Work-based Learning (collaboration with **Bob Bell & JISC RSC Northern**, June 2008), and Identity Management (May 2008).

Life-long Learning

Paul Horner (Project Officer at Newcastle University) has been contributing to national initiatives to develop UK specifications as part of the EPICS-2 and PIOP projects. The emerging technical standards for ePortfolios and personal data will provide better continuity in life-long learning and help make ePortfolios more interoperable with VLEs and other systems.

Mobile technologies

In light of rapid advances in connectivity for mobile technologies we have refocused our mobiles work onto the use of **JANET txt**. This will provide a mechanism for sending and receiving mobile phone text messages, as

another way to interact with ePortfolios / blogs, which we envisage will be particularly useful in **WBL** and other contexts.

Still to Come !

The project activities and evaluation of the pilots will be culminating over the next 4 months. Two further Regional Forum events will be announced in the near future.

Publications

Horner P, Cotterill SJ. **The Holy Grail of the m-portfolio**. Proc ePortfolio & Digital Identity 2008, Maastricht.

Cotterill SJ. **Learning with Web 2.0: hype or reality?** Proc. Festival of Learning 2008, Carlisle

Endney M, Cotterill SJ. **Regional solutions for linking postgraduate training systems and ePortfolios**. Proc UK GRAD YNE Hub 'eResearcher' Conference, Durham, 2008

Cotterill SJ, Horner P, McDonald AM, et al. **A Blog for learning: blogs and social networking with explicit support for skills and learning outcomes, within an integrated ePortfolio**. Proc. ePortfolios, identity and personalised learning in healthcare education. p91-6, 2008 Newcastle. (ISBN 978-1-905788-66-2)

Horner P, Cotterill SJ. **Meeting the ePortfolio Interoperability Challenge**. Proc. ePortfolios, identity and personalised learning in healthcare education. p124-7, 2008 Newcastle. (ISBN 978-1-905788-66-2):

Cotterill SJ, White A, Currant B. **Using Web 2.0 to support PDP** PDP-UK, Centre for Recording Achievement, 2007, 12: 7-8.

Simon Cotterill, Paul Horner, Sue Gill, et al. **Beyond the Blog: getting the right level of structure in an ePortfolio to support learning**. Proc. ePortfolios 2007, Maastricht.

Further Information

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