



## Institutional ePortfolios Video 7: Challenges

### What are the challenges of using an ePortfolio?

The challenge is to demonstrate the benefits to a wider group of course leaders. Really, to be sustainable, we need the module leader or the programme leader to be on board or to see the benefits and the purposes. And contexts are different. So not everybody has the same needs or the same purposes.

(Dr Bettie Higgs, University College Cork)

Some practical things like copyright that we have had to look at in the last little while, particularly as they've moved out of the likes of Mahara, which was the walled garden model, which we could protect and password protect. But once they go public, and they do want to use this kind of showcase element of the ePortfolio, then they've got to think about where do these images come from. Have I acknowledged links and videos appropriately? The other side is just care, I suppose, around being in an online space and what you're writing about – that you don't refer to other students without checking with them about something they might have said or you anonymise something if necessary.

(Dr Claire McAvinia, Dublin Institute of Technology)

Well, the technical competency of some of them, or maybe just their perception of their technical competency or lack of same. That caused problems. That first two to three-hour workshop was always very tense. There are a lot of issues around even, you know, getting onto the computer, accessing passwords, you know, when you help them set up the Wordpress they don't know where to get their password and how to click back in. And it can be quite tense.

(Dr Fiona O'Riordan, Griffith College)

The students were reluctant at first, because it was a lot of work. Because when they took their ePortfolios out to employers, frequently the employers had no idea what this was, what to do with it, they didn't even want to see it. So that was a frustration for the students. Knowing, again, which elements of the programme should be in the portfolio was challenging for us and for the students. The really big challenge was assessment. And we went through a whole series of different ways of approaching that. In at least one instance, we assessed the

work only in the classes in which it took place. And the ePortfolio wasn't assessed separately. We also tried having each element assessed for its reflection in the ePortfolio. And then that reflection mark went back to the instructor in the class and was included in the course mark there. We also tried simply telling the students that the ePortfolio is a programme requirement. So it's pass/fail, but you must submit it. But even in the condition of pass/fail, we felt that an important part of the ePortfolio was our feedback to the students. And that really became the biggest challenge of all. Because we were all conscientious about telling the students good things, pointing out possible changes, correcting any fallacies that we saw, encouraging them to think more deeply, marking the ePortfolio wasn't anyone's job, and it was everyone's job. And it was just an enormous workload for the faculty. And it was an enormous workload for the students.

(Dr Bill Hunter, University of Ontario Institute of Technology)

I suppose if I'm honest, modelling good practice myself would be the biggest challenge for me. Because to use the phrase, you do have to practice what you preach. So we were, you know, encouraging our students to build the pages when we weren't really doing a great job of it ourselves. I have my Weebly site up there, but the student sites are far better than mine. So that's the ongoing challenge I think, to spend the time on it.

(Kevin Maye, Galway Mayo Institute of Technology)