



Montréal 2004 - Catching the Wave!

A Report on the ePortfolio Forum Montréal, November 13-14, 2004

LifIA's Involvement in the ePortfolio

Dr. Kathryn Barker, along with others, has been promoting the ePortfolio since 1997 in Canada. She has written extensively and conducted research with a view to developing and implementing the ePortfolio across all levels of education and training. Her ePortfolio work has established links between the ePortfolio and:

- **education and training** at all levels (K-12, PSE and workplace) - as a teaching tool (reflection as a basis for learning), as a learning management tool (e.g., project-based learning) and as an alternative form of learning assessment;
- **lifelong learning** – as an efficient and effective method of tracking and recognizing ongoing learning, as an incentive to the lifelong learning requirement;
- **Prior Learning Assessment** – as the outcome of the PLA process of exploring and determining an individual's non-formal and informal learning;
- Human resources development and **Human Capital Management** – as the means of identifying and managing what a person and a group of persons knows and can do.

In October 2003, two of LifIA's principals, Dr. Kathryn Barker and Victor Leginsky, attended a seminal ePortfolio conference in Poitiers, France styled as, "The First International Conference On The Digital Portfolio". Reports and presentations were made by speakers from several countries, including one by Kathryn entitled, "Managing Learning in the Workplace with the ePortfolio". Results of that conference included:

- Progress on interoperability: the EPICC project (European Initiatives Co-ordination Committee);
- Creation of the European Consortium for the ePortfolio (Europortfolio);

- Organisation of country events worldwide to place ePortfolio developments in the national context;
- Work on competencies for ePortfolios;
- Development of training seminars for different sectors;
- The strengthening of international links and networks.

Three things became apparent from that conference:

1. the ePortfolio was rapidly becoming an essential tool for conceptualizing, planning and sharing learning among communities, organizations and companies as well as for individuals;
2. EifEL was taking the lead in guiding the development of the ePortfolio for all of Europe;
3. The Americas risked falling behind in the development and use of the ePortfolio without proactive leadership dedicated to integrating all of the projects and coordinating ePortfolio efforts.

It was also clear that for credibility and neutrality, the coordination effort had to be led by a not-for-profit organization. Coincidentally, LIfIA was being created to be the focal point for learning innovation in Canada. What better project to have LIfIA take a leadership role in than the ePortfolio for the Americas? So, **ePortfolio PanAmerica** was born.

The Genesis, Vision and Theme of the Montréal Forum

This Montréal forum had its roots at the working forum held in April 2004, at Vancouver, Canada. Using the presentations given there (see http://www.lifia.ca/en/learn_eport_conf_van04_pre.htm) and the discussions around them as a springboard, the forum participants created a plan for continuing the work of the conference. The plans were made in six key areas:

1. K-12;
2. PLA/Assessment;
3. Research and Quality;
4. Continuing and Professional Development
5. Higher Education;
6. Tool Development and Marketing.

In a bold and foresighted move, a mandate was given to LIfIA to be the nucleus of the ePortfolio for the Americas. To that end, the participants agreed that a PanAmerican ePortfolio forum would be held in Vancouver in April, 2005 to bring together all the work being done in North, Central and South America. Further, a formal partnership was reached with EifEL to the effect that members of LIfIA will gain automatic membership in EifEL, so that we are working in concert with Europe. As well, Phil Abrami and Anne Wade, the principals of the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance, Concordia University, Montréal, who made a great contribution to the Vancouver forum, proposed that a similar forum be held in their city. This would continue the building toward the PanAm Forum and the momentum of the ePortfolio in general. With that, this Montréal working forum was born.

The vision and theme was two fold: consolidate the theoretical basis of the ePortfolio, from both America and Europe, and provide even more concrete examples of use. That informed the choice of speakers and variety of topics.

The Presentations and the Work Done

Over a two-day period, the forum heard and discussed many insightful and thought-provoking presentations thematically arranged by level, learner, community and population. In keeping with LfIA's working forum model, presentations were made to all attendees. Everyone was able to ask questions, and then discuss them in affinity groups and in the "lunch with a speaker" portion of the program. The themes and presentations were:

Keynote: ePortfolio Past, Present and Future: Helen C. Barrett, Ph.D., *International Society for Technology in Education*

ePortfolio in Formal Learning:

Tools for Québec schools and Pre-school and primary education: Bev White-Weber (Director QESN-RECIT): an enlightening description and discussion of the ePortfolio in the Québec primary context;

Process, Showcase And Assessment Portfolios (In Relation To The QEP): Michel Frechette (Societe GRICS) – use of the ePortfolio in Québec secondary schools;

ePortfolio – A Work in Process Part Deux: a report by Stephen Parsons, of Nova Scotia Community College, on the work of the Canadian College that bills itself as the ePortfolio college, touching on areas such as Mastery Learning, Lifelong Learning, Experiential Learning and Transformative Learning;

ePortfolio in the Online Master of Distance Education (MDE): Ulrich Bernath Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg / Germany Centre for Distance Education – a "walking the walk" discussion of the use of ePortfolios in a distance masters level program;

Electronic Portfolio (EPAC) Community of Practice and Learning Communities: Tracy Penny Light (University of Waterloo): a full discussion of one of the premier ePortfolio projects in Canada - Making Research Connections and a demonstration of EPAC Learning Communities;

A Process and Showcase ePortfolio for Elementary and Secondary Schools, Jennifer Sclater ICT Consultant, Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (CSLP) Concordia University, Montréal.

Workplace Learning

ePortfolio & Record of Learning, Campus Canada: Peter Donkers – Executive Director of Campus Canada and a Director of LfIA: a discussion of Campus Canada's "Campus Connection";

ePortfolio for professional accreditation and career mobility – Maureen Layte, EIfEL (Europe): new approaches to the certification of professional competencies;

Human Capital Accounting: Managing Learning in the Workplace with the ePortfolio: Kathryn Chang Barker, Ph.D., FuturEd Inc.;

Skilled Immigrant ePortfolio: Technology Enabled Partnerships to Accelerate Immigrant Integration: Don Present Learning Agents – using the ePortfolio in the analysis and certification of the career abilities of skilled immigrants;

The ePortfolio for Quality Assurance: Victor P. Leginsky, QualitE-Learning Assurance Inc., the “eQcheck Company” – solving the “quality paradox” by the use of the ePortfolio.

Non-Formal Learning

Portfolio Development: ePortfolio & Alternatives for Adult Learners: Dr. Jane Arscott and Dr. Ingrid Crowther of Athabasca University; presentation of a project regarding PLAR tools at an entry, diploma, advanced and degree completion levels, adult learning;

Celebrating Lifelong Learning with an ePortfolio: Shane Sutherland, University of Wolverhampton, England;

The Learning Landscape: Weblogging and social networking in the context of e-portfolios: David Tosh, The University of Edinburgh: a discussion of much-needed research being done on the efficacy of the ePortfolio;

Weblogs as ePortfolios: Sébastien Paquet *National Research Council Canada* and Mario Asselin, *Institut St-Joseph* – a very interesting analysis of a phenomenon in Québec of learning through weblogs.

CSLP (Concordia University) Host Spotlight Panel

Tools for Québec schools: Bev White-Weber (Director QESN-RECIT): an enlightening description and discussion of the ePortfolio tools developed in the Québec school system;

The APOM (Application Pédagogique de l'ordinateur Montérégie) Digital Portfolio: Thomas Stenzel, Riverside School Board/RECIT and Susan Harvey, CS St. Hyacinthe/RECIT - the meaning and logistics behind student-centred portfolios;

McGill Electronic Field Assessment - A review of the McGill Electronic Evaluation Portfolio, by Adam Finkelstein, PhD (cand.), Manager, Teaching and Technology Support, Instructional Multimedia Services (formerly ICC);

Keeping Up – Using ePortfolios as a Tool for Planning Life-Long Learning Needs: Saul Carliner, CSLP (no PowerPoint presentation).

ePortfolio Leadership Panel

The Canadian eParfleche Project: ePortfolio for First Nations Communities: Victor P. Leginsky, LfIA – a description of a project linking aboriginal culture to the concept of the ePortfolio;

TaskStream – New York City USA “*The Tools of Engagement*” – How an ePortfolio solution can function: Sara Cloutier;

Avenet Web Solutions, Michael Norton, Saint Paul, Minnesota: a discussion of a popular American ePortfolio solution;

Standards for Quality and Interoperability: Griff Richards (Simon Fraser University) and Kathryn Barker (FuturEd);

Mobilizing for a Shared Vision: Don Present, Learning Agents – why and how to go down one road toward an ePortfolio for all citizens in Canada;

Europortfolio: “In 2010 every citizen will have an ePortfolio”: Serge Ravet & Maureen Layte, *EifEL* - a controversial discussion of the movement in Europe, and now in the Americas, for each citizen to have an ePortfolio by the year 2010.

Those presentations which included a powerpoint are available to LIfIA members and speakers for download at www.lifia.ca or <http://www.lif-fia.org/> . Please use your LIfIA username and password to access them.

Presentations were interspersed with affinity group sessions, with the types of groups chosen by the participants.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the last half of the final day comprised a strategic planning session and a “next steps” exercise.

Follow-Up Work

The follow-up work to the forum falls into four categories:

1. advocacy for “an ePortfolio for every citizen by 2010” in conjunction with EifEL;
2. ePortfolio research and development projects, specifically regarding interoperability and ePortfolio applications for special populations;
3. extension of the PanCanadian Memorandum of Understanding to include more participants who want to work together in Canada on systematic ePortfolio development to benefit end users; and
4. an ePortfolio for all LIfIA members – a challenge issued by Kathryn Barker to all participants – at least to have started their own ePortfolio by the PanAmerican ePortfolio Working Forum in Vancouver, April 18-19.

As stated at the forum, we are committed to cooperation, complete transparency and open-ness to ensure that we do not waste or duplicate effort, or re-invent the wheel.

We will be sharing more specific information about the plans for the ePortfolio work of the forum with the participants and LIfIA members in the very near future.

LifIA Membership

As stated above, we will distribute further and more specific information to participants who have attended or requested information from the fora, and to LifIA members. We would urge all individuals, organizations and companies that wish to continue their involvement in ePortfolio projects to join LifIA.

The list of benefits of a LifIA membership is growing. Firstly, LifIA is committed to providing all of its members with access to a quality ePortfolio tool. We expect to be able to make an announcement in this regard very soon. Please watch for it.

Secondly, a membership in LifIA automatically gains your organization a membership in EifEL, and a means of participation in the very exciting European ePortfolio projects. Please visit EifEL at www.EifE-L.org .

In addition to reduced rates on LifIA and EifEL events, members have access to all of the presentations made at all LifIA working fora, whether they attend or not. Many more events and ePortfolio projects are in the planning stages. By joining LifIA, your organization will be a part of the most exciting innovations in learning today through LifIA.

Full membership information is available on line at::

<http://www.lifia.ca/> or www.lif-fia.org.

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