

ePortfolio 2006 Plugfest

“Grand témoin”

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Towards an agenda for the near future

- Interoperability people could listen more closely
- I enjoy listening to both sides
 - Users, learners, practitioners, researchers – typically in universities but also in schools, colleges, professional workplaces
 - Software engineers, technology businesses
- I'll be listening to and talking with people throughout the day
 - If you have a burning agenda issue, please catch me for a minute
- Attempt to summarise current agenda, future milestones
 - For interoperability development
 - For research supporting interoperability

The key to e-portfolio system interoperability is ...

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Bringing together users and practitioners ...

- What do users want?
 - for personal use
 - for professional development
- What will help PDP practitioners with personal development?
- What is needed for e-assessment (etc.)?
- **Human** (and social) systems as well as technical
- *Research* angle

... with developers and developments ...

- What interoperability features are developers really able and willing to implement?
- Which features would be needed to enable automatic services related to e-portfolio systems?
- *Practical development angle*

... but

- To make matters more complex, there are multiple dependencies
 - What users want is strongly influenced by what there is
 - Developers spend more time thinking about possible solutions for things that appear to them to be useful – this will strongly influence what they create as tools or services, but is not necessarily what users actually want

The human and the machine

- Machine-processable v human-readable: vital distinction in ambition
- If only human reading is wanted, format matters much less
 - Just put on screen and let human scan/search
- But if machine processing is wanted, everything must be exactly in place

Possible automatic processing

- What is on the cards, present and future for:
 - e-recruitment, employment, HR?
 - e-admissions, educational pathways?
- What other motivations are there?
 - mediating information between public agencies
 - personal (and ethical) development
 - supporting authentic personalisation

Brief history of e-portfolio interoperability

- No concept of interoperability - every portfolio is unique
- Formal highly structured IMS LIP & HR-XML
- IMS ePortfolio – all things to everyone?
- HTML / RSS / "common denominator" XML (back to basics?)
- middle way using RDF / XTM ... ?

More challenges

- Interoperability standards that cover e-portfolio will cover most personal-related information
 - that has implications – needs to be compatible with what is actually there for other purposes
- Round-trip test
 - If importing the information you have just exported results in degradation of information that someone else might want to use, the format isn't working as well as it should

What to do?

- Forums need to keep bringing people together until we get working consensus
 - Here, over next two days
 - CETIS Portfolio SIG
 - PDP practitioners, such as CRA members
 - EIfEL, Europortfolio members
 - European networks and projects
 - Standards bodies

Predictions???

- I'm not a prophet
- But I can see connections ...

Q1

- When will significant numbers of users be wanting to transfer portfolio information?
 - Either batch transfer ...
 - ... or real-time transfer to serve actual use
 - When this happens, the demand for interoperability will become real, rather than theoretical, and the motivation will be there to free information to travel beyond where it was created
 - Less historical over time

Q2

- When will people understand about personal information distributed across the Internet?
 - We will go beyond having to upload files to a dedicated e-portfolio repository – instead just use in place (more of a Web 2.0 idea)
 - When this happens, there will be a motivation for building synchronous e-portfolio interoperability probably within a Web Services framework
 - More immediate openness

Q3

- When will most people really catch on to the power of the e-portfolio concepts in many areas of their lives?
 - When this happens, e-portfolio tools have a chance of being taken up willingly by more than the present small minority
 - Advisors will use them as well
- Compare blogging: only a small minority are active bloggers.

When, oh when?

- All these things *could* happen by 2007
- But will they?
- Depends on human networks
- Commitment rather than prediction
 - Can WE make something happen?
- Sufficient community to make it happen
- Form groups which agree on what is worthwhile, to happen next...

Worthwhile development goals

- New multi-spec family? E.g. something like
 - (simple parts) RSS/Atom, FOAF, Dublin Core metadata, HTML microformats
 - (complex) Splitting down of IMS ePortfolio
 - “Speclet”isation
 - Each lightweight spec must not exceed easy human comprehensibility (tree structures OK)
 - Preferably single spec for the complex stuff – don’t carry content in same place

Worthwhile research goals

- Sort out stakeholder motivation
 - Of all types, in all roles (analytical methodology)
 - Learners / users
 - Educators and others supporting learners
 - Software developers, technology businesses
- Interoperability for competencies and values
 - Frameworks and definitions
 - Role of ontology – ontologies must be comprehensible

Who does it?

- Who is going to fund the work?
- And how do we work in synergy?