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# BEING ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE – THE CHALLENGE OF CREATING A GENERIC SOFTWARE MODEL FOR A CLINICAL e-PORTFOLIO - ABSTRACT

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**Abstract:** The NHS e-Portfolio is web-based portfolio system that was launched in August 2005 with 400 pilot foundation year trainee doctors in Scotland. Between August 2006 and August 2007 the system was expanded to include all Scottish trainees, and trainees from all Northern Ireland, all Wales, and nine English Deaneries. The expansion resulted in the inclusion of 9000 trainees, in addition to 4000 educational supervisors, and 700 administrators. Further to this, the addition of specialty training (such as Core Medical Training, Royal College of General Practitioners, Dental training, and Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health) necessitated further adaptation of the existing software to meet the differing educational needs of these user groups. Significant further expansion is anticipated for August 2008. As such, there is a need to rebuild the NHS e-Portfolio software to allow for a more flexible approach to the addition of new user types, and to deal more efficiently with a significantly larger user base.

We have determined that the existing system would have to be rebuilt using Microsoft's .NET framework to produce a generic product that could account for significant variations in user requirements, not only of those we know of at this time, but also for any future specifications.

To begin with we first needed to deconstruct the existing e-portfolio in order to understand what the core features and requirements were, and then to produce an object model of the system from which a site could be constructed. During the process of developing the object model for a more generic system it was necessary to understand what the core business processes of the system were, and how such a system could cope with variations and exceptions.

What became clear is that we needed to be understand the limits of how generic the system can be. Too rigid or too generic a solution could undermine the overall design model that would result in unnecessary complexity. We show here a model of how we are now building a new e-Portfolio system as an enterprise level web application and how we intend to handle the common and distinct features of a medical e-Portfolio. The solution has involved deriving a means to locate users, ascribe web forms (reflective, work based, and educational assessments) that are available to them, and determine how to set complex read/right permissions on these forms that can vary according to a number of possible parameters.

The software solution is dependent on both the physical structure of the web application, and on the underlying database schema, which are described here.

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