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- E-portfolios for teachers/trainers
- E-portfolios for CEOs and managers
- E-portfolios for information technology and teaching and learning support services
- E-portfolios for employers, professional bodies and career services

### Further reading

Joint Information Systems Committee, (2008):

- *Effective practice with e-portfolios: Supporting 21st century learning*
- *InfoKit on e-portfolios*

These are available from <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/e-portfolios>

### Acknowledgment

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The Australian e-Portfolio Project acknowledges the Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA) in the United Kingdom for their guidance in the development of the original documents resource.

### Contact details

#### E-portfolios business activity

Website: [flexiblelearning.net.au/e-portfolios](http://flexiblelearning.net.au/e-portfolios)  
Blog: [flexiblelearning.net.au/e-portfoliosblog](http://flexiblelearning.net.au/e-portfoliosblog)

#### Australian Flexible Learning Framework

Phone: (07) 3307 4700  
Fax: (07) 3259 4371  
Website: [flexiblelearning.net.au](http://flexiblelearning.net.au)  
Email: [enquiries@flexiblelearning.net.au](mailto:enquiries@flexiblelearning.net.au)  
Address: GPO Box 1326, Brisbane QLD 4001

# e-portfolios for learners



**e-portfolios** ... are becoming popular around the world as a tool to enhance learning and assist with personal career development. As a learner, you might be wondering how you can use an e-portfolio to support your learning. This guide will introduce you to e-portfolios, their benefits, and the issues you need to consider when developing your own e-portfolio.

# What is an e-portfolio?

An *e-portfolio* is a learner-driven collection of digital objects demonstrating experiences, achievements and evidence of learning. E-portfolios provide learners with a structured way of recording their learning experiences and work history.

E-portfolios can be developed quickly and easily to capture live evidence through the use of mobile phones and point-of-view devices, and can include a range of digital evidence such as audio, video, photographs and blogs.

## Understanding how e-portfolios work

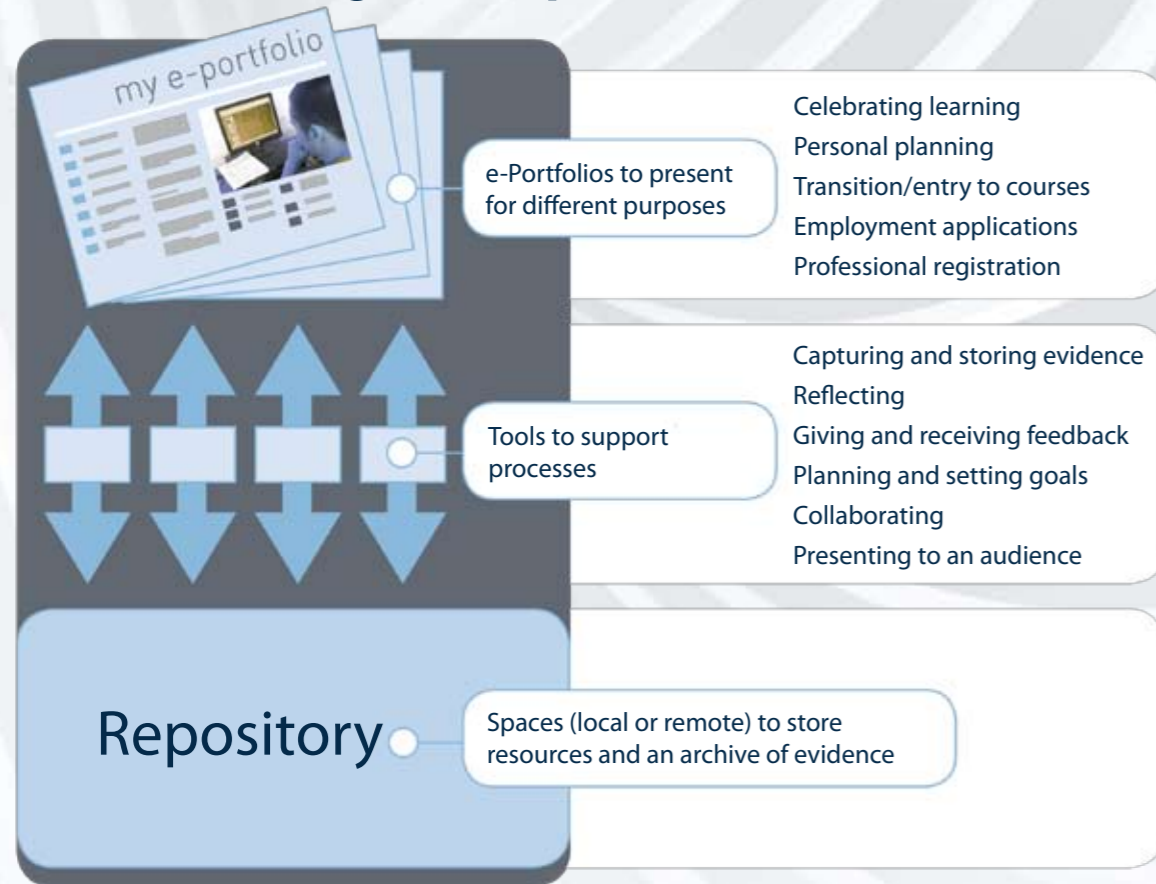


Figure 1 Adapted from Hartnell-Young et al. (2007) Impact study of e-portfolios on learning, Becta 2

## Why use an e-portfolio?

E-portfolios can be customised and personalised into a one-stop-shop to demonstrate your skills and experiences to teachers and trainers, peers and employers.

Many learners find their e-portfolio to be a valuable resource when it comes to writing job applications and preparing for interviews. Learners who have used e-portfolios report having a greater awareness of their skills, greater confidence in their abilities, and feeling more independent as a learner.

In a learning context, an e-portfolio can assist you with your personal development by providing an organised online space where you can:

- develop a holistic overview of your learning, experiences and development beyond individual classes
- understand your learning and experience in terms of work-readiness
- extract evidence to demonstrate your learning and achievements
- identify skill gaps through review of and reflection on your e-portfolio content
- plan, set and review personal development targets.

An e-portfolio is not only a product, but more importantly a process, which can help you to better understand not just what you have learned, but how you have learned.

As you reflect on your learning to create your e-portfolio, you will also develop important lifelong learning abilities that complement your technical knowledge and skills.

## Creating and maintaining my e-portfolio

### Creating an e-portfolio

Your reason(s) for creating the e-portfolio will guide you as to what evidence to include:

- To help me address job applications
- To showcase my skills and experiences to potential employers or professional organisations
- To demonstrate the attainment of job ready skills:
  - Refer to the skills required by your industry (available from job advertisements, industry associations or career advisory services), and think about which of your experiences and achievements align with them.
- To help me plan my personal development and develop lifelong learning skills:
  - Refer to the outcomes identified as important by your teacher/trainer and think about which of your experiences and achievements align with them. Identify which of these you don't have much evidence for. Consider what training or experiences you require to be able to develop those skills.
  - Use your e-portfolio to look for patterns in your learning. Are there certain types of experiences or assessment items from which you seem to learn more? Aim to structure future learning opportunities around those types of experiences.
- To help me transition from training to work or between training providers or further education
- To support my application for RPL (recognition of prior learning):
  - After you have entered a range of experiences, sit back and reflect on which skills you possess. You will probably find that each skill can be used to demonstrate more than one unit of competency or skills set.

### Creating an entry in my e-portfolio

To get the most out of your e-portfolio, you need to do more than simply add examples of your work. Each time you add a piece of evidence, you need to provide a brief explanation for the piece – why are you adding it? What does it display? What do you want your audience to know about that piece of work?

One method to help you provide an explanation is called the STAR-L framework. STAR-L stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result and lessons Learnt and, can help you to structure your reflections about an experience in such a way that the meaning and outcome of the experience can be clearly identified and communicated to others.

- **Situation** – the context in which the experience occurred.
- **Task** – what was required of you in the situation.
- **Action** – the steps that you took in response to the task.
- **Result** – the outcome of your actions.
- **Learnt** – the things you have learned from the experience.

Highlight any skills or abilities that you have developed or improved as a result of the experience. Think about how you might apply what you've learnt to other situations.

### Capturing my experiences in my e-portfolio

Think broadly when selecting experiences to include in your e-portfolio. You can include evidence of skills you have gained during training, at work, in volunteer roles or in your personal life. Some examples might include:

- Assessment pieces you performed well in during your training
- Roles or achievements in full time or part time jobs or voluntary work
- Awards you have received whilst training, at work or in your personal life.

Whatever you include should provide clear evidence of a particular skill or attribute that you possess.

### Accessing my e-portfolio

Whenever you add information to the web it is important to remember that it is a public space. While all e-portfolio systems provide privacy controls, it is essential that you understand exactly who can access your e-portfolio.

You will probably be able to customise your e-portfolio for different audiences, for example by selecting some experiences and evidence for your teacher/trainer to be able to see, whilst keeping other experiences for your eyes only.

Check your training provider's e-portfolio policy to make sure you understand how this works.

### Keeping my e-portfolio up-to-date

To ensure your e-portfolio gives you the greatest benefit, keep your information up-to-date. Think about how you are going to achieve this:

- Set aside half an hour every Friday to add that week's achievements to your e-portfolio.
- After a major event (eg seminar, lecture, assignment, performance), take time to reflect on your experience and add an entry about it to your e-portfolio.
- At the end of each month, spend an hour browsing through your e-portfolio. Consider whether there are any new experiences or artefacts you could add to it as evidence of your learning or skills.

### Maintaining my e-portfolio in the long term

In many cases, training providers will continue to provide former learners with access to e-portfolios after training completion. Check your training provider's e-portfolio policy to find out whether this is possible.

Alternatively, you may be able to transfer your material between different e-portfolio systems, such as that of your employer, a different educational institution, or professional association.

Finally, it is important to know whether there is a point at which your e-portfolio will be deleted by the training provider storing it, for example, if it is inactive for a certain period of time.