

Slide 1:

Presenting Digital Credential Platforms –

Slide 2:

“In a world of global student mobility, and global recruitment of graduates for graduate learning and employment, our combined network **can simplify** and **deepen trust in the exchange and verification of credentials.**” This is a quote from the company behind Canada’s new, official credential wallet for secondary learners and graduates. (Digitary and Parchment Achieving New Heights Together, 2021)

Slide 3:

Consists of an index with the following titles:

- About the Author
- Overview
- The Mobile Eco-System
- Canada
- Potential Value
- Potential Risks

Slide 4: About the Author

My name is Sally Bourque and I’m an instructional designer, trainer and lifelong learner with almost 9 years of experience in post-secondary eLearning. I hold a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education from Bishops University and I’m *almost* finished a Master of Educational Technology through University of British Columbia.

I began this project exploring micro-credentials and badging, but soon stumbled upon the concept of a digital credential platform and wanted to learn more about it.

Slide 5: Overview - So what is a Digital Credential Platform?

Sometimes referred to as part of a digital wallet, or portfolio, it is a platform that allows people to own, exchange, track and share proof of their skills/abilities regardless of geography in a centralized (simplified) manner. (Chaktsiris, et al., 2021, pp. 2-3) This includes access to share official transcripts and certificates from traditional certifying bodies, and potentially evidence of other learning.

One of the biggest differences from traditional credentials *is ease of access* and sharing.

Slide 6: The Digital Credential Eco-system

Digital badges are a *smart* credential based on an open standard that can travel with the people who earn them. (Lafrate, 2017) CanCred Factory and Open Badge Factory are examples of popular platforms for issuing open badges. (CanCred Factory, 2021)

Micro-Credentials: According the Contact North’s Teach Online Blog, “There is no absolute definition for micro-credentials in Canada or anywhere else, in terms of period of study, range of content or specific forms of assessment.” (Ten Facts You Need to Know About Micro-Credentials, 2020) However, generally

speaking they are short, skill-based, industry recognized, shareable, stackable and (in Ontario) it is agreed that they are transcript-able.

A digital credential platform has potential to store and share a variety of credentials.

One of the major cautions/criticisms of the micro-credential is their lack of common framework and inconsistent approaches (McCrae, 2021) however a centralized platform might address some of those issues by enforcing standards for submission and a classification system on different types of credentials submitted to the system. This might be one pathway to begin to solve this ubiquitous criticism.

In the future, it might aid in more reliable references too, by creating opportunity to submit a digital reference to the platform that can “live” there, tagged and classified indefinitely and present a more detailed and broad representation of a person’s experiences and abilities over time.

Success is critically dependent on robust digital security (likely using blockchain technology – similar to cryptocurrency), and equitable access to reliable wireless internet.

Slide 7: Canada - Let’s take a brief look at a Canadian example:

- Launched in 2020, the National Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) has created MyCreds | MesCertif to support mobile learners with trusted document and credential exchange in virtual wallets. (Bold New Ways In Sharing Digitized Documents Internationally: A Canadian Approach, 2021) Documents issued through the MyCreds portal contain digital signatures that meet the legal requirements of certified digital documents in countries around the world
- Several Canadian Universities have subscribed

Slide 8: What is the Potential value-added to education?

- Increased control and autonomy to individual learners
- Supporting new forms of digital credentials
- Increase adaptability of workforce by increasing access to collect, curate, and share representations of experience and expertise
- Enhancement/partner or phase out for services like LinkedIn

Slide 9: Potential Criticisms/Issues:

- Newer credentials lack of common framework leading to inconsistent approaches and confusion in the marketplace (McCrae, 2021) this could be amplified by a digital credential platform
- Reinforcing (or introducing more) monetary barriers to access (ie: if you must pay for access or any advanced services within the platform)

- Risk to information security, having all these important documents and data about a person in one place. We will want to take note of the laws and regulations that govern these new platforms
- Risk of slippery slope to "social credit score" – digital wallet that contains different 'scores' and 'proofs' to other factors related to citizenship

Slide 10: Summary

We have traditional credentials, and in the past few decades an increasing number of (new) digital credentials.

There are also other proofs of skill/knowledge/ability, like job references, LinkedIn endorsements, networking, etc.

Ideally, I'd like to see a digital credential platform encompass ALL these various types of credentials, in an open (free) and accessible way for learners.

My Creds seems to be digitizing traditional credentials from universities and colleges and, in Canada anyway, it's unclear how much this may begin to amalgamate the variety of credentials available or continue to keep them separate. As digital increasingly becomes the standard, it seems likely that institutions that offer micros and badges will want to amalgamate all their credentials under one roof, but time will tell if these platforms are able to simplify and deepen trust as they claim, or simply create more accessible pathways to a confusing and overwhelming variety of credentials.

Slide 11: Thank You

References

- Bold New Ways In Sharing Digitized Documents Internationally: A Canadian Approach.* (2021, June 18). Retrieved from AACRAO: <https://www.aacrao.org/events-training/event/2021/06/18/default-calendar/bold-new-ways-in-sharing-digitized-documents-internationally-a-canadian-approach>
- CAN MICRO-CREDENTIALS KEEP SMBS IN THE GAME?* (2021, March). Retrieved from Alacrity Canada: <https://alacritycanada.com/can-micro-credentials-keep-smbs-in-the-game/>
- CanCred Factory.* (2021). Retrieved from Frequently Asked Questions: <https://factory.cancred.ca/faq/#What%20are%20Open%20Badges>
- Chaktsiris, M., McCallum, K., Luke, R., Cukier, W., Patterson, L., Garreffa, N., & Gooch, E. (2021). *Is the Future Micro? Unbundling learning for flexibility and accessibility.* eCampus Ontario .
- Digitary and Parchment Achieving New Heights Together.* (2021, July 14). Retrieved from Digitary: <https://www.digitary.net/digitary-and-parchment/>
- Digitary Hits New Milestone with 2 Million Learner Accounts Now Registered Globally.* (2021, June 9). Retrieved from Digitary: <https://www.digitary.net/digitary-hits-new-milestone-with-2-million-learner-accounts-now-registered-globally/>
- Lafrate, M. (2017, November 6). *Digital Badges: What Are They And How Are They Used?* Retrieved from elearning Industry: <https://elearningindustry.com/guide-to-digital-badges-how-used>
- Leading the Digital Credential Transformation for Higher Education in Canada.* (2021, June 15). Retrieved from Digitary: <https://www.digitary.net/leading-the-digital-credential-transformation-for-higher-education-in-canada/>
- McCrae, H. (2021, October 4). *Maximizing the Potential of Microcredentials.* Retrieved from The evollution: A Modern Campus Illumination: <https://evollution.com/programming/credentials/maximizing-the-potential-of-microcredentials/>
- Media Release: Seneca joins collaborative national network supporting student mobility.* (2020, September 22). Retrieved from Seneca: <https://www.senecacollege.ca/news-and-events/media-releases/seneca-joins-collaborative-national-network-supporting-student-mobility.html>
- Ten Facts You Need to Know About Micro-Credentials.* (2020, December 9). Retrieved from TEACHONLINE.CA: Contact North : <https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials>

