Learning Technology Staff e-Portfolio – Lessons Learned

Project Description

Professional staff supporting e-learning at UBC are a diverse group, with equally diverse backgrounds and skills. Learning Technology is a new and dynamic field, lacking the well-defined job roles and classifications of more established career areas. Professionals in these roles are called upon to advise faculty members on implementing technology for instructional purposes - a function that requires both technical and pedagogical knowledge. This project will provide a scaffold for Learning Technology professionals to document their skills, knowledge and experience, and assist them with identifying areas of strength and weakness. It will also provide a means for systematically identifying the types of professional development opportunities that should be made available so that the professional staff can better support faculty and students.

Successes

❖ Opened discussions with UBC central HR on participating in the creation of a staff portfolio program.
❖ A core group (6-7 users) still very engaged in their blogfolio and keen to maintain it.
❖ Work-study student developed blogfolio software by customizing Movable Type blog software.
❖ This approach generated a lot of interest at UBC's 2004 e-Portfolio Conference; resulted in many follow-up inquiries about the approach.
❖ Presentation on blogfolio approach at Educause 2005 Conference in Orlando, FLA. (pre-conference workshop).

Challenges

❖ Pilot group dispersed across campus; difficult to maintain communication and gather users together for feedback sessions.
❖ No guidelines on how much time to spend on the e-portfolio; some staff felt that it was extra work added on to their regular workload.
❖ Software difficult to support; heavy on staff-time required to set up and support on a continuing basis.
❖ New users found blogfolios difficult to customize.

User Feedback and Support

❖ Quotes from our users
  ▪ "It allows you to put that extra information that you can't share with your employer during the very first impression. Sure, your employers are going to look at your resume – those are your main

> big points. But if the employer has further questions, they can go to your e-portfolio. Your resume still needs to stand on its own, but the e-portfolio can serve as a supplemental material to demonstrate your skills and knowledge."
>
> - "My e-portfolio will help me manage change. Changes are happening quickly. I will be able to reflect on the transitions".

Recommendations

- ❖ Continue discussions with UBC central HR on an e-portfolio program for staff.
- ❖ Develop, in consultation with UBC HR, a MOST course on building an employment portfolio.
- ❖ Create clear guidelines on how to use the e-portfolio and how to incorporate it into standard workflow and workplace evaluation processes.
- ❖ Choose a simpler application that can accommodate a wider-range of technology skill levels.