



# ePortfolios for creative arts, music and arts students in Australian universities

## Final Report 2015

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Project website: [www.eportfolioassist.com.au](http://www.eportfolioassist.com.au)

Community website: [www.capaeportfolios.ning.com](http://www.capaeportfolios.ning.com)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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Curtin University



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# List of acronyms used

## List of acronyms used

Numerous terms are commonly used for electronic portfolios, including 'eFolio', 'iFolio', 'iportfolio', and 'web folio'. We use 'ePortfolio' throughout this report, even when this differs from that used by cited authors.

|      |   |
|------|---|
| eP   | ePortfolio  |
| CAPA | Creative and Performing Arts                            |
| UWS  | University of Western Sydney                            |
| QCGU | Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University |
| SCM  | Sydney Conservatorium of Music                          |

## Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a 30-month project at four Australian universities, where we documented the impact of student electronic portfolio use on teaching and learning in music and other creative and performing arts. From November 2011 to April 2014, the creative and performing arts ePortfolio project (CAPA-eP) has refined and validated ePortfolio practices to support and enhance quality learning and teaching by university staff. Various terms are used for electronic portfolios, among them 'e-folio', 'e-portfolio', 'i-folio', 'i-portfolio', 'web-folio'. This report uses the term 'ePortfolio' to cover all of these terms.

Researchers from Curtin University, Griffith University, The University of Sydney, the University of Western Sydney used and evaluated ePortfolios in their teaching of music and other creative and performing arts during the 30-month period. In addition to investigating the effects of ePortfolios on students, their identity, and the enhancement of learning in a technology environment, we report the impact on teachers and their responses to teaching through the use of ePortfolios. The ways in which students' learning and academics' teaching respond to the use of ePortfolios differ between the universities: each has different degrees in these disciplines and different policies and uses for ePortfolio based work.

The ePortfolio project was driven by the learning process rather than the technological tool and it is expected that the findings of this study can inform future curriculum, policy and practice for creative and performing arts students in Australian tertiary institutions. The creative application and development of an ePortfolio as a pedagogic innovation in learning and teaching in higher education lies in strategies that students acquire for selecting authentic evidence to document achievements and skills as graduates. ePortfolio development involves problem solving, decision-making, reflection, organisation, and critical thinking by students developing a learning 'story' that accurately represents skills learnt and competencies developed. This report documents the pedagogic and technological undertaking of ePortfolio development for creative and performing arts students and explores how student-artists perceive themselves, and their choice of evidence selected to showcase development; this highlights aspects of artistic identity versus professional career identity, and the ways in which these different identities are engaged during ePortfolio construction and, subsequently, when an ePortfolio is used to represent a student's profile.

The most significant outcomes are: a community website for exchanging information about ePortfolios among the wider public (<http://www.capaeportfolios.ning.com>); an open-source website to provide practical assistance for university students and staff in designing and using ePortfolio (<http://www.eportfolioassist.com.au>); national and international refereed conference presentations, refereed journal papers, and book chapters (see Appendix A); two student encounter days focusing on student-led presentations of their own ePortfolios and including staff professional learning sessions.

This report summarises data from the experiences of academics and students where an ePortfolio has been implemented into curriculum for creative and performing arts degree programs from November 2011 to March 2014 (Table 1). The results show that ePortfolios allow students to demonstrate their artistic capabilities, and increased their ability to plan, implement and assess their learning reflectively and to understand documentation relevant to performing arts careers. Students developed greater competencies in their educational beliefs, pedagogical skills, university generic

attributes, technological expertise, and ability to address the parameters commonly used by employer groups and professional bodies.

Through exploring each institution's experience, we found that ePortfolio creation allows students to achieve a demonstration of artistic capabilities in performance, music technology, musicology, composition and writing. We showed that students increase their ability to plan, implement and assess their learning reflectively and to understand documentation relevant to a career. An ePortfolio is a valuable tool to document students' learning and to use this for future employment as a graduate. The literature published from the project and the case studies demonstrate an overall agreed intention to implement ePortfolio with students of music and the creative arts. ePortfolios are beneficial to students in many ways, although the approach differs at each institution. In individual subjects, ePortfolios are a tool for assessment, for encouraging student interactions, and for the collation of small, discrete tasks through which achieving the objectives of a subject can be seen from a student perspective.

The role of an ePortfolio and its use in music and other creative and performing arts areas in each of the universities is explained in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 sets out the approach and provides a selection of significant literature that framed the project. In Chapter 3 we document the data and results from both students and staff members using ePortfolios in their teaching and learning, and reveal changes to teaching and learning as a result of ePortfolio. Comments derived from semi-structured interviews with both students and staff members are included. The results of the project indicate how teaching in music and other creative and performing arts can benefit from the incorporation of ePortfolios into tertiary teaching and learning. The conclusory Chapter 4 describes how the use of ePortfolios relates to changes in assessment procedures by staff, of how it demonstrates the longitudinal nature of study in music and other creative and performing arts, the ability of ePortfolios to provide holistic views of university learning, and the significance to staff and students of ePortfolios as representations of the multiple identities that music students develop during their studies.

**Our recommendations** are that successful implementation of ePortfolios involves:

1. Investigating and selecting appropriate platforms for specific discipline areas, rather than adopting generic platforms.
2. Training both students and staff.
3. Modelling their use by staff so that students see their uses, relevance and potential.
4. Integrating them into the curriculum, taking into consideration their ability to change styles of learning and teaching.
5. Using them appropriately as an assessment tool.
6. Developing and communicating clear justifications for their use and explanations of their application.
7. Support by universities at policy and implementation levels.
8. The potential for ongoing access to and use after students have graduated.

The outcomes are listed at the end of the final chapter and can also be found on the project Community of Practice website at <http://capaeportfolios.ning.com/>

Project website at <http://www.ePortfolioAssist.com.au>

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## Chapter 1: Aims, background and approach

The creation of an ePortfolio often relies on a student's ability to collect, reflect and select material that is appropriate to an indicated goal, and to exercise the management of their knowledge in such a way that contributes to linking a range of skills – especially pedagogy and technology. The CAPA ePortfolio project provided tertiary students from numerous performing and creative arts degree programs in four Australian universities with skills to create an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio) in which they were able to document their academic and artistic outcomes for future employment and/or enhanced employability in the arts sector. Given the strong impact that ePortfolios have had on the higher education sector in areas of teaching and learning (e.g. previous ALTC grants at Queensland University of Technology – AePP), this project enhanced the development of strategies for tertiary creative and performing artists to document skills acquired and outcomes achieved as beginning artists, and future teachers themselves. Teaching is a key component of artists' career portfolios, and the potential for an ePortfolio to enhance opportunities in this realm was previously unexplored.

The creative application and development of ePortfolios as an innovation in higher education learning and teaching was revealed in the strategies students acquired to select authentic evidence and document achievements and skills as a graduate music and performance studies artist. The CAPA ePortfolio project enabled both students and teachers to consider crucial issues of salient identity and holistic career planning, leading to a more strategic selection of evidence to showcase their development. By highlighting aspects of artistic identity versus professional career identity, the project led to new insights regarding the training of artists. It involved students in exploring their known information and communication technology (ICT) skills and, at times, extending these beyond their expectations. Drawing on the results of previous ePortfolio projects, the literature, and the resources available at each institution, the aim of the project was to provide a range of ePortfolio templates for use by music, performance studies, and visual and creative arts students in Australian universities. This aim is visible through the *ePortfolioAssist* website, which will be accessible to the public from April 2014 to April 2017.

The rationale behind this project is informed by the literature on ePortfolios. It builds on the work of Hallam et al. (2008, 2009), Oliver and Nikolettatos (2009) and Oliver (2010), in previously funded ALTC projects. Specifically, it puts into practice recommendations of Hallam et al. to increase the understanding of the potential of ePortfolios in the university sector, to further the relationship between higher education and vocational education, to provide a medium for lifelong learning, to investigate ePortfolios in a cross-institutional setting, and to use ePortfolio as a means to enhance learning and teaching (Hallam et al., 2009). It extends the work of Oliver and Nikolettatos (2009), who explored ePortfolios as a tool to measure graduate attributes. Other research into the introduction of ePortfolios for university students focuses mostly on their generic use rather than their applications in discipline-specific areas (e.g. Gülbahar & Tinmaz, 2006; Reardon, Lumsden & Meyer, 2005; Hallam et al., 2008; Hallam et al., 2009). One area that has been investigated widely is that of teacher education (Adamy & Milman, 2009; Imhof & Picard, 2009; Wetzel & Strudler, 2005); in music studies, only the area of music education has been specifically researched as a site of ePortfolio use (Bauer & Dunn, 2003). Therefore, the purpose of this project was to devise

ePortfolios beyond this – into other areas of music and other creative and performing arts studies not currently investigated: composition, creative writing, musicology, performance, music professional practice, and performance studies. This rationale covers:

- the need to develop music-, creative/performing arts, and arts-specific ePortfolio templates to aid the creation of student ePortfolios (depending on institution-determined platforms);
- the evaluation of these in cross-institutional settings;
- the intention to prepare students to be technologically astute in presenting themselves to future employers, grantmaking bodies, and potential institutions for graduate study;
- the need to teach students how to use ePortfolios in these contexts; and
- the provision of staff development to enhance learning and teaching (especially the IT teaching context) at the collaborating institutions.

Since their introduction into university learning and teaching in the early 1990s, ePortfolios have become standard artefacts through which students collate, archive, reflect on, and present the outcomes of their studies. For teaching staff, they have become a valuable tool for assessment and are a measurable influence on curriculum design. Student-created ePortfolios are a useful tool as an institutional capstone object in the form of a final, summative product through which a student collates work completed throughout a degree program and demonstrates both knowledge gained and skills developed. The scope of their use ranges from single-task assignments to representations of student progression throughout degree programs.

Used as capstone artefacts (either at the completion of a subject/course/unit of study or at the end of a whole degree program), ePortfolios have other implications. They provide a longitudinal view of a student's learning over a complete degree program in a scaffolded way that encourages students' interpretations of their learning as incremental. The ePortfolio outcomes show that the process of developing electronic portfolios promotes a technology-enriched environment for arts students to cultivate their identity, learning and knowledge; often the requirement to construct and disseminate an ePortfolio acts as the impetus for students to develop more sophisticated technological skills; so ePortfolios play a role in ongoing technological upskilling. Exploring real-world experiences through an ePortfolio allows arts students to engage with technology such that their learning is enhanced and creative identity strengthened. Exploring arts students' identities through ePortfolio work provides students with options, opportunities and a space to continue their learning in a reflective way.

ePortfolios have attracted research interest since the 1990s, with an increase in publications on issues surrounding their use. Specifically in the performing arts, a small amount of research in the late 1990s by Castiglione (1996), Moss (1997) and McGreevy-Nichols (1999) has been followed by widening exposure of discussions of the applications, roles and significance of ePortfolios generally – but not specifically in the creative and performing arts. This project, therefore, was an essential piece of the ePortfolio development puzzle that

researched how arts students could use ePortfolios as a tool for deeper learning, greater understanding of their skills and a vehicle for identity development that broadened their work readiness/graduate employability. This project builds on significant research undertaken in 2009–11 by staff at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (SCM), The University of Sydney, to introduce ePortfolios for students undertaking undergraduate music education training (n=95). This research designed, implemented, and evaluated ePortfolios that students used to demonstrate:

- musical capabilities in performance, composition, and ensemble direction;
- the ability to plan, implement, and assess teaching;
- knowledge of government education policies;
- understanding of documentation relevant to teaching in schools and other careers;
- educational and pedagogical skills;
- university-generic attributes;
- technological skills; and
- the ability to address employment parameters required by employer groups and such professional bodies as the NSW Institute of Teachers (the teacher accreditation body in NSW).

Because individual students in creative and performing arts have different needs and expectations of their future, an ePortfolio can assist students to reflect on their present and dream about their future. A dream can be a reflection and a portfolio is a perfect reflective tool. The University of Sydney research had a major impact on students through the use of ePortfolios for music education and has achieved a number of definable outcomes:

- the uptake of ePortfolios by other faculties at The University of Sydney increased,
- the music education ePortfolios have been showcased at University-wide Learning and Teaching colloquium in May 2012;
- the research generated multiple publications and national/international conference presentations (Dunbar-Hall, Rowley, Webb & Bell, 2010; Dunbar-Hall, Rowley, Bell & Taylor, 2012; Rowley, 2011; Rowley & Dunbar-Hall, 2011; Taylor, Dunbar-Hall & Rowley, 2012; Rowley & Dunbar-Hall, 2012; Rowley, Dunbar-Hall, Bell & Taylor, 2012);
- there was a positive impact on students preparing for employment as music teachers has been evidenced through the production of professional portfolios at a high standard, which has been noted by music teachers and employers;
- there was evidence among music education students of adeptness in the use of technology for pedagogical purposes and the development of strategies of self-reflection and analysis using the ePortfolio;
- the finding that integrating ePortfolio components into music education courses requires academic staff to rethink assessment procedures;

- students have been provided with an observable, holistic, and usable outcome of their degree program;
- research staff working on the project developed expertise in ePortfolio use, design, implementation and integration into the curriculum.

There were extensive trials of ePortfolio for music education students and staff at The University of Sydney as a digital record of achievement that has the ability to store print media, graphics, audio files and audiovisual material. The music education project began with the objective of collecting evidence to document achievement of teacher professional standards; the researchers discovered that ePortfolio was a positive impact on student learning. Not only did students create tools and strategies to make them useable for future employment, but the ePortfolios enhanced learning broadly across their teacher-training program. Students engaged in the process of learning and as a result they reported the development of strategies demonstrating being better equipped as performing and creative arts graduates.

ePortfolios proved to be easily disseminated at the students' invitation via email, as a link to The University of Sydney's commercial ePortfolio platform, and could be continually updated as each user's needs, qualifications and experience developed. (ePortfolio platforms can be commercial or freeware available unsupported on the internet). The project uncovered and identified that students take ownership and rework their portfolio to reflect the person they see themselves as, and at times, acknowledge a degree of conflict about their identity. This foundational research supported the claims in the literature that the use of the ePortfolio is not just as a tool for accreditation but a powerful tool in career planning. Music education ePortfolios acted as capstone objects, were intended for use in job applications, and were designed to address the requirements of professional teacher accreditation (Dunbar-Hall, Rowley, Webb & Bell, 2010; Dunbar-Hall, Rowley, Bell & Taylor, 2012). Their implementation had been analysed for their advantages to student learning and self-reflection (Rowley, 2011), their implications for curriculum design (Rowley & Dunbar-Hall, 2011), their IT requirements (Taylor, Dunbar-Hall & Rowley, 2012), and their relationships to assessment (Rowley & Dunbar-Hall, 2012) and accreditation (Rowley, Dunbar-Hall, Bell & Taylor, 2012).

Considering The University of Sydney music education project achievements, it was clear that there is a need to develop specific ePortfolio templates for music students in other areas of specialisation (e.g. composition, musicology, performance, music technology, and music Professional Practice), and in other areas of the creative and performing arts (e.g. Theatre, film/TV) to be tested, along with the already identified strategies. Thus, here we report on data gathered from each institution in the CAPA-eP project on their approach to ePortfolios, their introduction, contents and applications from its own perspective.

## Chapter 2: Literature review and method

By integrating a technologically driven process into students' programs of study, this project prompted a significant change in the culture of tertiary music, creative/performing arts, and arts studies. It focused on an emerging form of professional preparation for students and taught students how to use relevant technology for their own purposes. It addressed individual students' needs in that each student has her/his own method of progression through a music or performance studies degree program; exhibited her/his own musical/performance learning, tastes, interests, and professional direction; and combined differing levels of performance, pedagogy, composition, and research. No two students have the same study program or musical/artistic backgrounds and outcomes; by creating the possibility of individualised ePortfolios, this project drew heavily on and emphasised student diversity.

Each set of students, we found, requires different ways of demonstrating their artistic/musical/professional skills; ePortfolios are different from conventional approaches in their possibilities for inclusions and modes of digitisation. The project's value lay in provision of ePortfolio templates that can be directly related to the learning and teaching content of Australian music and other creative and performing arts degrees, thus addressing a need. Such ePortfolios not only offer the means for music and performance studies students to represent themselves in an electronic format – with a direct relationship to employment opportunities – but have the ability to enhance learning and teaching at the partner institutions, to refashion the ways students perceive their studies, to integrate digital information and its presentation into students' experiences, and to change the ways in which students and staff respond to the outcomes of study. The project has extended the work of the SCM-only ePortfolio project (2009–11) to a national level through the involvement of institutions from around Australia, responding to a current lack of ePortfolio templates specifically intended for use by creative arts, music and arts students. It has effectively doubled the existing published literature in the field of CAPA ePortfolio

Research on ePortfolios is strongly represented from writers in Britain and the US, but with regular contribution from researchers in Australia, Canada, Europe, and Scandinavia – all locations where educational technology is well established and economically supported, and where its use is an expectation of education systems. Alongside discussion of ePortfolios in generic research publications for education, and those devoted to music and performing arts education, investigation of ePortfolios has become the topic of dedicated journals, professional associations, conferences, and web sites. The literature surrounding the study of ePortfolios in universities has covered a range of conceptual areas, including their framing as a site of learning (Stefani et al., 2007; Akçil & Arap, 2009); as encouragement of student reflection on learning (Doig et al., 2006); as identity definition (McAlpine, 2005); in terms of the institutional implications (Joyes, et al., 2010); the use of ePortfolios to encourage peer assessment (Stevenson, 2006); and consideration of university students as attracted to and adept users of current technologies for social and educational networking, such as Facebook and LinkedIn (Oliver & Goerke, 2007; Hemmi et al., 2009; Gray et al., 2010). These outcomes of investigating ePortfolios and their relevance to tertiary education laid the foundations for this project's momentum and research direction.

Our research was qualitatively based, and surveys, individual interviews and focus group interviews were major ways of deriving impressions of ePortfolio use (Table 1 in Appendix A). To ensure a degree of comparability across the institutions, an initial set of open-ended question topics was designed from which specific, institution-relevant questions could be tailored. These covered:

- student choices of ePortfolio content; reasons for content choice;
- perceived uses of ePortfolios during study and after graduation;
- problems encountered in ePortfolio-based work;
- how an ePortfolio related to learning; aspects of ePortfolios directly related to students' chosen creative/performing arts specialisations;
- relationships, if any, between ePortfolios and the use of social networking sites; and
- technological aspects of making and disseminating an ePortfolio.

In line with the institutional differences outlined above, each institution also used research questions relevant to their own ePortfolio profile. In total, our findings on student ePortfolios in music and other creative and performing arts are based on interactions with 335 students.

The first stage of the project was to build on the work already completed in the design and implementation of ePortfolios for students in the music education degree program at the lead institution, SCM, and subsequently to extend this to students in other degree programs (musicology, composition, performance) at SCM and partner institutions. This required devising the needs of each set of students (through interviews with students and staff, and reviews of professional requirements), evaluating the 'templates' currently in use, and managing ePortfolio implementation. This staged process, working with each set of students discretely and contiguously, allowed the research team to draw on the findings from each student group and using these findings as the impetus for subsequent steps through the project period. Trials were conducted to see if aspects are immediately transferable to other cohorts.

The project leader, Dr Jennifer Rowley, consulted the steering committee individually and as a group along with the external evaluator at regular intervals throughout the two years for quality assurance purposes and monitoring the reliability and validity of the research. We established a community website during the first stage, through which we reported progress and findings for staff, students and the wider community ([capaeportfolios.ning.com](http://capaeportfolios.ning.com)).

The next stage was one of curriculum design, embedding ePortfolio work into the teaching content of relevant degree programs at all institutions. This was achieved by introducing individual components of ePortfolios at various points throughout a degree program as assessments. Examples from ePortfolio use by SCM was the basis of modelling the ePortfolio products and the process of embedding electronic portfolios into the degree programs of other institutions. Issues related to the technological aspects of ePortfolios emerged throughout the project and the different backgrounds of institutions, staff and

students influenced both the technology benefit and challenge for students and staff.

Part of this stage of the project was two Student Encounter Days, at which staff and students from collaborating universities and other tertiary institutions attended two single-day symposia to discuss ePortfolios (for example, TAFE SA, TAFE NSW; ACU; UNSW; CSU; St Augustine's College Secondary School). These were held in September 2012 and March 2014. More than 85 students and staff attended the first encounter day and 67 attended the second day. A total of 25 students presented their own ePortfolio work to peers and academic staff, and team members facilitated roundtable discussions with peers about ePortfolio. Benefits, problems and possibilities of the ePortfolio were investigated along with future directions, including the shape and possible details of prospective ePortfolio projects. Throughout the project, much data were collected and embedded into the approach to informing the 'how', 'when', 'why', and 'what' of a student ePortfolio (Figures 1–7).

A substantial literature review was carried out alongside the data collection and this formed part of the data collection and the project outcome. The literature specific to music/creative and performing arts in the scope of student-created ePortfolios is few in number. Indeed, the broad range of publications arising from this project has provided a solid contribution to the CAPA – ePortfolio area of research literature. Though the pre-existing literature suggested that there is an increasing emphasis on reflective learning and practice in higher education, some authors posited that the nature of ePortfolios both encourages and supports this reflective style of learning (Pelliccione & Dixon, 2008). ePortfolio usage is reported and analysed across many disciplines in university settings (Jafari & Kaufman, 2006); however, the uptake of ePortfolio is reported as more frequent in specific discipline areas such as health education (Lewis et al., 2010) and teacher education. Butler (2006) reports that teacher education is the most advanced in use and analysis of ePortfolios, with a significant body of literature (Penny & Kinslow, 2006; Wang, 2009; Lin, 2008; Adamy & Milman, 2009; Imhof & Picard, 2009). In this context, ePortfolios are noted to be an 'effective vehicle to capture the complexities of learning, teaching, and learning to teach' (Doig et al., 2006, p. 159). ePortfolios are seen as providing a site where a learner can reflect on and review learning (Akçil & Arap, 2009); Barrett (2007) reports this as the critical aspect of ePortfolios. Some authors discuss ePortfolios as demonstrations of students' technological skills (Milman & Kilbane, 2005; Hartley, Urish & Johnston, 2006). Lin (2008) states that student teachers who recognise the benefits and understand the technological processes involved in designing and making ePortfolios are more competent in using other forms of IT-assisted instruction in their own teaching.

Perhaps the most comprehensive study of ePortfolios in music teacher preparation is Thornton et al. (2011). This study examined the value of ePortfolios in an undergraduate music education degree as perceived by six separate stakeholder groups: current students, student teachers, alumni, mentor teachers (tertiary practicum supervisors), employers, and music education faculty members. In many cases in that study, students said that ePortfolios did not provide them with meaningful reflective learning experiences due, in part, to frustrations with attempting to use unfamiliar technology. Many students stated that they would be unlikely to use their ePortfolio after graduating; however, about half of the alumni surveyed noted that their ePortfolio had been of some use to them in gaining employment. The majority of employers indicated that features of potential employees' ePortfolios they



were most interested in were those that would traditionally have been submitted in a paper portfolio. In its emphasis on the learning process rather than the technological tool, it is not surprising that our results differed from those of Thornton et al. (2011).

The project gathered survey and focus-group interview data (n=345) were collected at four Australian tertiary institutions where ePortfolio production was extended or introduced for creative and performing arts students. The data was analysed for impact factor on the students' learning experience and results showed students developed a greater understanding of: writing reflectively, planning for their future arts careers, collaborating and in their identity development as an arts student (Dunbar-Hall et al., 2013).

We found that the development of the ePortfolio provided the creative and performing arts students with critical skills (e.g. collaboration, creativity and cross-discipline connections) and provided a mechanism for students to participate in current learning practices through fostering reflection and collaboration with their discipline (Dunbar-Hall et al., 2013).

Collaborative and reflective practice is at the core of higher-order thinking and learning, and students engaging in this knowledge management allowed the ePortfolio to provide an efficient way to collect (and archive) their learning and for students to realise the outcome of their studies (Brooks & Rowley, 2013).

## Chapter 3: Significance and innovation – learning and teaching outcomes

The ePortfolio has the potential to be a powerful tool for all learners through the introduction of reflection or reflective practice activities (Brooks & Rowley, 2013). Our data suggest the real possibility that ePortfolio development will make a significant difference to the quality of learning and professional outcomes for creative and performing artists in Australia. It must be acknowledged here that there were significant differences at each institution in ePortfolio technology, use and understanding in the CAPE – eP project. Many educators use ePortfolios as a learning tool and the project has wider implications for students in disciplines such as the fine arts and design, since it will suggest effective strategies for compiling a folio for professional practice. This is particularly the case for arts practice students, including those whose training involves drawing, painting, sculpting, and all types of music and theatre. This suggests that disseminating our findings on reflection will have potential impact on more students in tertiary study in a wide range of institutions: we are aiming at all creative/performing arts student cohorts, including dance and electro-acoustic music. One of the processes undertaken in the early stages of the project was to familiarise the research team with the different ePortfolio platforms, uses, and projects at the individual institutions. This ‘audit’ was an outcome in itself for the project, as it assisted in developing our collective and individual learning and teaching skills as academics (Taylor et al., 2012).

### Sydney Conservatorium of Music (SCM), The University of Sydney

Adapting the ePortfolio ‘templates’ used by music education students for students in other degree program specialisations across SCM was the main task of this institution’s process. The task was informed by institutional knowledge of the different potential contents and uses of ePortfolios by students studying to enter different types of music professional placements. Since music education students had constructed their ePortfolios with a view to addressing government-mandated accreditation criteria for employment, their ePortfolios had a level of prescription and a ready-made audience; students in composition, performance and musicology do not study or work in such a pre-set framework, therefore how their ePortfolios would represent students’ abilities, and the uses that would be made of ePortfolios, were more open-ended (Dunbar-Hall et al., 2013). Similarly, while music education students were studying in an IT-rich environment, they readily saw their ePortfolio work as relevant and viable (Rowley & Dunbar-Hall, 2011). Students in other music specialisations – especially performance and musicology, where the IT environment was not as explicit – provided different data in relation to their acceptance and uses of a personal digital tool (such as an ePortfolio) and their abilities to work confidently in this context. This situation was one of the main issues we investigated.

From the initial project at SCM, the current project saw a transfer of understandings about and uses of ePortfolios into other areas of tertiary music study: composition, musicology, and performance. This required the assessment of different expectations of ePortfolios from these different types of students, and from staff involved in delivery of the specialised areas of study in various music degree programs. The diversity of areas within music demonstrated

differing levels of student engagement with ePortfolios, ambiguities over their effectiveness in a music-related profession, a range of student desires to engage with ePortfolio and the technology required to work on and through them, and a spectrum of possibilities for their use. Early indications from surveying the musicology students in 2012 showed that they linked ePortfolios to job hunting, but did not see that it would be applicable to their personal career path, although they could see it as being useful to others. There was little evidence that any of the participants had thought creatively about the possibilities of using an ePortfolio, either personally or professionally. Broadly speaking, the composition cohort we surveyed showed a more positive attitude towards the potential of ePortfolios, and was more inclined to think of creative ways to use them.

By tailoring ePortfolio processes to the specialisations of these different sets of students – composition, musicology, and performance – in Semesters 1 and 2, 2012, we saw that students were able to use and discuss the benefit of ePortfolio for their future musical career. In 2013 we continued to interview and work with performance students, since the results of surveys with the composition and musicology students revealed that the ePortfolio-mandated platform at The University of Sydney was not suitable for their needs. However, numerous students commented on how using an ePortfolio had led them to think about themselves and their studies in new ways. Comments such as ‘(it) forces you to rethink... what was relevant, what was useful in what I learnt,’ ‘(it) can force you to reflect,’ ‘(I used it to) reflect on how I’m performing currently,’ and ‘I had to think about how to organize an ePortfolio’ all relate to this aspect of their use.

There was a need to train both staff and students in the use of ePortfolio processes and the task of integrating the process of developing an ePortfolio into relevant units of study as assessable components of study. Once this process was established as the pathway to ePortfolio use by students at SCM, it was evaluated and adjusted so that the introduction of ePortfolios in an ongoing manner to respond to student needs, staff perceptions and professional expectations was addressed (Figure 3, Appendix A).

In 2014 we saw a renewed interest in the ePortfolio for composition students, since they were transitioning from paper portfolios to online portfolios. In addition, 85 students enrolled in the internship program (which started in 2013 at SCM) were building ePortfolios and documenting their reflections on the work experience.

ePortfolios were introduced to staff and students at the partner institutions by integrating into the curriculum, and evaluated for similarity and differences from one institution to another.

### **Curtin University**

The Curtin University ePortfolio project team worked with cohorts of undergraduate students from theatre, creative writing and feature writing, to create ePortfolios that documented their academic and creative skills and knowledge. Performance studies is taught at Curtin University to PhD level, and the courses form part of a thriving humanities faculty that includes visual arts, multimedia, design, built environment, performance studies, screen arts, creative and professional writing, and journalism. Given the complex

nature of careers in all of these sectors, the development of employability skills is a high priority across all courses (Rowley & Bennett, 2013). Performance studies is an exciting area in today's media-driven world. In this major, students learn the practical techniques and theory involved in the world of theatre and performance. Students develop skills in performance, directing, writing, devising, dramaturgy, critical analysis, stage management, and theatre production. Performance studies majors complete practical and theoretical units that explore the scope and range of theatrical performance. Most classes take the form of practical workshops and students are given many opportunities to audition for and participate in public productions. The on-campus Upstairs Theatre is used for both teaching and rehearsals, and serves as a venue for seasons of student productions. The skills and experience gained by students as they engage in this broad suite of activities are ideally suited to an ePortfolio approach as they can reflect on their learning in a practical way.

The focus of the project was on career planning and the development of professional identities, with the broader intention of enhancing students' ability to recognise and maximise future opportunities for work and employment (Dunbar-Hall et al., 2013). The project employed an institutional platform known as 'iPortfolio', which had many thousands of users across the university but had previously received little interest from the arts and humanities. The platform was user-friendly and offered students lifelong access to their ePortfolio.

In phase 1 (2012 semester 1) the project worked with first- and second-year performance students in theatre studies, who attended two professional development workshops and were encouraged to create an ePortfolio over the course of one semester. None of them did, despite being very positive about the workshops.

In phase 2 (2012 semester 2), the workshops were delivered in a third-year capstone unit with 34 writing students who had majors in creative, professional and feature writing. The students were provided two lab-based workshops on how to establish an ePortfolio, and at the end of semester students commented on the usefulness of the workshops. They also commented that thinking about an ePortfolio had prompted them to think about the future and what it might look like. None of them submitted ePortfolios, but some students said they had created an ePortfolio and were considering using it as graduates.

In phase 3 (2013) the workshops were again embedded into the third-year capstone writing unit. This time they were supplemented with two elective career workshops, as requested by the students. The researcher participated in the online blog that connected students with peers and their lecturer during their professional placement, and students were required to submit two career development tools and a home page as part of their assessment for the unit. Every student had to create an ePortfolio to meet the demands of assessment, and two-thirds of them did far more than was required. Feedback suggests that once the students engaged with the ePortfolio they took ownership of it and began to make it their own. Essentially, *until the ePortfolio was required as an assessment item, students did not engage in it*. The researchers believe that the deep engagement encountered this year is entirely due to the fact it was positioned as a relevant, practical career development tool.

The impact on student learning and professional development was observed by the Curtin-

based researcher, unit coordinator, and students. This is sufficient for the ePortfolio to be embedded from 2014. Next year the ePortfolio will be introduced in semester 1, during which students will develop the basic pages and attend a career workshop. This change has been introduced so that by semester 2 – when the students undertake their professional practicum (and in what is for many students the busy, final semester of study) – the ePortfolio will already be established. This should enable students to add to it much earlier, and to develop it over a longer period of time.

### University of Western Sydney

The placement and use of the ePortfolio at the University of Western Sydney is in a capstone professional practice unit so composers, performers, musicologists, and sound technologists rather than just one of these groups are actively involved. Graduates from this institution find professional work in a range of places including teaching, sound design, as sound recordists in sound studios, performing and conducting (of some national orchestras), recording artists, popular music industry, and music therapy.

At the University of Western Sydney, three different ePortfolio platforms were offered to students in two subjects over three years.

The professional practice, third-year capstone subject, 'Music Project', requires students to take their music practice into the community. In 2012, Bachelor of Music graduates who had been offered use of the ePortfolio platform *CareerHub* to house their CV, professional photograph, capacity statement for prospective employer in Music Project the previous year, were asked about their use of, and possible uses for, the platform now that they had graduated. Four students responded (16 asked, total class size 54), commenting on the platform's potential for indicating what has been achieved so far; that it might be used 'when chasing live gigs' (but could not see how); and that it could help make contacts and get work and/or potential clients after graduation.

In 2012, all 66 students taking Music Project were required to use *Pebble+* to house a curriculum vitae, professional photograph, capacity statement for prospective employer plus a summary of their community project. Out of 66 students, 32 responded to a questionnaire asking about how the platform could enhance student learning and career advancement in undergraduate music subjects. About half were negative, with half of those comments relating to difficulty of use. Positive responses referred to the usefulness of *Pebble+* as a submission tool for video, assignments and feedback, particularly out of hours. In relation to *Pebble+*'s role in career advancement and achieving goals, more than half saw no possible enhancement of career advancement after graduation through the use of *Pebble+*, but about one eighth of the students viewed *Pebble+* as being useful in its clear guidelines for their curriculum vitae construction and storage. Despite all students completing music technology subjects in first year, the majority found the platform difficult and needing clearer guidelines from the teacher.

In a second-year group music performance subject, students were required to complete a collaborative essay in pairs on a given task, writing two concert reviews together, a peer evaluation separately, and one collaborative essay – a total of four tasks for each student. In

2012 the Learning Management System, *Blackboard*, was used as an ePortfolio platform for the task and in 2013, *Pebble+* was adopted for the same task. For *Blackboard*, challenges (12 responses out of 87 students) focused on lack of instructions from the teacher, problems with collaborative partners, issues uploading images/videos and formatting work, and no understanding of why hard copy was not used. Benefits focused on ease of submission, ease of communication via the group discussion board, and ease of insight when working collaboratively. Challenges of using the ePortfolio platform for the written tasks (3 responses out of 69 students) focused around the complexity of *Pebble+*, and therefore the double burden when one person of the collaborating pair knows more about how to work the program than the other person.

It was found that the Learning Management System (LMS) was easier to use, especially for the peer evaluation of essays, than *Pebble+*; UWS students will return to LMS for this task in 2014. The UWS-based researcher found that most students who were involved in the trial of *Pebble+* would use it again for the professional portfolio. The School at UWS will not be using *Pebble+* in 2014, as the cost cannot be met, especially given that freeware is available. The researcher felt that students needed to have instruction on how to use the platform but did not want to take time away from other topics to acquire this information. It was felt that both platforms (*Blackboard* and *Pebble+*) are very good for collaborative work and submission of work, and have good potential for deep analysis of video and image within an essay, subject to ease of loadability.

In summary, negative student response to LMS Blackboard was seldom about the platform and more about subject content and task details; negative student response to *Pebble+* was largely about the platform itself. In general, students responded that they were comfortable using LMS Blackboard platform but found the content and tasks designed by the teacher to be unhelpful for their undergraduate learning. Having said that, three categories of student response emerged to *Pebble+* use: (i) positive about current use and its future applicability for undergraduate learning and after graduating; (ii) negative about current use (stressful, difficult etc.) but positive about future applicability for undergraduate learning and after graduating; and (iii) negative about both current and future use. This suggests that time is required to get to know the *Pebble +* platform, as was possible with the *LMS Blackboard* platform.

### Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University

Music education at Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University (QCGU), involves significant emphasis on preparing student awareness and skill-sets in maintaining a competitive primacy, since it pertains to portfolio careers. An important component of this preparation is in the development of agency for dissemination of experience, preparedness for professional practice, and the ability to publicly express complexity and richness across each individual's unique portfolio of professional and creative activities. Graduates from the QCGU are found practising their craft in portfolio careers internationally. Graduate destinations in a portfolio career trajectory can typically include: performance-oriented contexts; teaching and education contexts; moving image contexts such as film, game and TV composition, arranging, conducting and/or performing; recording studio contexts like arranging, composing, engineering, producing, musical direction; artist management and

direction contexts, either for self or for groups and ensembles; tour and event staging, management and promotion; consultancy contexts; and a wide variety of professional contexts that respond to each individual's unique skill-sets rather than as a result of a "job description" created by an employer. In this portfolio career landscape, it is therefore vital that graduates be appropriately prepared throughout their tertiary education experience to succeed in increasingly competitive job and career contexts. ePortfolios provide an important vehicle as part of a suite of approaches that have been shown to provide a competitive edge that further assists in focusing students' energies on the development of successful and viable portfolio careers.

Student engagement with the ePortfolio predominantly fits three emergent categories: the student who is excited or inquisitive about the possibility of creating a professionally oriented ePortfolio and engaged in the processes; the student who is 'fearful' of or 'intimidated' by the commitment to the ePortfolio; and the student who does not believe there is relevance for them and who consequently displaying minimum engagement.

The level of reflection over time was clearly evident in student responses, going beyond a simple sense of self-awareness. Students who engaged in reflection used their awareness to evaluate their own thinking to better understand their progression, goals and achievements (King & Kitchener, 1994). Further, a sense of self-efficacy was heightened in the process of reflecting, resulting in a sense of resiliency in the face of obstacles such as self-doubt.

We observed the successful use of freely available open-source software and rich-media social networking/media sites such as *SoundCloud* and *YouTube*. This proved to focus conversations on intellectual and creative pursuits and drastically reduced technocentric conversations. Software used by each student for their ePortfolios has predominantly been raised in discussion by students when comparing and contrasting the benefits of different platforms to each other, or in asking advice as to recommendations of where to start. There were reports by students who found it easy to access and negotiate technical assistance from online and face-to-face community participation. Students also commented on what they saw as the effective aspects of using the software.

Some students noted that the freedoms afforded them, in conjunction with the clearly defined boundaries and the just-in-time interventions, were encouraging and contributed to a sense of self-determination and initiative. Five students wrote that more consistent reference by all area staff regarding the relevance, use and applicability of the ePortfolio would have helped their sense of whole of program inclusion.

All staff in 2014 will be inculcated to the use of the ePortfolio now that the proof-of-concept has shown dividends. However, there is no expectation that all staff will engage deeply in the backend and theoretical use of an ePortfolio, although all will be asked to include explicit discussions and guidance as to what aspects of their coursework, goals or learning outcomes may be important in their sub-disciplinary context(s).

The use of ePortfolios as assessment objects will be disseminated to other departments at QCGU via a teacher who delivers core courses into other programs. This person will be responsible for communicating (with assistance from music technology as appropriate). In

early years the selection process is seemingly quite simple for students. This is perceived to be a consequence of students not having generated sizeable amounts of material yet, as well as a by-product of early-year students' generalised tendency to focus on the few things they feel they do best.

By the time students have reached third year, however, most have displayed and reported difficulties in how they can define themselves, showing reticence in doing what they perceive as pigeon-holing themselves. One student's comment is indicative of many conversations with final-year students: "I don't know how to portray myself – I am more things than I can put online, and what if I don't choose the thing that this employer is looking for?"

This fosters lengthy and mature discussions about representing focus, depth and ethics, but at the same time foregrounding concepts around potential – both personal and professional. One conversation often had with students is that creative artefacts do not in and of themselves limit what a person is capable of achieving, and while they might be evidence of specific skills, it is up to the student to present these artefacts as representative evidence of aspects such as quality, attention to detail, nuanced understanding and sophisticated application of broader, transferrable and adaptable knowledge and skill-sets.

Students are more open to a wider array of possibilities by being better able to generalise their skill sets and perceiving alternative opportunities that might be quite divergent from the notion of their dream job/position/career. The perceived tensions between "artistic and professional identities versus the 'learner' identity" are blurred or broken or many students for some, quite significantly. The shift from thinking of themselves as students to thinking of themselves as self-directional autonomous beings capable of competing in highly competitive and fast-transitioning professional landscapes was reported. In this respect, we again see the intersection of music and technology as quickly evolving, where jobs exist now that did not exist five years ago, and jobs will exist in another five years' time that do not exist now. There is no single "music technology" profession – rather there are many diverse opportunities where the potential for growth and maturation within a career are often almost impossible to predetermine. There are often no clear pathways of progressing up a company structure, rather bringing multiple skills and professional traits to bear to create a niche for oneself in professional landscapes that are often sensitive to cultural, social, technological and broader financial imperatives.

The higher-achieving students appear to be more adept at realising how they can transfer their understanding of self into new domains, and to extend these students' event horizons into longer-term goals where understanding personal development and career trajectories carries less fear. This appears to result from experiences associated with implementing and assessing their learning in a consistently reflexive way as a result of their engagement with longitudinal thinking associated with the pedagogical objective of the ePortfolio.



## Chapter 4: Conclusions, outputs and outcomes

This project established ePortfolios for undergraduate music and performance studies students in Australian universities by adapting their use at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (SCM), The University of Sydney, to students at University of Western Sydney, Curtin University and Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University. Building on work previously accomplished at SCM, we designed, implemented, and evaluated ePortfolios for professional needs of music education to music composition, performance, musicology, music technology, professional practice and sound recording technology students preparing for entry to professional positions, grant/fellowship application, and/or graduate study. The programs were based on student needs across the many types of music and creative and performing arts discipline areas.

A critical hypothesis was that ePortfolios cannot be generic in these discipline areas. Despite some basic commonalities of creative and performing arts, the project was based on the distinctions between them, the training they require, teaching practices, learning styles, expected outcomes, and potential professional directions. Therefore, a major part of our investigation was to determine how ePortfolios might differ across this sector of tertiary study, how students in different specific discipline areas need to tailor their ePortfolios to suit a range of issues, how the use of ePortfolios can be optimised, and how students and staff involved with ePortfolios can demonstrate differences in their uses of and opinions about them. Alongside ways that students in these subject areas worked with and through ePortfolios, we assessed staff participation and considered relationships between ePortfolio use and institutional policies in relation to expectations of the ongoing updating of IT-assisted teaching, assessment practices, curriculum design and implementation, institutional decision-making in relation to the choice of ePortfolio platform, and integration into the work of universities (Blom et al., 2013). An innovative aspect of the project was to enable us to determine how forms of assessment and reporting should be adapted, how teaching and learning is influenced, how the focus can most effectively be on individual students' needs and artistic strengths. In addition, we sought to determine how ePortfolios can provide students with a capstone product – an electronic portfolio for employers in the arts sector – and can bring about change in tertiary study through the creative application and development of current (but ongoing developmental) technology.

In summary, the project demonstrated the viability of ePortfolios as a tool for students and staff in the university teaching of music and other creative and performing arts. Numerous areas were shown to benefit from the use of ePortfolios: they were a means of showing the longitudinal nature of university study; they could act as a form of archiving of students' work; they could foster self-reflection by students; they could effectively draw attention to and demonstrate the multi-identity nature of students in music and other creative and performing arts, as creators, performers, critics, analysts, teachers, and learners; and they required that students become adept users of digital technology, often leading to increases in their levels of technological proficiency. The ePortfolio revealed a nexus between students' uses of social networking and its related technology and the presence of similar digital technology in university learning situations, revealing ways in which students think about their university lives in relation to their non-university ones through the lens of

technology. The ePortfolio can be a tool for the delivery of teaching; staff can use ePortfolios to manage assessment tasks; and ePortfolios have a bearing on learning management systems, administrative technology, and university policy decision-making.

The focus of this project on music and other creative and performing art demonstrated that ePortfolios in these discipline areas cannot be considered as a generic tool. Rather these related discipline areas require different uses of and thinking about ePortfolios. As Rowley & Bennett (2013) found, depending on the artistic direction from which a student comes, the ePortfolio experience differs widely in terms of:

- contents;
- the formats of contents;
- the weights given to component parts of ePortfolios;
- dissemination practices;
- intended audiences; and
- personal uses of ePortfolios.

A marked difference was observed in the thinking behind ePortfolio use in the performing arts areas of this project and that in music technology. Due to the fact that students in music technology began working on their ePortfolios with already established technological skills, but students in other areas had to receive training to bring their levels of technological skill up to an acceptable level, *music technology students were able to move to higher cognitive levels and debates about ePortfolios*. This was strengthened by the fact that these students were required to choose their own ePortfolio platforms from freely available software, and thus had been required from their initial stages of the project to critique and select from numerous ePortfolio platforms. Conversely, students in non-music technology programs were required to use platforms provided by their institutions; decision-making (a skill that ePortfolio work has been demonstrated to foster) was therefore initially in place for some students, but not for others.

This is an important finding. It is linked to the general purchase by two out of the four of the universities in this project had purchased access to commercially available ePortfolio platforms and had mandated these for student use. Unfortunately, as student comments repeatedly pointed out, this platform was not entirely successful for ePortfolios in music or other creative and performing arts. The platform had been designed as a generic tertiary studies tool without consideration of its potential uses in specific discipline areas. Considering ePortfolios for music and other creative and performing arts, therefore, *it is clear that ePortfolios need to be designed, or at least selected, with reference to the requirements of the discipline areas in which they will be used*. Similarly, that universities would mandate a commercial ePortfolio platform without seeking input from the staff or students who would be required to use it became an emerging issue as the project proceeded.

The fact that this project involved four universities, each with its own way of teaching in the music and other creative and performing arts disciplines, and that groups of students who

participated at each university also differed markedly, reinforced the view that the participating students could demonstrate that their thinking about and uses of ePortfolios were reflective of their specific areas of music and creative and performing arts studies. This indicates that any future use of ePortfolios in these discipline areas needs to address issues of:

- how ePortfolios integrate into university teaching and learning in these discipline areas
- how suitable ePortfolio platforms can be identified
- potential uses and roles of ePortfolios for driving decisions about viability, and
- the specific attributes of studying music and other creative and performing arts in relation to expectations of ePortfolio work.

These issues provide a clear direction for further work on ePortfolios, both in the discipline areas of this project and in others.

## List of outcomes and deliverables

To date there are three book chapters; four journal articles, five full papers in refereed conference proceedings; seven international/national conference presentations:

### Conference Papers

Bennett, D., Rowley, J., Dunbar-Hall, P., Blom, D., & Hitchcock, M. (2014). Identity and the learning process: ePortfolios and higher education Arts students. In *Conference Proceedings: International Society for Music Education*, July, Porte Allegre, Brazil. July, 2014 (accepted 12 March 2014).

Blom, D., Rowley, J., Bennett, D., Hitchcock, M., & Dunbar-Hall, P. (2013). Two-way impact: Institutional e-learning policy/ educator practices in creative arts through ePortfolio creation. In M. Ciussi and M. Augier (eds.), *Proceedings of the 12<sup>th</sup> European Conference on e-Learning*, ECEL, October 30-31, SKEMA Business School, Sophia Antipolis, France.

Dunbar-Hall, P., Rowley, J., Bennett, D., Blom, D., & Hitchcock, M. (2013). ePortfolios in music and creative arts education: Innovating to inspire learning. In *Redefining the musical landscape: Inspired learning and innovation in music education---XIX National Conference Proceedings* (pp. 82-87). Australian Society for Music Education.

Rowley, J., & Bennett, D (2013). Technology, identity and the creative artist. *ASCILITE 2013 Conference* (Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education), pp. 775–780.

Rowley, J., Dunbar-Hall, P., Blom, D., Bennett, D., & Hitchcock, M. (2014). ePortfolios in the teaching of music and other creative and performing arts in four Australian universities. In *Conference Proceedings: International Society for Music Education*, July, Porte Allegre, Brazil. July, 2014 (accepted 12 March 2014).

### Conference presentations

Bennett, D., Rowley, J., Blom, D., Dunbar-Hall, P., Hitchcock, M., & Robertson R. (2014). “Who am I and what evidence do I have?” ePortfolios in music and writing as a means to develop learning and self-efficacy, *Western Australia Teaching and Learning Forum* (WA T&L Forum, Curtin University). January 2014

Blom, D. & Hitchcock, M. (2013) ‘A role for the e-portfolio in educating the professional musician (not the music teacher)’, Symposium presentation at University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education, 20 September.

## Journal Articles

Rowley, J., Bennett, D., Dunbar-Hall, P., & Blom, D. (2014). Exploring the pedagogy and impact of technology on ePortfolio creation for Arts students in Australian tertiary study. *Special Edition: ePortfolios – UAE Journal of Educational Technology and eLearning*. Retrieved from <http://ejournal.hct.ac.ae/special-edition-of-the-ejournal-eportfolios/>

Bennett, D., Rowley, J., Dunbar-Hall, P., Hitchcock, M., & Blom, D. (2014). Electronic portfolios and learner identity: an ePortfolio case study in music and writing. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, (ahead of print), pp. 1-18.

Blom, D., Rowley, J., Bennett, D., Hitchcock, M., & Dunbar-Hall, P. (2014). Knowledge sharing: Exploring institutional policy and educator practice through ePortfolios in music and writing. *Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 12(2), 138-148.

Dunbar-Hall, P., Rowley, J., Brooks, W., Cotton, H., & Lill, A. (2015). ePortfolios in music and other performing arts education: History through a critique of literature. *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, 36(2), 139-149.

## Book Chapters

Blom, D. (2013). Developing collaborative creativity in university music performance students through paired essay writing, In P. Burnard (ed.) *Developing Creativities in Higher Music Education – International perspectives and practices* (pp. 99-114), Oxford, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Blom, D., Rowley, J., Bennett, D., Hitchcock, M., & Dunbar-Hall, P. (2013). Two-way impact: Institutional e-Learning policy/educator practices in creative arts through ePortfolio creation. In M. Ciussi & M. Augier (eds.), *Proceedings of the 12th European Conference on e-Learning*, (pp. 33-42), SKEMA Business School Sophia Antipolis, France, 30-31 October 2013. E-book ISBN 978 1 909507 84 5, E-book ISSN: 2048 8645. Reading, United Kingdom: Academic Conferences and Publishing International Limited.

Rowley, J., Bennett, D., & Dunbar Hall, P. (2014) Activating *career creativities* developed in creating ePortfolios for career awareness and resilience. In P. Burnard & E. Haddon (eds.), *Activating diverse musical creativities: Teaching and learning in higher music education*. London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury.

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## Certification

### ***Certification by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent)***

I certify that all parts of the final report for this OLT grant/fellowship (remove as appropriate) provide an accurate representation of the implementation, impact and findings of the project, and that the report is of publishable quality.

Name:



Professor Pip Pattison  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Date: 23/11/2015

## Appendix A: Tables and Figures

**Table 1: Data collection items and chronology**

| Date          | Curtin University   | Queensland Conservatorium of Music         | Sydney Conservatorium of Music  | University of Western Sydney  | Shared                                     |
|---------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| 2008/<br>2009 |   | Survey<br>Interview (focus group)          |   |   |  |
| 2011          |   |  |   | Questionnaire (3 <sup>rd</sup> year Professional Practice)  |  |
| 2012          | Survey (theatre students)<br>Reflections (strengths and weaknesses)<br>Reflections (life and career)<br>Reflections (work placement)<br>Reflections (journal on ePortfolio) |  | Survey (musicology)<br>Survey (composition)<br>Interviews (focus group)<br>ePortfolio images      | Questionnaire (2 <sup>nd</sup> year performance)<br>Questionnaire (3 <sup>rd</sup> year Professional Practice)<br>ePortfolio images | Literature review (annotated bibliography) |
| 2013          | Interviews (focus group)<br>Reflections (Blog entries)<br>ePortfolio images   | Reflections (discussions and observations) | Interviews (individual)<br>Interviews (focus group)<br>Reflections (written)<br>ePortfolio images | Questionnaire (2 <sup>nd</sup> year performance)<br>Interview (focus group)   | Literature reviews                         |
| 2014          | Interviews (individual)   | Interviews (individual)                    |   |   |  |

**Table 2: Literature reviews and annotated bibliography**

An annotated bibliography and several literature reviews were compiled across 2011–2014 as part of the project.

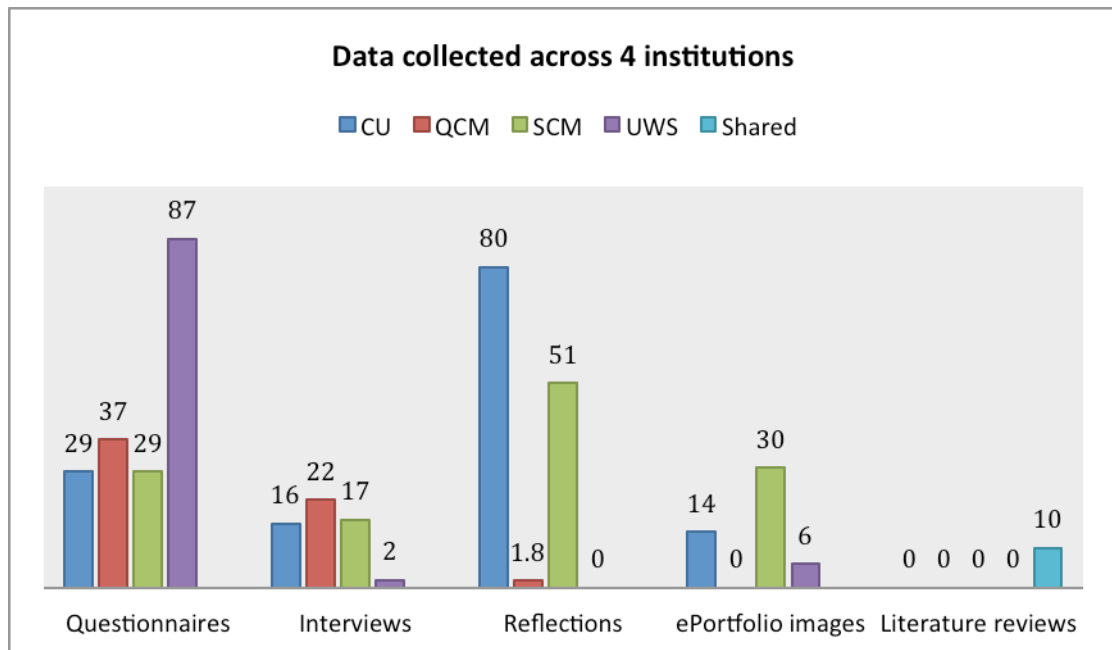
|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Annotated Bibliography | ePortfolios: An Annotated Bibliography              |
| Literature Reviews     | ePortfolios in the Creative Arts                    |
|                        | ePortfolios and Graduate Employability              |
|                        | ePortfolios and Music Learning                      |
|                        | ePortfolios and Peer Assessment                     |
|                        | Alternative and Various uses of ePortfolios         |
|                        | Institutional use and implementation of ePortfolios |
|                        | ePortfolios and Identity Development                |
|                        | Barriers to Student Engagement with ePortfolios     |

A journal article was published result of the literature reviews conducted:

Dunbar-Hall, P., Rowley, J., Brooks, W., Cotton, H., & Lill, A. (2015). ePortfolios in music and other performing arts education: History through a critique of literature. *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, 36(2), 139-149.

**Figure 1: Data collected across 4 institutions**

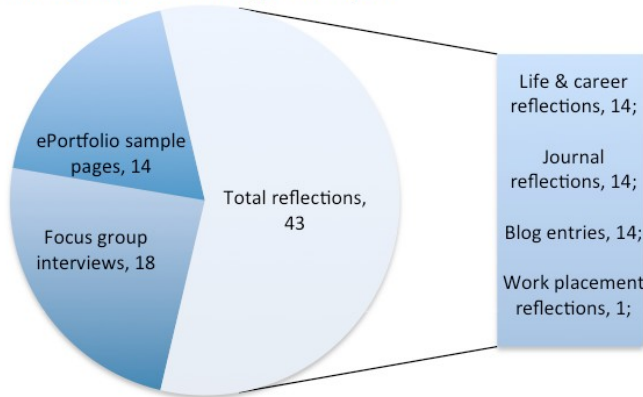
Data were collected across the four participating institutions using various collection tools and recording formats.



**Figures 2 & 3: Curtin University data collection**

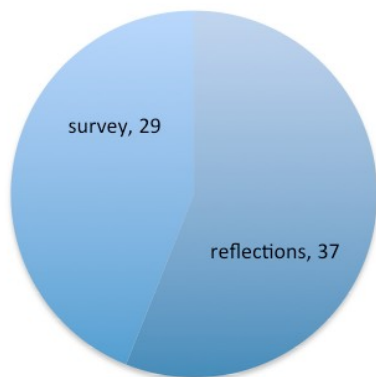
**Research team --- Dawn Bennett**

**Data collected from writing students, CU**



|                 |                 |    |
|-----------------|-----------------|----|
| Interviews      |                 | 18 |
| eP sample pages |                 | 14 |
| Reflections     | Total           | 43 |
|                 | Life and career | 14 |
|                 | Journal         | 14 |
|                 | Blog entries    | 14 |
|                 | Work placement  | 1  |

**Data collected from theatre students, CU**

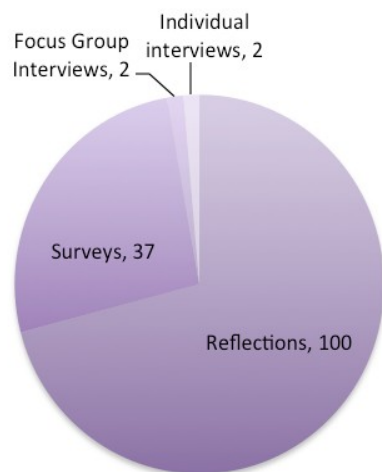


|  |    |
|--|----|
| Reflections (strengths and weaknesses) | 37 |
| Survey (future work and life)          | 29 |

**Figure 4: Queensland Conservatorium of Music (Griffith University) data collection**

**Research team – Matt Hitchcock**

**Data collected from music technology students, GU**



|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Reflections            | 100 |
| Surveys                | 37  |
| Individual interviews  | 2   |
| Focus group interviews | 2   |

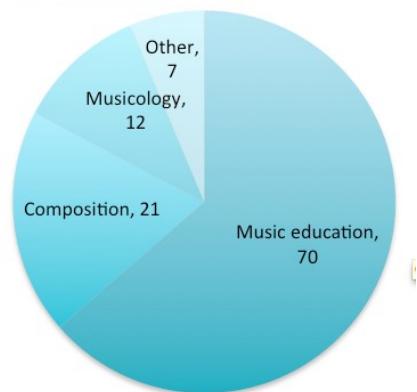
**Figures 5 & 6: Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney**

**Research Team:** Researchers: Jennifer Rowley, Peter Dunbar---Hall

Manager: Siobhain O’Leary

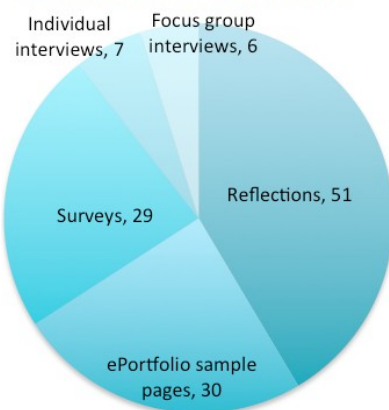
Research Assistants: Wendy Brooks, Hugh Cotton, Athena Lill, John Taylor

**Student participants, SCM**



| Student participants, SCM, (n=110)                 |    |
|--|----|
| Music education                                    | 70 |
| Composition  | 21 |
| Musicology   | 12 |
| Other (Performance, Music Studies, Music/Medicine) | 7  |

**Data collected from SCM students**

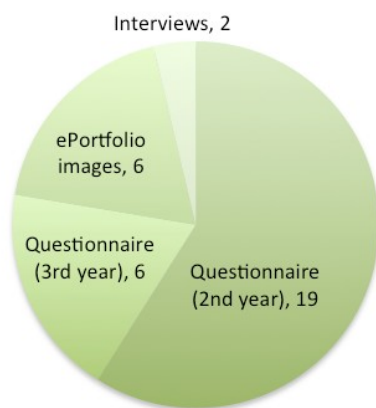


| Data collected from SCM students, (n=1113) |    |
|--|----|
| Reflections                                | 51 |
| ePortfolio sample pages                    | 30 |
| Surveys                                    | 29 |
| Individual interviews                      | 7  |
| Focus group interviews                     | 6  |

**Figure 7: University of Western Sydney data collection**

**Research Team: Diana Blom**

**Data collected from music students, UWS**



| Data collected from music students, UWS (n=70)                               |    |
|--|----|
| Questionnaires -2 <sup>nd</sup> year Music group performance students        | 19 |
| Questionnaires -3 <sup>rd</sup> year professional practice capstone students | 6  |
| ePortfolio images  | 6  |
| Interviews   | 2  |



## Appendix B: Survey questions

### Survey of ePortfolio use at QCGU, November 2013

Year of study in 2013:

Gender:

1. What words/roles do you usually use to describe yourself to others? (Include clarifying statements as to when and how if this helps provide clarity to your response.)
2. Are there any words/roles you tend to avoid or shy away from and why?
3. What is your understanding of the purpose/s of an ePortfolio?
4. Do you think an ePortfolio has any use for you  
[a] as a student (yes/no and also please state why)  
[b] as a professional (yes/no and also please state why)
5. Have you used an ePortfolio for anything other than an assessment item? If so, how and to what result?
6. Do you think you would use an ePortfolio for anything other than an assessment item? (explain your answer).
7. Do you think you will continue to maintain your ePortfolio after graduation?
8. What do you think an ePortfolio should contain, and why?
9. Do you perceive any difference between your hard-copy portfolios and your ePortfolio, and if so, what are they?  
Achievements and learning outcomes.
10. Did you experience any challenges in the development of your ePortfolio. If so, what were they, do you think you overcame them, and how so?
11. Did you experience any realisations as a by-product of engaging in the development of an ePortfolio?
12. Reflect back to your thoughts as you were developing your ePortfolios. Did you experience any concerns during the development of your ePortfolio? If so, what?
13. Reflect back to your thoughts as you were developing your ePortfolios. Did you experience any positive outcomes during the development of your ePortfolio? If so, what?
14. Generally, has developing an ePortfolio had any impact on you, and if so, how so?

## Appendix C: Independent evaluation report

ID11-2041: ePortfolios for creative arts, music and arts students in Australian universities

Submitted by Lynn McAllister – Senior Support Officer – eLearning Services Queensland University of Technology

### Evaluation brief and process

The Creative and performing arts ePortfolio (CAPA) project ran from November 2011 to April 2014. The Interim external evaluator's report was delivered on October 30 2012. The Final report was delivered on March 31 2014.

This independent evaluation report provides summative evaluation of the project and project processes following handover from the Interim evaluator during the later phase of the project.

I accepted the role of external evaluator in October 2013, during phase three of the project, to undertake final evaluation and develop the summative independent evaluation report. The primary external evaluator had delivered the Interim report in October 2012 and was due for extended leave in 2014. I met with the project leader, Jennifer Rowley, at the ePortfolios Australia Forum in October 2013 to discuss the evaluator role and requirements. I have continued the approach initiated by the primary external evaluator.

In keeping with the Interim external evaluator report, the final summative report is based on the D-Cubed Framework (Hinton & Gannaway, 2011). The framework identifies three crucial aspects which influence the success of a project. This provides a triple focus 'lens' through which to view the project:

- assessment of readiness for change
- stakeholder engagement throughout the project
- capacity of the project to transfer outcomes broadly.

This report presents evidence of the successful delivery of project outcomes, and the contribution the project has made to the 'ePortfolios for learning' body of evidence. Project processes as well as the meeting of challenges and unexpected issues are briefly illustrated as they may inform the broader project environment for future project teams.

The final evaluation report seeks to elucidate how the project has met the stated project evaluation criteria:

1. extent to which the project has achieved its intended outcomes through the development of capacity amongst staff from different Music, Creative/Performance and Arts disciplines to work with ePortfolios
2. extent to which ePortfolio pedagogies are evident in curricula at all institutions
3. range and scope of ePortfolio items included by students
4. the effectiveness of dissemination processes
5. learning outcomes of the Student Encounter Day
6. scope for use of the ePortfolio process beyond the length of the project funding
7. effectiveness of the strategies used to embed ePortfolios in the Music, Creative/Performance and Arts curriculum
8. the interest in ePortfolios by other Music, Creative/Performance and Arts disciplines
9. the applicability to industry and the usefulness/effectiveness/relevance of the resulting ePortfolios to the employment sector

The evaluation questions are included as Attachment 1.

## Project engagement

I first met the Project Leader, Jennifer Rowley at the ePortfolio Australia Conference in Perth in 2010. I have spoken with her at subsequent ePortfolio events and was aware of this project initiation. I attended the project Student Encounter Day September 27 2012, which was held in conjunction with the ePortfolios Australia Forum. In December 2013, I met with the project team members during a professional writing retreat and was able to gather feedback relating to the evaluation criteria. I found attendance at the STePS student showcase and Professional Learning event at the Sydney Conservatorium March 22nd 2014 a very valuable opportunity to gather direct evidence of the impact of the project on project members, students and colleagues.

During the project I have been able to Skype with the project leader, have accessed all project documentation from the core repository and the project Ning community site *ePortfolios for arts students*, to inform this summative evaluation.

Viewed through the triple focus lens, this project has clearly established the “readiness for change”. It builds on work undertaken earlier, by two project members at the lead institution, and on project outcomes from previous ALTC/OLT -funded projects. The project leader has regularly engaged with ePortfolio stakeholders at conferences and symposia. Project team members have been actively engaging with stakeholders and potential stakeholders at their institutions and at professional events over the duration of the project. The development of dissemination strategies and resources has been done to maximise the transfer of project outcomes as broadly as possible across discipline areas, education sectors and internationally. The evidence presented in the report can be read in terms of this triple lens focus.

## Project processes

Key features of this project have been the enthusiasm and dedication of team members and the strong leadership provided by the project leader. The project members valued greatly the dedication of the project leader who effectively guided the team to the project’s successful conclusion. From the outset, project activities have been designed to most effectively support collaboration between project members. The project communication strategy has been highly effective in providing team members with timely ongoing access to all project information. The core resource is the project repository which aggregates all team planning documents, including ethics clearance, publication drafts, meeting minutes and other project documents. Project members were able to share documents easily and effectively through this space.

Broad stakeholder engagement was facilitated through the Ning community site – *ePortfolios for arts students*. Visitors to the site can access a number of general ePortfolio articles and video clips and project resources. Interested stakeholders can join the Ning community and contribute to the discussion group and post comments to the community. The site was promoted at conferences and other events and through e-lists and newsletters. The Ning community site will be maintained for 12 months beyond the project end to facilitate continued discussion and sharing of ePortfolio practice.

In July 2013, the project team requested an extension to the project to May 2014, to allow data collection at two partner institutions and thus deliver a more complete and therefore more valuable result. An extension to end March 2014 was granted with recommendations to limit further resource development and more effectively bring the project to a close. All extension recommendations were implemented and project plans updated. The primary external evaluator reviewed the recommendations and then stepped aside from the role with a very positive outlook for the final phase of the project.

The Interim external evaluation report was delivered in October 2012 and noted the enthusiasm of the project members and successful progress being made at this point. The Interim evaluation

recommended several adjustments to help ensure continued smooth and positive progress.

## Addressing recommendations from the Interim evaluation

The Interim external evaluation recommended the following steps to ensure continued positive progress of the project. Evidence suggests the project team very successfully addressed the recommendations and this has ensured maximum value of the project in informing practice.

*1. Quarterly virtual meetings of the Steering Committee in which a formal agenda is followed and the Project reports on progress and requests activity endorsement from the Steering Committee.*

The Interim evaluation recommended stronger engagement with the Steering Committee (SC) to better utilise expertise, engender discussion and undertake any required project problem solving. Formative feedback suggested that “they could have made better use of the SC in the establishment phase.” The project team responded, scheduling additional meetings to engage with the SC virtually and face to face. Project members updated the SC on activities at their different institutions and were able to clarify particular queries from the SC members. The challenge of engaging the geographically diverse group remained throughout the later stages of the project. At the close of the project the steering committee indicated that “The use of the steering committee has definitely improved but could still be strengthened”. The project team members were extremely appreciative of all discussion engendered within and guidance received from the SC members. They felt that more-useful support could have been offered by the OLT to advise project teams on the role of Steering Committees in advising on project activities or direction. It is evident from SC feedback that strong relationships have been built with members as a result of the project engagement.

*2. Continue to focus on the modular nature of the Project approach such that the ‘templates’ are de-coupled from technology and can be applicable across contexts and disciplines.*

Continued project activities in 2013 clearly indicate the ongoing focus on technology-independent ‘templates’ in facilitating ePortfolio application. At one member institution, the ePortfolio activity, in a third year capstone unit was successfully completed because it could be carried out independently of technology. The ‘template’ focus was utilised within two different commercial platforms and the institutional Learning Management System, at different times, to facilitate different purposes and activities. This project member indicated the de-coupled ‘template’ focus had been crucial to continued successful engagement with the ePortfolio approach in this unit. This project activity represents a mature approach to ePortfolio, where technology-independence suggests sustainability of the approach. This is a particularly strong indicator of the significance and success of this project in informing the ePortfolio community.

*3. Consider carrying out high level stakeholder analysis to inform the dissemination plan.*

High-level stakeholder analysis was evident in the regular review and updating of the Dissemination Plan, which is a very detailed and comprehensive guide to dissemination avenues. Dissemination opportunities were being identified in the closing phase of the project to accommodate additional resources and to make resources widely available to all stakeholder groups. Team members had sourced relevant Journals and were planning an edited book which would include a chapter on the ePortfolio activities from the project. They have planned to present internationally in 2014. The ePortfolioAssist website offers a broad range of resource types to accommodate the wide range of interested stakeholders.

*4. The external evaluator and the Project Manager review the project plan for year 2 and agree the evaluation activities for 2013. (There were several suggested changes to the evaluation criteria)*

The external evaluator and the project leader undertook project review and the evaluation criteria for 2013 were amended as agreed by all members. The amended evaluation criteria are those

included in this report. These criteria continued to inform activity during the extension period.

## Fulfilment of project purposes

The following section draws upon project documentation and discussion with project partners to briefly illustrate the valuable contribution this project has made to ePortfolio engagement both in Australian higher education and across the international ePortfolio environment.

- *To inform development of capacity amongst staff from different Music, Creative/Performance and Arts disciplines to work with ePortfolios*
  - The outcomes achieved across this project clearly illustrate the growing capacity within the project members as they engage with ePortfolios across the two years of the project. I believe the project findings through the various dissemination resources will inform uptake and embedding of ePortfolios in different music and performance areas as well as providing motivation and support for those already working with ePortfolios. The ePortfolioAssist website provides wide access to the project outcomes and should prove a very significant project output. The Ning community site has the capacity to support music and creative arts practitioners online.
  - The insights shared by project members and colleagues at the Professional Learning day in March 2014 and on the DVD *ePortfolios in Australian universities: For creative and performing arts* provide advice and guidance for those seeking to build capacity to engage or continue with ePortfolios for learning and teaching. Excerpts from the DVD and the panel discussions will be available on the ePortfolioAssist website.
- *To identify the range and scope of ePortfolio items included by students*
  - The project has been highly successful in its contribution to the notion of ePortfolio as collections of evidence. Through the student ePortfolios which have been shared across project partners and at the two STePS Student Showcase events, students have been able to show and talk about the types of items they choose to include and why. The student voice in ePortfolio learning is sought after particularly by those planning to take up ePortfolios. Gaining insight into the processes and choices in building an ePortfolio is very valuable for informing practitioners in the embedding and application of ePortfolios for learning and teaching.
  - The example ePortfolios shared by students during the project have included:
    - cover letters and CVs
    - reports on projects undertaken as formal study
    - images, sound files and footage of personal performances
    - photos and footage of performance attendance (for learning or personal enjoyment)
    - images and stories about wider life experiences (outside formal education)
    - reflections on musical arrangement activities and outcomes
    - personal philosophies
    - music tutoring logs
    - original compositions
    - reflections on classroom practica
    - sample lesson and behaviour management plans
- *To develop an effective dissemination process which can effectively transfer project outcomes broadly*
  - The project team developed a detailed dissemination plan from the outset and regularly updated this across the project. As detailed in the final report, there is a wide range of dissemination resources including journal articles, conference presentations, book chapter and student encounter and professional learning events. In all, more than 40 project outputs disseminating outcomes and findings, sharing insights and suggesting how to engage with and develop the ePortfolio approach for different purposes.

- The ePortfolios Assist website (<http://eportfolioassist.com.au/>) has been developed to provide ongoing dissemination for at least the 3 year period required by OLT but also with the potential for project dissemination beyond this point. The developer has stated that the site requires minimal maintenance to remain up to date and has the inbuilt capacity for upgrading into the future.
  - The dissemination process successfully leveraged conferences and events, both in Australia and overseas, which were attended by members independently of project requirements and provided additional dissemination opportunities. Project dissemination will continue beyond the project close as members will present at upcoming conferences. Six papers have been accepted for international conferences in 2014. The dissemination activity has added significant value to the OLT funding for the project. The range of dissemination events is significant as it spans areas beyond the ambit of the project activity both geographically and across sectors.
- *To promote interest in ePortfolios by other Music, Creative/Performance and Arts disciplines*  
It is evident from the project outcomes and findings that have been formally disseminated in articles and presentations that the project activities have generated considerable interest and will continue to do so.
    - As mentioned previously the Professional Learning panel was delivered at STePS Student showcase and professional learning afternoon in March 2014. It promoted interest in ePortfolios for all attendees whether from music related disciplines or 'other than music' areas, as evidence by enthusiastic questioning of panellists and very positive feedback about the event. It was indeed a treat to hear from practitioners directly, about their experiences with ePortfolios in the medical sciences, education, creative writing as well as music and the arts. It is very valuable to share practice with colleagues and peers and this type of sharing opportunity does not often become available.
    - The DVD *ePortfolios in Australian universities: For creative and performing arts* is a very significant project output. The sharing of personal experiences of implementing ePortfolios teaching is indeed inspirational. Project members talk frankly about how the ePortfolio has supported their learning and teaching goals and informed subtle redesign of teaching approaches; how students have engaged with ePortfolios; what types of content students choose to include in the ePortfolio and share insights into the significance of ePortfolio activity for enhancing student learning "I'm finding increasingly... that students are feeding back to the first years what's worked for them"
    - Project team members also share the ways in which using ePortfolios has changed their teaching approaches or practice "it's been an impetus for me to change...and teach in a more effective manner for the way my students need to learn".
  - *To gauge the usefulness of the resulting ePortfolios to the employment sector*  
While there is little information, directly relating to employers' use or opinions of ePortfolios, arising directly from the project activities, the examples below evidence the effectiveness of ePortfolio construction to support students to become aware of the requirements for employment seeking. This shows the capacity of ePortfolios to successfully assist in the transition from student to professional life.
    - Students found that engaging in ePortfolio activities which were framed from a professional identity perspective helped them develop and understand themselves as more than students. They realised they would need a clear sense of professional skills and abilities to 'get a job' and would then need to maintain a professional profile into the future. It is evident from this type of realisation that engaging meaningfully with ePortfolios can support students to make the most of their university learning and the transition to employment.
    - One of the project activity areas showed that the ePortfolio tasks had helped students develop the ability to understand and address 'employment parameters required by employer groups'.

- The project leader, Jennifer Rowley, has been invited to join international partners in a project to look at “preparing graduates for 'work readiness' through the teaching and learning processes”.

## Responding to challenges

Team members expressed disappointment that professional colleagues at their institutions were not necessarily supportive or understanding of the application of the ePortfolio approach of the project. It was at times disheartening that the broader institution did not share the enthusiasm or interest of the project team. This was mentioned specifically by several people at the professional learning event. It is disheartening but not unusual and certainly not unique to this project. It is a phenomenon shared by many practitioners who are engaging with or innovating in the ‘ePortfolio space’. In my experience this type of reaction is best met with continued enthusiasm and a willingness to share. That is the approach I have seen from the team members in this project.

I feel the enthusiasm of the team partners and the significant, positive user/student feedback which they collected during the project will not only keep the team members positive but will also encourage engagement across discipline areas at the partner institutions and more broadly. I feel confident that the outcomes achieved by this project will continue to make a positive difference to ePortfolio understanding into the future through the ongoing dissemination afforded through dissemination resources such as the ePortfolioAssist website.

Engaging members in the Ning community site *ePortfolios for arts students* remained a challenge throughout the project. Strategies for engaging members were regularly discussed at team meetings. The site was promoted widely at conferences, forums and meetings and at the close of the project the membership community remains quite small. The challenge remains to engage a wider audience in this information rich community. Interestingly, the Australian ePortfolio Project final report recommended that a community of practice site be established “to share learning and experiences of quality ePortfolio practice in higher education”. The current project community site is a step on the path to achieving this outcome (Hallam et al, 2008, p. 137).

## Impact of the project

I am sure the project Final Report will have a considerable and positive impact on the ePortfolio community, both in Australia and internationally. In addition, the dissemination resources and events have brought an impact of their own. The project dissemination activities and avenues are many and varied. They have opened considerable scope for immediate and ongoing project impact. To date there have been two student showcase events, a professional learning panel, two book chapters, four journal articles and seven international conference presentations and other less formal presentations and information documents. (Details can be found in the Final Report.) The following examples exemplify the nature of the impact of the dissemination strategy.

### Student showcases

As a member of the Australian ePortfolio Project (AeP) team; having worked in supporting both students and academics in using an ePortfolio approach to learning and teaching over many years and through ongoing participation in planning the annual Australian ePortfolio conference/forum, I have seen first-hand the significant impact of ‘the student voice’ on those interested in ePortfolios for education and learning. Delegate feedback always includes a call for ‘more of those student panels’. I have no doubt that the two STePS Student Showcase events held in 2012 and 2014 are among the most significant and informative episodes in Australian ePortfolio engagement. Attendees at these events were very positive about the power of the ‘user voice’ to enthuse and inspire teaching staff in their use of ePortfolios. It was particularly

heartening at the 2014 STePS showcase that secondary school students were included in the presentations. Since the AeP, in 2007/8 there has been increasing interest in ensuring a cross-sector awareness and understanding within the Australian education ePortfolio community. The STePS showcase 2014 has made a very positive contribution in this regard.

## **The DVD**

*ePortfolios in Australian universities: For creative and performing arts*

This DVD was detailed in the previous section. It presents the project members talking about their experiences of embedding the ePortfolio approach during the project activities over the last 2 -3 years. Excerpts from the DVD will be presented on the ePortfolio Assist website for easy access by all interested stakeholders. This will enable ongoing impact on future learning and teaching practice. The DVD content provides evidence in support of the second evaluation criterion ...*extent to which ePortfolio pedagogies are evident in curricula at all institutions.*

## **Research**

In terms of continued research into ePortfolios for learning and teaching, this project has provided a solid evidence base from which to further explore and investigate the use of ePortfolios across education sectors and disciplines areas. The project has gathered a significant amount of student data as well as reflections from teaching staff which give valuable insight into the influence ePortfolios can have on learning and meta-learning and also on teaching and curriculum design. This is a very significant addition to the literature. The current body of evidence, of what it means to students to use ePortfolios in learning, and how this use may enhance learning, is quite small. The current project has added valuable insights which will provide impetus for further research to support ePortfolios in learning and teaching.

## **International**

While not a direct aim of the project the capacity to engage the international ePortfolio community is a very positive indication of the success of dissemination of project outcomes and the capacity of Australian ePortfolio activity to interest and enthuse beyond the immediate project environs to the international ePortfolio audience. As a research group, the project team has six papers accepted at the upcoming international commissions and conference in Brazil in July. An international educational company has expressed interest in embedding ePortfolios for use in schools. Jennifer Rowley has been invited to work with international partners to investigate using ePortfolios in preparing graduates for 'work readiness' through their teaching and learning processes. The international conference in Brazil offers further dissemination and collaboration opportunities further adding value to the project.

## **Recommendation**

The project Ning community site – *ePortfolios for arts students* will be maintained for 12 months beyond the project end, to further the opportunity for interested stakeholders to share ePortfolio experience and expertise. It is perhaps timely for the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) to take up the challenge to provide the capacity for the 'ePortfolios for learning' community to establish a sustainable community site where practitioners can "share learning and experiences of quality ePortfolio practice in higher education, in order to foster scholarship and research and to provide a forum for dissemination about good practice".

## **Conclusion**

It is apparent through my engagement with project dissemination events and from talking with project partners and colleagues at these events, that the *ePortfolios for creative arts, music and arts students in Australian universities* project has been transforming the notion of ePortfolios for learning and teaching and for professional development, not only in music and the performing



arts but also across discipline areas. In my view, this project has made a significant contribution to the ePortfolios evidence base, not only in Australian higher education but internationally and across education sectors. The enthusiasm and dedication of the project members has been a key feature of the project throughout and has been recognised by those at dissemination events. The evaluation report indicates the project is highly successful when viewed through the triple focus lens of “readiness for change, stakeholder engagement throughout the project and capacity of the project to transfer outcomes broadly” (Hinton & Gannaway, 2011). Planned dissemination articles and presentations for 2014 and ongoing provision of the ePortfolioAssist website will maximise the transfer of project outcomes into the future.

The Office for Learning and Teaching should be very pleased with the value delivered by *ePortfolios for creative arts, music and arts students in Australian universities*. It will continue to have positive impact in higher education and beyond. I hope the project partners have enjoyed the challenges of delivering this very successful and enlightening project. Personally, it has been a great pleasure to meet project stakeholders and to be involved as an independent evaluator. In closing, I commend the Ning community site – *ePortfolios for arts students* and the ePortfolioAssist website to everyone who has an interest in the application of ePortfolios for learning, teaching and personal development.

## **References**

Hallam, G., Harper, W., McCowan, C. Hauville, K., McAllister, L. & Creagh, T. (2008). Australian ePortfolio Project: ePortfolio use by university students in Australia: Informing excellence in policy and practice. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology.

Hinton, T., Gannaway, D., Berry, B., & Moore, K. (2011). *The D-Cubed Guide: Planning for Effective Dissemination*. Sydney: Australian Teaching and Learning Council.

## **Attachment 1**

The key evaluation questions:

1. To what extent have the intended outcomes been achieved? What have been the unintended outcomes and how has this shaped the direction and achievements of the project over time?
2. What new knowledge has been uncovered about ePortfolio use with Music, Creative/Performance and Arts students?
3. What were the personal outcomes for the team members?
4. How has the ePortfolio Project helped orient discussion surrounding learning, curriculum renewal, reflective practice, and Music, Creative/Performance and Arts outputs?
5. Has the ePortfolio Project enabled a more sophisticated understanding of the concept and use of ePortfolios in music and performance studies as an assessment, reflective and showcase tool?
6. What impact has ePortfolio technology had on staff, students, and curriculum design?
7. Were the dissemination strategies to other Music, Creative/Performance and Arts Faculties at the collaborating institutions appropriate and is there any evidence of impact?
8. What lessons have been learned from this project, particularly about project management and the processes of the project and how might these lessons be of assistance to other projects?