

Community of eLearning: creating a community of learning through an ePortfolio website

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Graphic Design is a discipline that is undergoing major changes in its associated technologies; while underlying design principles may remain fundamentally intact, new digital technologies and publishing mediums provide new challenges. This research project looked at the possibilities of engaging students and teachers in out-of-class communicating to enhance the learning and teaching environment and to involve graphic design staff working as a team to introduce new technologies into learning and teaching approaches, with associated curriculum development. This was seen as engaging with an online ePortfolio/Blog area that was specifically tailored for the students so that they could communicate with each other and the tutor of the class. There was also the need for the students to up-load their project designs to ascertain critique from their peers and tutors whilst away from class. This would have several benefits as feedback could be given outside of the classroom, making the precious time in class much more fulfilling and productive whilst creating a collaborative design community. It will also enable teaching material to be available to students for independent learning in online and downloadable formats and will enable teaching staff to concentrate on developing concepts, while allowing students to develop as independent, engaged learners. A key aspect of the project will be the adoption of new approaches involving staff in an active, team-based exploration of new approaches. It is expected that long-term changes will be more successfully embedded through individual development. Long-term resources will be developed and made available across disciplines, as appropriate.