Chapter XXXVI
Creating a Strategy for the Implementation of the QUT ePortfolio

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**ABSTRACT**

This chapter introduces the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) ePortfolio project as an example of a successful collaboration and integration strategy within a higher education context. Following extensive piloting and testing, the portfolio was released to all students and staff late in 2004, and by May 2005 in excess of 10,000 portfolios had been commenced. This chapter will present insights into this project which reveal some key collaboration and integration strategy decisions that were taken by both the university and the portfolio design team. In order to support these insights, preliminary student, academic, and employer feedback is provided based on research carried out from 2003 to 2005. The authors hope that this chapter will provide insights that will enable other institutions to enjoy similar success.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Student Electronic Portfolio (the Portfolio) is a distinctly innovative addition to the experience of being a student at an Australian university. This assertion is made on the basis of its student centeredness, its alignment with teaching and learning policy and with the whole student experience, its flexibility and compre-
hensiveness, and its university-wide integrated architecture.

The Portfolio’s design and development was a direct consequence of the strategic harnessing of a wide spectrum of skills, knowledge, and technology across the university. Its goal is to enhance the student experience, making it more reflective, more personally valuable and continuous, and more enduring than was possible before the development of comprehensive digital facilities at the university.

This chapter will firstly present reflections on the collaboration and integration strategies used for the successful development and implementation of the Portfolio, and secondly provide preliminary student, academic, and employer feedback to the Portfolio based on research carried out during 2003 to 2005.

THE NEED

The impetus for this project was twofold: firstly, the opportunity to create an innovative university framework that helped students to gain a “bird’s-eye” perspective on their learning, as well as their goals for the future. If students could achieve this, then it would be possible for them to become more excited about learning and to strategize to reach their own goals. In brief, the project was propelled by a vision to add value to students’ learning by empowering them through reflective thinking. As QUT’s DVC for Teaching, Information, and Learning Support, Tom Cochrane, said:

There existed genuine potential to help students ‘pull it all together’ so that they could see how their experiences added up and made sense as a whole.

Secondly, the Portfolio was driven by Col McCowan, the manager of the Careers and Employment section at QUT, who clearly saw the Portfolio as providing a competitive advantage to QUT students over other university graduates in an increasingly competitive labour market.

QUT Portfolio Structure

The Portfolio comprises an online tool that students utilize to record, catalogue, retrieve, and present reflections on experiences and artefacts that support the development of graduate capabilities. The Portfolio extends the student journey beyond the classroom: it allows students to write about their personal, community, and work life, as well as their life as an undergraduate and beyond. From the students’ perspective it is holistic, allowing them to build a picture of themselves as a whole person, a picture that cannot be seen in an academic history or curriculum vitae alone.

The Portfolio is available to all of QUT’s 40,000 students (12% from overseas) and to all staff (3,500). The Portfolio comprises five main structural areas:

1. **Portfolio Management:** Where students are able to add, edit, and manage experiences and artefacts, and to create, release, and export their Portfolio.
2. **Portfolio Display:** Where authorized users can view released Portfolios.
3. **Portfolio Support:** Where students and staff have access to sample portfolios, electronic and print guides, and tutorials.
4. **Résumé Builder:** Where students can create, release, and manage their résumés.
5. **File Manager:** Where each student can store up to 128mb of artefacts.

Access to the Portfolio is via “QUT Virtual,” the university’s intranet for students and staff. QUT Virtual provides a simple portal
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