Chapter 4
Implementing ePortfolios:
From Pilot Project to Full Scale Implementation

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the most important steps in the process of ePortfolio implementation at the Faculty of Organization and Informatics (FOI) at the University of Zagreb. Stemming from an announcement by 11 faculties from the University of Zagreb, the Centre for E-Learning at the University of Zagreb reports that eportfolio is now used by over 500 students. The University of Zagreb adopted the E-learning Strategy in 2007 and this chapter covers the period 2007-2010. During this time, the response to ePortfolios greatly improved, which the authors suggest are due to changes discussed in this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

Within its E-learning strategy developed in July 2007, the University of Zagreb committed to establish and maintain the ePortfolio system at the university and/or at the faculties belonging to the university. According to the report of the Centre for E-Learning at the University of Zagreb, 11 of its faculties have announced a plan for conducting other activities defined by the E-learning strategy, among which is ePortfolio. To date, several researches within the Centre for E-Learning have dealt with certain professional aspects of ePortfolio, such as the functionalities of tools that support ePortfolio. However, comprehensive research has neither been conducted by the Centre nor any university in Croatia. Therefore,
the ePortfolio experience at the Faculty of Organization and Informatics (FOI), which belongs to the University of Zagreb, represents a very valuable contribution to supporting and developing lifelong learning in Croatia. In this chapter, the most important steps in the process of ePortfolio implementation at the Faculty of Organization and Informatics are presented.

**E-LEARNING STRATEGY ON THE FACULTY**

The E-learning Strategy of the University of Zagreb was adopted in 2007 and covers the period 2007-2010. According to the strategy, technology should be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes, with pedagogical needs always kept in mind rather than the application of modern technologies for their own sake. To support realization of planned activities, a new e-learning support center was established at the central university level. The main tasks of this center are: to provide a standard LMS and e-portfolio platform; to provide support to teachers and students through a help desk and training; to promote and encourage the application of information and communication technologies in university education; and to monitor and analyze e-learning implementation at the university.

Since faculties are independent entities in Croatia, it was left to the faculty management to decide whether to use resources provided by this center or to base e-learning on their own resources. A few months later, then, the university-wide strategy, an e-learning strategy developed by the Faculty of Organization and Informatics (FOI), was approved. It acknowledged the goals that were given in the university strategy but also refined them to make them operational and introduced a few new goals that were specific to the Faculty mission.

By implementing e-learning, FOI plans to achieve following strategic goals: to enhance quality of educational process and learning outcomes; to prepare students for lifelong learning; to ensure that potential students have better and wider access to education; and to provide exposure to the international market. The Faculty believes a blended (hybrid) learning approach is the most suitable one in teaching and learning. Such an approach is based on the combination of classic teaching methods and those employed in virtual learning and teaching environments. Choice of the form and intensity of e-learning is left to the teachers of the Faculty. Since it is acknowledged that systematic implementation of e-learning contributes to enhancement of teaching and research processes, the business position of FOI, personnel development and lifelong learning and the fact that FOI is mainly a faculty of information sciences, the faculty decided that entire e-learning infrastructure will be based on internal faculty human and technical resources.

In the FOI E-learning Strategy, there are three different levels pre-defined for e-courses (Figure 1). The main goal of the first level is to increase availability of learning materials and to ease communication with students. The first level means that an e-course includes basic information about curriculum/topics, learning outcomes, references, forums for communication and selected learning materials. This level is obligatory for all courses.

The hidden goal of this basic level is to gradually introduce e-learning to teaching staff and to get them more involved. The goal of the second level is to ease the learning process through better integration between e-learning and classic teaching. An e-course that is on the second level should contain learning materials organized according to specific topics, discussion forums for different topics (i.e., student communication), a timetable and calendar for different tasks, and course tools, such as tests, marks, homework, and a glossary. Finally, the goal of the third level is to advance teaching methods by hybrid course organization made according to the principles of instructional design. An e-course on the third level improves upon the second level in terms of design, the inclu-
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