

In what ways do digital portfolios enhance and affect learning?

Mary Chisnall
Oxford Area School
October 2009.
mary@oxford.school.nz

A Sabbatical Project by Mary Chisnall, Oxford Area School 2009.

In what ways do digital portfolios enhance and affect learning?

The investigation into assessment and other learning outcomes is an area in our school which is being continually revisited. I decided my inquiry question would lead me directly into action research for term one and two into this specific aspect of student learning. Each student would have the opportunity to develop and track their own personal progress and reflect on their learning. They would develop and extend their ICT skills to record their personal growth and subsequently share their progress with their parents in a different way. Encouraging closer links with the student, parents and teacher through conferencing via digital portfolios, would enhance the student's ability to goal set and prepare for life long learning as well as provide them with a valuable retrieval space for their special work.

I wanted to be innovative in our school, to accept a new challenge to research and develop an idea using ICT and to explore the ways other schools were integrating ICT into assessing student progress.

In this paper I intend to discuss digital portfolios, share the action research process I undertook including examples, discuss the benefits to the individual, parent and school community and reflect on where to next incorporating some aspects of the latest Ministry of Education thinking on eportfolios.

A digital portfolio or e-portfolio as seems to be more commonly referred to in the research, is an electronic format for learners to record their work, their achievements and their goals, to reflect on their learning, and to share and be supported in this. It enables learners to represent the information in different formats and to take the information with them as they move between institutions. (Banks, 2004.p3 cited in MoE, Celebrating e-portfolios 2009)

Our school had previously collected set samples of student learning which was systematically pasted into a scrapbook at regular intervals. Whole school assessment changes had seen this form of data collection abandoned for other forms of reporting but all in a paper format. I found it frustrating that photos, video clips and special pieces of written work on the schools' server were deleted at the end of each year. Students enjoyed sharing their achievements with their peers but rarely did their families participate. Reflective comments were written in an exercise book and checked by the teacher. E-portfolios seemed to be a perfect platform to explore because it opened up opportunities for the saving of this range of learning and offered students another way of self assessing their own achievements by using a blog as a reflective tool.

My journey of learning started when I began reading about Dr Helen Barrett who is widely recognised for her work on electronic portfolios for lifelong and life wide learning. Gaining an insight into the range of benefits of such a technology inspired me to search out a possible model of storage or learning management system (LMS). It seemed that there were three options –CD, DVD or WWW. Keeping in mind that e-Portfolios are about people, rather than technology and that our server is very well used I chose the interface of 'My Portfolio by Mahara' which is free to schools. <http://myportfolio.school.nz>. Mahara is an off site hosting service which is independent of present staff and local school servers. *The tools have to be unobtrusive, supportive and flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of learners. JISC, (2007)* I hoped that this would be the case.

My next step then was to become the student and learn through Mahara's online tutorial how the programme worked. I created a page for myself trialling all aspects in preparation for the teaching to my 2009 year 6 class. It soon became evident that a new class of ten year olds would struggle to understand the complex steps in creating their own portfolio. I developed a teaching template of each stage of the making of a personalised Myportfolio page using my own example. **(fig1 p13)** I wanted the introduction to be a positive experience so a carefully scaffolded resource seemed to be the only way. This resource became a valuable tool in teaching my class of 25 to create their own portfolios. A common password for all students gave me direct access to monitoring progress or fixing an error in my own time. I was to discover that Mahara is known to be 'quite sophisticated' as will be discussed later in this report.

With the resource prepared and having some understanding myself, I invited the parents to visit the class where I was able to explain to the students and their parents what we were going to create and why. I used my own newly made portfolio as an example to share. I devised a questionnaire for both parents and students for February and June so I could track progress. **(fig 2 p27)** Parent approval for internet use was also gained at this time. As I proceeded with each step along the teaching journey I used the blog on my own portfolio page as a reflection area of my personal challenges and growth. *Practitioners must become learners again.....However, tutors do need to participate. It is valuable for learners to see their tutors joining in discussions and sharing experiences. (Julie Hughes, practitioner cited in JISC, 2007)*

It was clear to me that although I had created the teaching guide resource, there were many aspects to making the home page portfolio which would be time consuming and confusing for many students if I was to be the only teacher of knowledge. I needed some 'tech wizard' teachers to work alongside me so I first taught two techno students, Ben and Hayden. I trialled the guideline resource on them, revised some parts and then the three of us proceeded to help all the other students to create their very own Myportfolio page.



Each page had some personal information, a blog, a media folder, a learning sample folder, a photo folder and a space for a minimum of four photos to be seen at one time. Having a data projector to show the guideline resource and a bank of computers available for two thirds of the class to use made this task easier. The boys were very capable teachers. By the end of the first session most of the students had succeeded. This meant that the remainder of the students had one to one student tuition to complete their home page on the following day. Each student had made their own e-portfolio page and was ready to upload their new learning.

Term 1 progressed with the blog being used as a weekly reflection tool for their prior learning. Uploading of photos and learning samples was soon learnt. We found that the digital camera was being used more often to record many events as well as capturing images of written work or art. I videoed each student reading to later discover that Myportfolio only accepts 50MB of video footage –one minute of recording. I had 100-150 MB of recording which meant the student would sit for a long time waiting and wondering why the video would not upload! I have now discovered that these could be embedded into You tube but I didn't want them to be available to the public so we uploaded what we could in the way of video clips, embedded them in power points some times and saved them on a CD at other times. This did cause some frustration as I felt the video clips were some of the most valuable data collected for the students to view, reflect and use for setting their own goals as well as giving parents an honest insight into their child's learning in the classroom environment. Students were however able to reflect on their progress and develop new learning goals by viewing the clips on the CD or from the main server. There were direct teacher/student conversations however these were not recorded. Maybe that will be a challenge for me for the future



Students were encouraged to submit their portfolio work to me during the term for reflection and written comments were able to be added. Once the portfolio was submitted students could only view their work but not add to it until it was released. This didn't cause any concerns because I was able to mark the projects at home.

Other work gathered that term was a travel project which was videoed, photos of units and an end of term reflective power point. Many students grew in confidence during this time and some started to upload photos from home and share their work with their families. Others did what was required at school and needed to have a student as a teacher to help them with each move because they lacked confidence.

Term 2 saw a greater confidence in uploading independently by more students. Students communicated and enjoyed sharing their portfolios with others within the classroom. They were always available to support others because they were all encouraged to become teachers freeing me up to challenge their thinking about progress, rather than spending my teacher time on the process.

Many pieces of written work were videoed – like our letter of complaint to the local council and our thank you letters to places we visited on camp. Students explained their numeracy strategies onto video and shared their space findings and posters. Power points became an effective way of sharing lots of photos and a reflective template (**fig 3 p29**) was very useful to explain the learning intention and state the 'where to next' comments. Some students added photos and web links if they chose and many experimented in individualising their home page format. The term finished with a reflective power point and blog as in term 1.

In week 9 of term 2 the students invited their families to come to school to view their MyPortfolios. The students took total control of the conference. They showed what work they wanted to, they told their stories of learning and the parents became mesmerised by their computer skills as well as their enthusiasm to answer questions and share their achievements. This was such a highlight for me because this allowed the parents to see their child functioning in the school day setting and allowed me to see the child proudly confident about explaining the process and their progress in just two terms. They had been empowered to learn and reflect in this digital age. I too had benefited from the process and incidentally learnt new skills from my tech wizards.

The parents revisited the questionnaire giving me written and verbal feedback. The students completed their questionnaire and also took part in a cooperative activity to share their thinking on the benefits of the project for not only themselves but the wider community. These I collated and shared with the students.

Benefits for Individual

There was a range of very positive comments which the students shared. Comments about 'gaining more confidence on the computer', 'choosing what they could do', 'being a teacher', 'proudly sharing their work with their parents', 'knowing a lot more', 'looking back at the blogs and remembering the things we have done' as well as comments like 'looked at my thinking when I showed my parents', 'choose what I show them so they can see my progress' or 'I've come a long way. I knew nothing and now I know how to do lots.'



As a class their comments were about 'having so much fun', 'store our work forever', 'everything you put on stays on', 'learnt more about the computer and how to use it like uploading, power points and saving files' and 'blogging was a fun way to think about what we had achieved'. Some students shared their password with their Grandparents and extended family who were then able to see their achievements from their own homes in the North Island.

Benefits for Parents

The students wrote that 'their parents could see their work at home', 'they could write comments on the student's blog' and 'they could see what they were doing at school'. Parents wrote the same comments as well as comments like- 'video footage was more real than a display for parents', 'good to see how my child responds in their classroom learning', 'boost for my child's self esteem being able to proudly show me his efforts, how he operates the equipment, makes power points and discusses his learning', 'impressed with the child's knowledge and the high level of learning in the child centred conference'. 'It gave parents a positive and fantastic method to report back to us on work achieved to date. I felt like I was in the classroom with my child with this form of reporting'.

With the students permission parents are more able to view the learning journey and the learning goals because of the web- based platform. In future I could see benefits in recording learning conversations between the student and the teacher where discussion and reflection would lead to next step goals. Parents could listen to these conversations and work with them which would impact positively on future learning.



Benefits for the School

The National Assessment Strategy for schools was launched in 1999. Setting specific and challenging goals with students, fostering partnerships in learning and using information to improve learning were some focus areas. Myportfolios have addressed these areas. Through blogging, videos and reflections students have set themselves goals and sought to improve their learning by constructively analysing their work. The fact that their student's work can be viewed at anytime at home, as well as the 95% turnout of families for the student lead conference at school, strongly supports the fostering partnerships focus.

The students saw the school benefits as 'students wanting to work', 'improved computer skills', 'teacher can see what we have done', 'feeling important because we were the only ones doing it' and 'being able to interact with other schools and classes'.

The students also shared some limitations. 'Uploading videos was the biggest concern' and 'remembering how to upload and to send messages on the forum was too hard because we wanted to do other things like blogging and uploading photos'.

Interestingly parent concern focussed on the lack of proof reading in their child's power point, spelling errors, sentence structure and limited keyboard skills with the use of one finger. Perhaps this should have be seen as a true reflection of some future goals for their child or as in one case an opportunity for the parent to work at home on their child's learning concern. Not all work is marked for accuracy in their exercise books although the skill of proof reading is highly recommended.

Where to next

From my research I see that the introduction of e-portfolios is being explored in various ways. Explanations of high workloads on teachers and new initiatives were cited as reasons for the slow uptake in e-Portfolio development often seeing innovative teachers working in isolation rather than school wide use.

JISC Effective Practice with e-Portfolios, UK 2008 and editure e-Portfolios-Celebrating Learning, MOE, NZ draft July 2009 explore the place and use of electronic portfolios in primary schools through to secondary colleges. Both papers acknowledge that as the new technologies become more accessible the key is how to best use them in schools to support learning. *Case studies in NZ identified many common themes, most importantly, where schools are genuinely committed to the development of 'confident, connected, actively involved life-long learners' (MoE 2007), an ePortfolio is likely to be an integral part of the journey towards that goal. Strong links exist between the e-Portfolios and the school's pedagogical beliefs. E-Portfolios will assist the development of key competency skills, providing evidence of a student's growing development in a range of curriculum areas, assisting teachers personalise learning, better preparing students with the skills required to thrive in this knowledge age, engaging students in their learning and showing that schooling can be relevant to their 21st century lives. (MoE draft, 2009, p. iii)*

My Thoughts

"ePortfolios are not about technology; they are about pedagogy and learning. They are about life-long learning." (MOE, 2009)

I hope that my students will now take charge of their own portfolio and continue to blog and upload whether I am present or not. It will be interesting to see what percentage of students have the confidence to make this the beginning of their learning journey and continue to build and personalise their pages. I feel that as a parent I would value the variety of work that has been uploaded. It reflects the child's academic journey in literacy and maths as well as snapshots of the Arts and the cooperative learning and thinking that the children participate in each week.



As a teacher it requires a reasonable level of computer literacy, an ability to trouble shoot, to take a risk and be a learner, a confidence to step aside and to encourage a range of student teachers or tech wizards as we call them to be the main teacher, to widely use the digital camera and video in the classroom and to provide the time for students to reflect and upload their work. Introducing the programme requires fundamental skill learning and careful scaffolding so that students have a positive experience. e-Portfolios must always be about people rather than the technology although coping with the process must be understood first before focussing on the quality of the product.

I think Year 6 is probably young enough for using Mahara platform for e-Portfolios because of its complexity of views as was a view quoted in the *MoE Editure draft(2009)* when it referred to the Mahara option as 'quite sophisticated.' *If the MoE is considering a national base technical platform (or reference implementation) for ePortfolios then Mahara presents itself as an obvious candidate. However Mahara is not suitable in its current state for supporting the requirements of a number of schools, particularly with respect to simplicity and ease of use. In its current form it is felt that Mahara is more focussed at high school and tertiary rather than intermediate and below. The software is quite sophisticated in the multiple views it offers but lacks simple options where the more structured approach is not required.*

Students in lower classes could focus on saving files, taking photos, writing reflections and making power points so they confidently start with a range of base skills. I observed in many schools in Christchurch and Nelson where blogging was used as the tool for embedding these student achievements which was accepted by parents and is widely used as an open source tool.

I hope the Ministry of Education adopts a standardised MLS with funding so that teachers can up skill themselves to use 21st century technologies such as e-Portfolios to inspire and develop 'confident, connected, actively involved life-long learners'. Access to a more simple format would inspire me to encourage my Y4-6 syndicate to develop this personalised learning especially if the management team linked e-Portfolios with our schools' pedagogy. E-Portfolios are an integral way of developing key competency skills and providing evidence of a student's growing development in a range of curriculum areas. At the very least e-Portfolios could be established in Year 6 and independently students could continue to personalise their learning with minimal teacher support at Year 7/8 level.

The introduction of digital or e-Portfolios into my class programme this year has positively enhanced and affected student learning. Students have shown an enthusiasm to take control of their own learning as their confidence has grown and many have acquired a greater sense of self-worth. The early introduction to reflectively blog helped them to make connections between aspects of their learning and their own development. This was exciting for me to observe during the parent conference. Fox. 2008 acknowledged the shift in thinking as *students moved from e-learning to me-learning, growing independent, confident learners who understand that learning is something they do; it is not something that others do to them.*

Developing the skills of reflection and determining the next steps to move forward through e-Portfolios make students' independent, self-directed learners which are also the goals of the New Zealand Curriculum document. The opportunity to investigate and see samples of implementation as I visited a range of schools in New Zealand, England and California has inspired me continue my journey with e-Portfolios. Cambridgeshire, England was the only area where I felt the eportfolio platform was highly successful and very student friendly. Many of the other eportfolios observed were in the form of blogging or power points which was not web based. I was proud of the achievements my students had made in the two terms of the research trial.

Each portfolio tells a personal story. I need to see that strong links are made to the key competencies; that assessment is *for* learning not *of* learning; that the learner is engaged, motivated, and enthusiastic; that setting goals is used as a powerful way to focus students' learning; and that possibly the inclusion of digital stories into their e-Portfolios might be used as an another way where student voice can be heard to track the learning journey.

I have many exciting challenges ahead of me to continue to trial with my students of the future to enhance, affect and personalise their learning.

Footnote:

My sabbatical leave was taken in Term 3. Now in Term 4 I am pleased to report that more than half the class added to their blog in my absence but no other work was uploaded. This either reflected that more scaffolding was necessary or that uploading came from teacher directed enthusiasm and lesson opportunities.

This term however, we have uploaded photos of the latest events, written blogs and are preparing for our final power point reflecting our years' work. Students have changed their passwords and are preparing to take total ownership of their eportfolio as they move into their new learning in Year 7. I hope their new teachers will encourage continued uploading and reflections and see this as an effective assessment tool of the future.

References

Barret, H (200) How to create your own Electronic Portfolio. Retrieved on 18 June 2008 from <http://electronicportfolios.com/portfolios/howto/index.html>

Barrett, H. (2005) Researching Electronic Portfolios and Learner Engagement. Retrieved on 24 January 2009 from <http://www.electronicportfolios.com/reflect/whitepaper.pdf>

Barrett, H. (2006) Digital Stories in ePortfolios: Multiple Purposes and Tools. Retrieved on 24 January 2009 from <http://electronicportfolios.org/digistory/purposesmac.html>

Becta, (2007) The Impact of e-portfolios on learning. Retrieved on 9 July 2009 from http://partners.becta.org.uk/upload-dir/downloads/page_documents/research/impact_study_eportfolios.doc

Fox, I. (2008) ePortfolios, A Personal Space for Learning, Retrieved on 8 June 2009 from <http://www.ian.fox.co.nz/downloads>

Grant, S. (2009) LEAP2A: A specification for e-portfolio portability and interoperability. Retrieved on 21 July 2009 from http://newsletter.alt.ac.uk/e_article001402921.cfm?x=b11,0,w

Hall, K. (2007) From Clearfile to CD. NZ Educational Gazette 5 February 2007

JISC, (2007) Effective Practice with e-Portfolios. Retrieved 9 July 2009 from <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/effectivepracticeeportfolios.pdf>

Ministry of Education, (2007) The New Zealand Curriculum, Wellington: Learning Media

Ministry of Education, (2007) Lets Talk About; Personalised Learning, Wellington: Learning Media

Ministry of Education, (2009) Editure: Celebrating Learning New Zealand: <http://lietze.edublogs.org/files/2009/07/moeeportfolioreportconsultationdraft.pdf>

STARZ Learning Platform UK: www.starz.org.uk www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Appendix

Fig 1: Setting Up Your MyPortfolio Profile.

1. The My Portfolio Home Page:



myPortfolio Schools: My Future

Home Profile My Portfolio Groups Settings Logout

Search Users

Welcome

My Portfolio provides a personal learning environment to record and showcase evidence of achievement, manage development plans, set goals, and create online learning communities.

Examples

Sample 1 Sample 2

Take a Tour (Video Guides)

- Login, profile and settings
- Resumé builder
- Blogging
- Uploading resources
- Creating Views
- Groups, Forums and Friends
- Quick Admin Guide

Links and Resources

- Quick reference guide for students
- Quick reference guide for staff
- Sample View 1
- Sample View 2

Welcome to MyPortfolio

Students

- Create a plan of study, a career plan, map your personal development
- Maintain multiple web-based resumé
- Showcase your achievements with all sorts of files, photos, blogs and graphics
- Create media rich Views to share with family, friends, employers and instructors
- Reflect as part of your learning experience

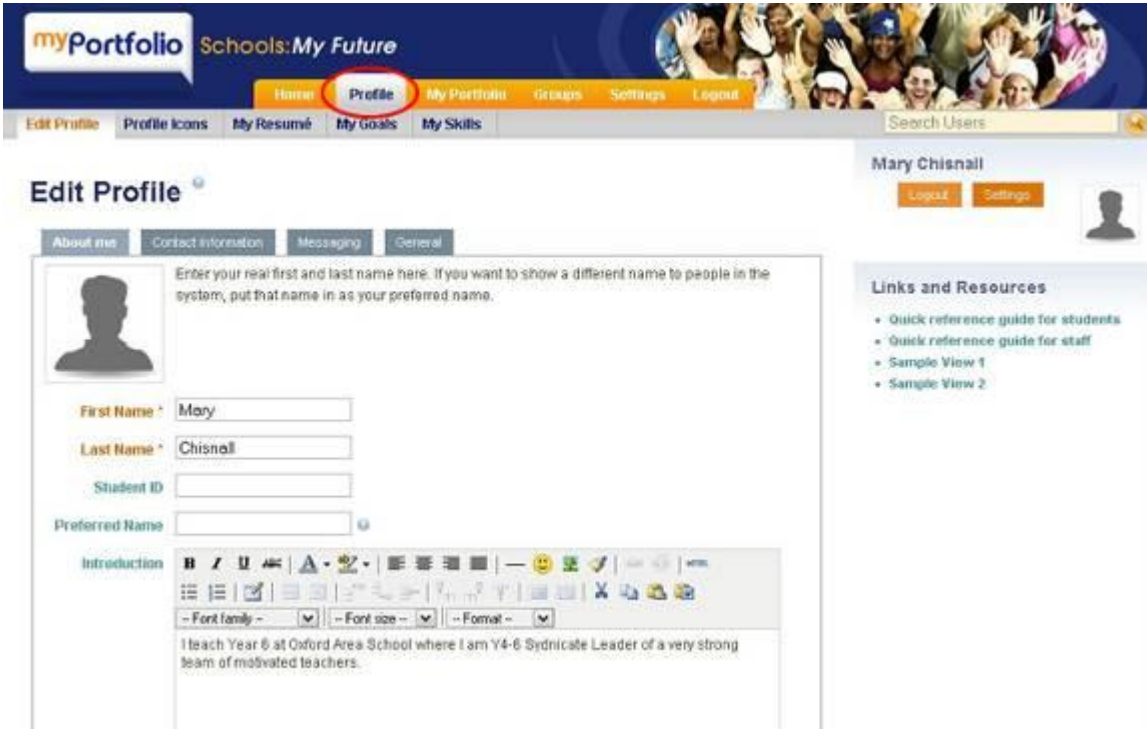
Teachers

- Create portfolio projects as part of your class
- Help your students prepare and thrive in the digital age
- Comment on and assess your students' achievements
- Create your own portfolio, for your class and for your career

Schools

- Prepare school leaver profiles for all your students
- Showcase your students' accomplishments
- Enable family to share with the students' learning experiences
- Prepare your students for work, study and life

2. Click on the 'Profile' tab then fill in name, details and save.



myPortfolio Schools: My Future

Home Profile My Portfolio Groups Settings Logout

Edit Profile Profile Icons My Resumé My Goals My Skills

Search Users

Edit Profile

About me Contact information Messaging General

Enter your real first and last name here. If you want to show a different name to people in the system, put that name in as your preferred name.

First Name * Mary

Last Name * Chisnall

Student ID

Preferred Name

Introduction

I teach Year 6 at Oxford Area School where I am Y4-6 Syndicate Leader of a very strong team of motivated teachers.

Links and Resources

- Quick reference guide for students
- Quick reference guide for staff
- Sample View 1
- Sample View 2

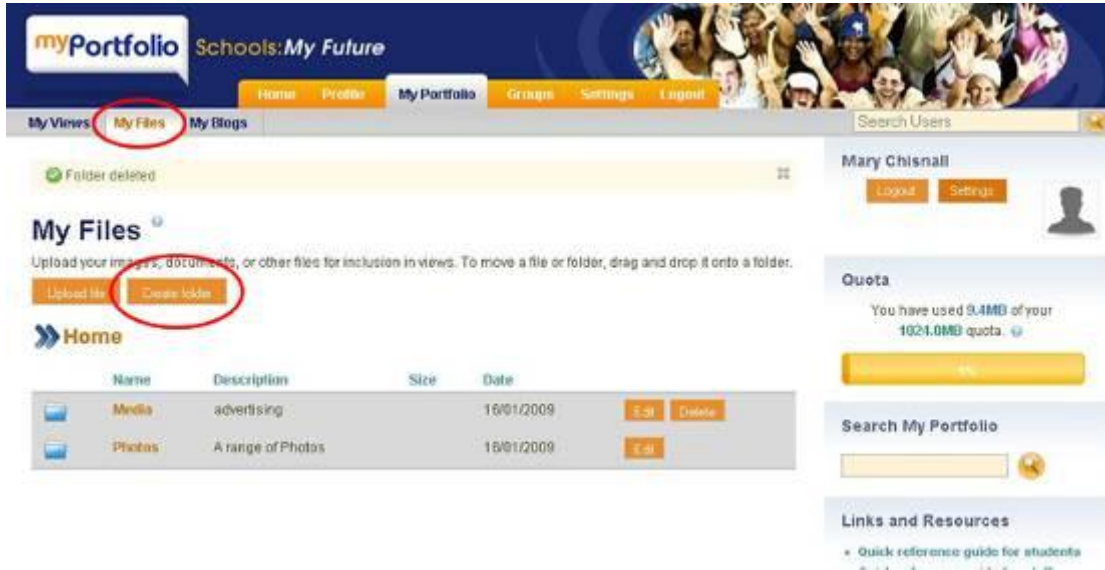
5. When your 'Profile Information' shows in the view area press save.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit View' interface for 'Mary's Portfolio'. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Home, Profile, My Portfolio, Groups, Settings, and Logout. Below these are 'My Views', 'My Files', and 'My Blogs' tabs, along with a 'Search Users' field. The main heading is 'Edit View "Mary's Portfolio"'. Below this, there is a sub-heading: 'Choose from the tabs below to see what blocks you can display in your View. You can drag and drop the blocks in to your View layout. Select the ? icon for more information or Take a Tour. Here's a Sample View to give you an idea of how your View might look.'

The main content area has several tabs: Blogs (3), External feeds (1), Files, images and video (5), General (1), Profile (2), and Resumé (2). Under the 'Profile (2)' tab, there are two blocks: 'Contact Information' and 'Profile Information'. Both blocks have a 'Choose contact information to display' or 'Choose profile information to display' option. A red circle highlights the 'Profile Information' block in this selection area. A red arrow points from this circle to the 'Profile Information' block in the 'Drag blocks below this line to add them to your View layout' section. In this section, the 'Profile Information' block is already present and is also circled in red. To its right are 'My Family' and 'Our house' blocks. Below the 'Profile Information' block, there is a list of details: 'I live in Mandeville', 'Home Phone: 03 3134781', 'Country: New Zealand', and 'Email Address: mary@oxford.school.nz'. A circular photo of a family is also visible next to the 'My Family' block, and a photo of a house is next to the 'Our house' block.

Creating files.

1. Click on the 'My Files' tab then the 'Create Folder' button.



The screenshot shows the myPortfolio Schools: My Future interface. The 'My Files' tab is selected and circled in red. Below the navigation bar, there is a 'Folder deleted' notification. The 'My Files' section has a sub-header and instructions: 'Upload your images, documents, or other files for inclusion in views. To move a file or folder, drag and drop it onto a folder.' Below this, there are two buttons: 'Upload file' and 'Create folder', with the latter circled in red. A table lists existing folders:

Name	Description	Size	Date	Edit	Delete
Media	advertising		16/01/2009	Edit	Delete
Photos	A range of Photos		19/01/2009	Edit	

On the right side, there is a user profile for Mary Chisnall with 'Logout' and 'Settings' buttons. Below that is a 'Quota' section showing 'You have used 9.4MB of your 1024.0MB quota.' and a 'Search My Portfolio' search bar. At the bottom right, there is a 'Links and Resources' section with a link to a 'Quick reference guide for students'.

2. Enter 'My Learning' as the name and a short description of your new folder.



The screenshot shows the 'Create folder' form in the myPortfolio Schools: My Future interface. The 'Name' field contains 'My Learning' and the 'Description' field contains 'Samples of my work'. The 'Create folder' button is circled in red. The 'Destination' is set to 'None'. The 'Tags' field is empty. The 'Cancel' button is also visible.

Repeat steps 1 & 2 creating folders named Photo's and video's.

Uploading Files.

1. Click on the 'Photos' file.

The screenshot shows the 'myPortfolio Schools: My Future' interface. The user is logged in as Mary Chisnall. The 'My Files' section is active, displaying a list of folders: 'My Learning', 'Photos', and 'Videos'. The 'Photos' folder is circled in red. Below the list, there are buttons for 'Upload file' and 'Create folder'. The right sidebar shows the user's profile, quota (9.4MB used of 1024.0MB), and search options.

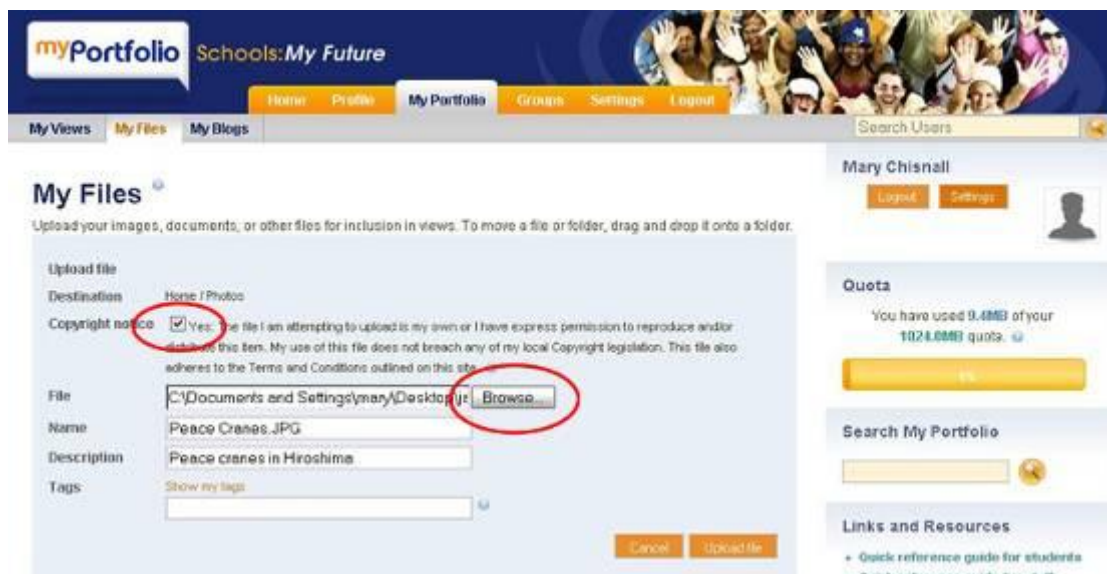
Name	Description	Size	Date	Actions
My Learning	Samples of my work.		25/01/2009	Edit Delete
Photos	A range of Photos		19/01/2009	Edit
Videos	My videos.		25/01/2009	Edit Delete

2. Click on the 'Upload file' button.

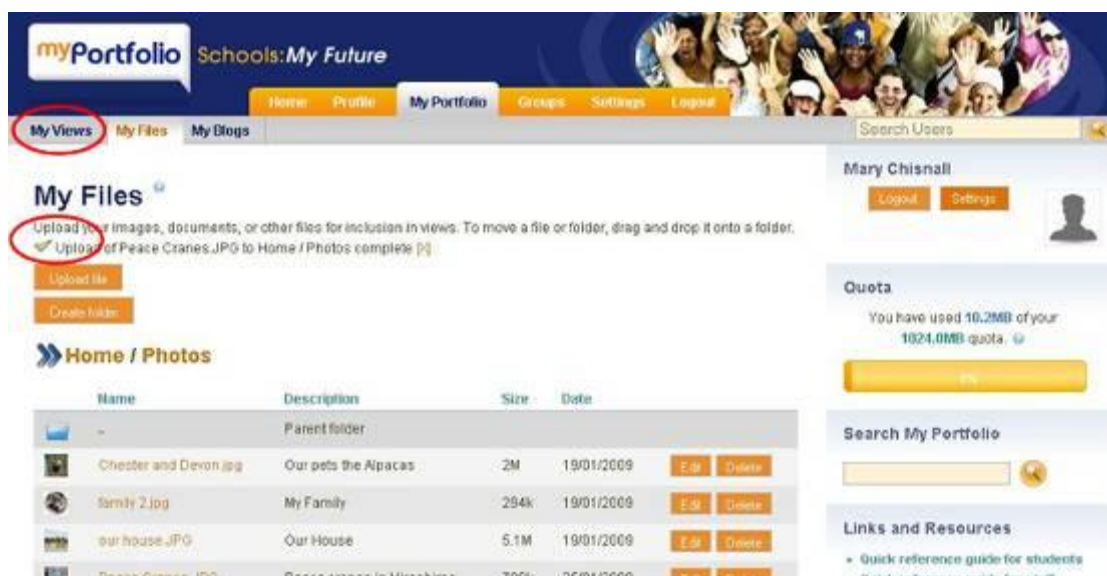
The screenshot shows the 'myPortfolio Schools: My Future' interface. The user is logged in as Mary Chisnall. The 'My Files' section is active, and the 'Upload file' button is circled in red. The interface shows the 'Home / Photos' path. Below the path, there is a table of files. The right sidebar shows the user's profile, quota (9.4MB used of 1024.0MB), and search options.

Name	Description	Size	Date	Actions
-	Parent folder			
Chester and Devon.jpg	Our pets the Alpacas	2M	19/01/2009	Edit Delete
family 2.jpg	My Family	294k	19/01/2009	Edit Delete
our house.JPG	Our House	5.1M	19/01/2009	Edit Delete
Tips.jpg	Our cat	2M	19/01/2009	Edit Delete

3. You must click the 'copyright notice' box. Click the 'Browse' button to find the photo you want to upload then enter a name and description. Press the 'Upload file' button.



4. Wait a short while and the green tick will appear to show the photo has uploaded.



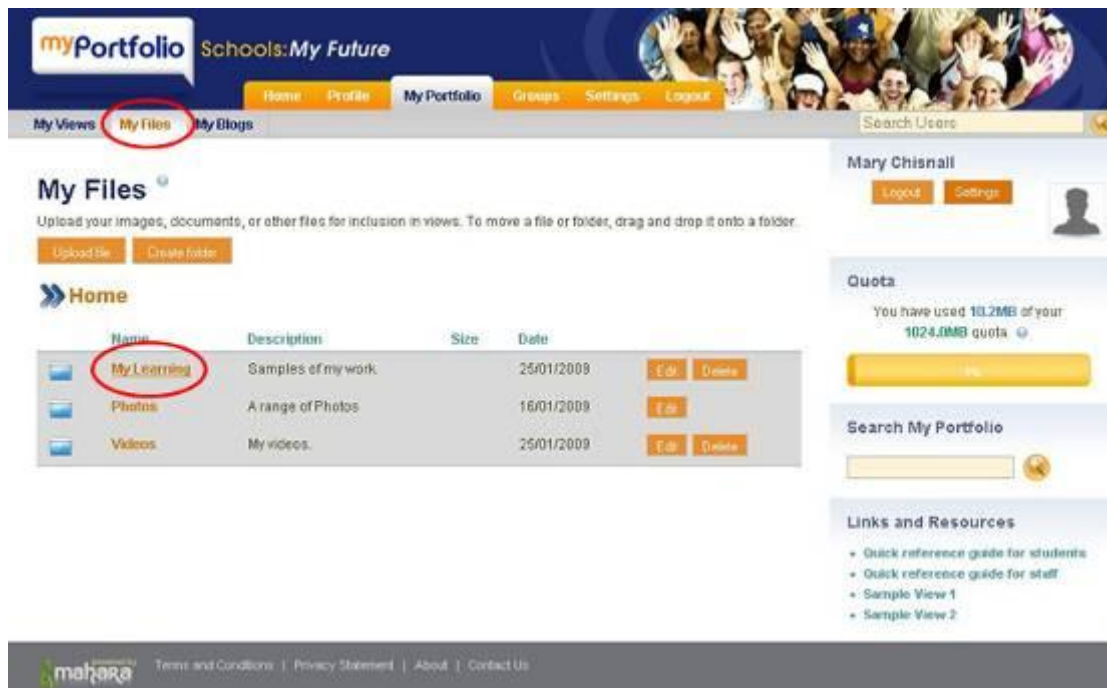
Click on 'My Views' then 'Edit This View'.

5. On the main view area click on the small cog and select the photo you would like to see. Enter a short description in the 'Block Title' box. Tick the 'Show Description' box and set the width to 170.



Repeat this for all photos where it says 'An Image'.

6. Click on 'My Files' and then on 'My Learning'.



7. Click on the 'Upload file' button.

The screenshot shows the 'myPortfolio Schools: My Future' interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Home, Profile, My Portfolio, Groups, Settings, and Logout. Below these are 'My Views', 'My Files', and 'My Blogs' tabs. A search bar for users is on the right. The main content area is titled 'My Files' and includes instructions: 'Upload your images, documents, or other files for inclusion in views. To move a file or folder, drag and drop it onto a folder.' Two buttons, 'Upload file' and 'Create folder', are visible, with 'Upload file' circled in red. Below this is a breadcrumb trail 'Home / My Learning' and a table with columns for Name, Description, Size, and Date. The table contains one entry: a folder named '-' with description 'Parent folder'. On the right side, there is a user profile for 'Mary Chisnall' with 'Logout' and 'Settings' buttons, a 'Quota' section showing '10.2MB' used of a '1024.0MB' quota, a 'Search My Portfolio' box, and a 'Links and Resources' section with four links.

8. You must click the 'copyright notice' box. Click the 'Browse' button to find the file you want to upload then enter a name and description. Press the 'Upload file' button.

This screenshot shows the 'My Files' upload form. The 'Destination' is set to 'Home / My Learning'. The 'Copyright notice' section has a checked box and text: 'Yes: The file I am attempting to upload is my own or I have express permission to reproduce and/or distribute this item. My use of this file does not breach any of my local Copyright legislation. This file also adheres to the Terms and Conditions outlined on this site.' The 'File' field contains the path 'C:\Documents and Settings\mary\Desktop\...', with a 'Browse...' button circled in red. The 'Name' field contains 'PRIDE poem.doc', the 'Description' field contains 'My Poem', and the 'Tags' field has a 'Show my tags' link. At the bottom of the form are 'Cancel' and 'Upload file' buttons, with 'Upload file' circled in red. The rest of the page layout is identical to the previous screenshot.

9. Wait a short while and the green tick will appear to show the photo has uploaded.

The screenshot shows the 'myPortfolio Schools: My Future' interface. The 'My Files' section is active, displaying a table of files. A green checkmark is visible next to the upload status of 'PRIDE poem.doc', indicating successful upload. The interface includes navigation tabs for 'Home', 'Profile', 'My Portfolio', 'Groups', 'Settings', and 'Logout'. A search bar for users is also present.

Name	Description	Size	Date
..	Parent folder		
PRIDE poem.doc	My Poem	23.5k	25/01/2009

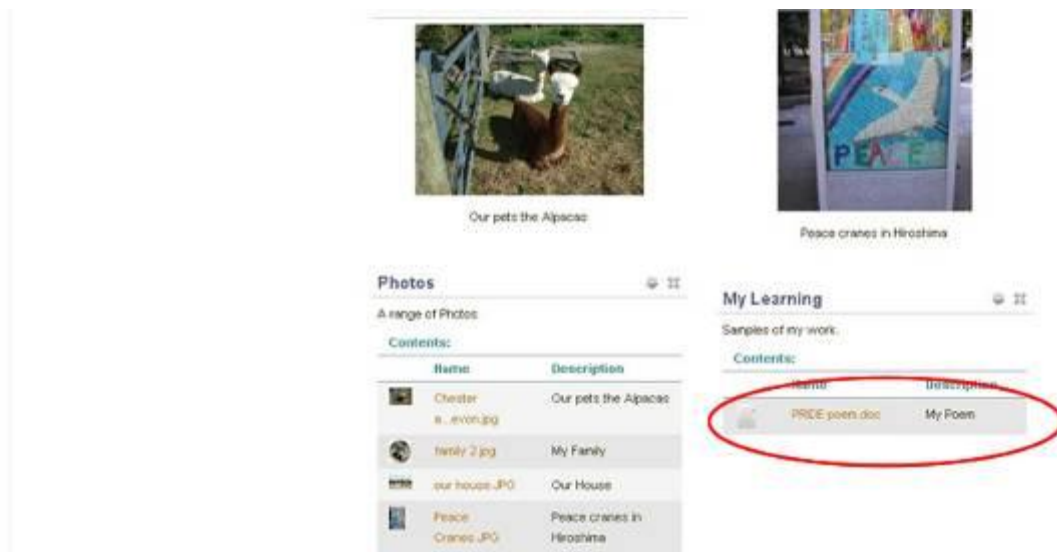
Click on 'My Views' then 'Edit This View'.

10. On the view area click on the small cog and click in the circle next to 'My Learning'. Type 'My Learning' into the 'Block Title' box and press the 'Save' button.

The screenshot shows the 'A Folder' configuration page. The 'Block Title' is set to 'My Learning'. The 'Folder' type is set to 'My Learning'. The 'Save' button is highlighted. The page also displays a list of photos and a 'Contents' table.

Name	Description
Chester- s...evon.jpg	Our pets the Alpacas
family 2.jpg	My Family
our house.JPG	Our House
Peace Cranes.JPG	Peace cranes in Hiroshima
Tigt.jpg	Our cat

11. You will now see a link to your work appear under 'My Learning'. To view it click on the link.



12. Click on 'Download' then press 'Open' and 'Ok' when the options appear.



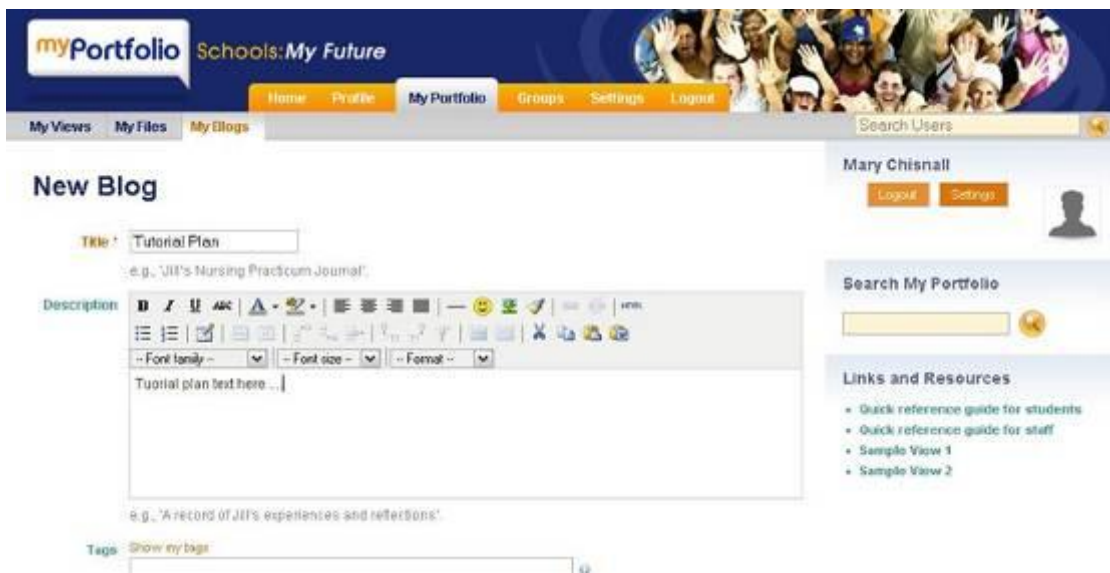
Setting up a Blog.

1. Click on 'My Portfolio' and then on 'My Blogs'. On the 'My Blogs' screen press the 'Add Blog' button.



The screenshot shows the 'myPortfolio Schools: My Future' interface. The navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Profile', 'My Portfolio', 'Groups', 'Settings', and 'Logout'. The 'My Blogs' tab is selected and circled in red. Below the navigation bar, the 'My Blogs' section is visible, featuring a table with columns for 'Title' and 'Description'. The table contains three entries: 'Term 1 reflections', 'Uploading Photos', and 'First steps my portfolio'. Each entry has a 'Delete' button. A red circle highlights the 'Add Blog' button in the top right corner of the 'My Blogs' section. On the right side of the page, there is a user profile for 'Mary Chisnall' with 'Logout' and 'Settings' buttons, a search bar for 'Search My Portfolio', and a 'Links and Resources' section with several links.

2. Type in a title for your new blog and write your thoughts into the text area. When this is done press the 'Create Blog' button.



The screenshot shows the 'New Blog' creation page in the 'myPortfolio Schools: My Future' interface. The navigation bar is the same as in the previous screenshot. The 'My Blogs' tab is selected. The main content area is titled 'New Blog' and contains a form for creating a new blog entry. The 'Title' field is filled with 'Tutorial Plan'. Below the title field, there is a text area for the description, which contains the text 'Tutorial plan text here ...'. The description field has a rich text editor toolbar above it. At the bottom of the form, there is a 'Tags' field with the text 'Show my tags'. On the right side of the page, there is a user profile for 'Mary Chisnall' with 'Logout' and 'Settings' buttons, a search bar for 'Search My Portfolio', and a 'Links and Resources' section with several links.

Click on 'My Views' then 'Edit This View'.

3. Click on the 'Blogs' tab and drag the 'Recent Blog Posts' object onto the main area

Edit View "Mary's Portfolio" [?]

Choose from the tabs below to see what blocks you can display in your View. You can drag and drop the blocks in to your View layout.

Select the ? icon for more information or Take a Tour. Here's a [Sample View](#) to give you an idea of how your View might look.

Blogs (3) External Needs (1) Files, images, PDFs (5) General (1) Profile (2) Resumé (2)

Blog Display an entire blog

Blog Post Display one blog post

Recent Blog Posts Display the 10 most recent blog posts

[Change my View layout](#) [Display my View](#)

Drag blocks below this line to add them to your View layout. You can drag blocks around your View layout to position them.

Profile Information **My Family** **Our house**

I live in Mandeville

- Home Phone: 03 3121701
- Country: New Zealand
- Email Address: mary@pictard.school.nz
- Last Name: Charval



Adding Posts To Your Blog.

1. Click on the 'My Blogs' tab and then click on the title.



The screenshot shows the myPortfolio Schools: My Future interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Profile', 'My Portfolio', 'Groups', 'Settings', and 'Logout'. Below this, there are tabs for 'My Views', 'My Files', and 'My Blogs'. The 'My Blogs' tab is active, displaying a list of blogs. The first blog entry is titled 'Term 1 reflections' with the description 'Today I met with Darren to discuss the project.' The title 'Term 1 reflections' is circled in red. To the right of the title is an 'Add Post' button. On the right side of the page, there is a user profile for 'Mary Chisnall' with 'Logout' and 'Settings' buttons, a search bar for 'Search My Portfolio', and a 'Links and Resources' section with links to 'Quick reference guide for students', 'Quick reference guide for staff', 'Sample View 1', and 'Sample View 2'.

2. Press the 'Add Post' button.



The screenshot shows the myPortfolio Schools: My Future interface with the 'View Blog - Term 1 reflections' page open. The top navigation bar is the same as in the previous screenshot. The 'My Blogs' tab is active, and the 'View Blog - Term 1 reflections' page is displayed. The title 'View Blog - Term 1 reflections' is circled in red. Below the title is the description 'Today I met with Darren to discuss the project.' and an 'Add Post' button. The page content includes a section for 'Uploading photos' with a 'Published' status, and a section for 'First Meeting' with a 'Published' status. The 'Add Post' button is circled in red. The right side of the page shows the user profile for 'Mary Chisnall', a search bar for 'Search My Portfolio', and a 'Links and Resources' section with links to 'Quick reference guide for students', 'Quick reference guide for staff', 'Sample View 1', and 'Sample View 2'.

3. Type in the title of your 'Post' and write your reflection in the text area. When finished, press 'Save Post'.



Click on 'My Views' then 'Edit This View'.

4. Click on 'Display My View' to see the portfolio you have created. It will contain your profile, photo's, your work and your blog.



Fig 2

Parent Questionnaire

Can you please complete this questionnaire for me now in February and again in June?

For all of these questions 0 = no skill, and 5 = very skilled

	Parent 1		Parent 2	
	February	June	February	June
Do you have a computer at home?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Do you have internet access?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Do you have broadband or dialup?	B / D	B / D	B / D	B / D
Do you use a computer?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
How confident are you at using 'word'? (0=not, 5=high)				
How confident are you at using/making powerpoints?				
How confident are you at using the internet?				
How confident are you at using email systems?				
How confident are you at saving files?				
Rate your child's skill at using 'word'				
Rate your child's skill at using/making powerpoints				
Rate your child's skill at using the internet				
Rate your child's skill at using email				
Rate your child's skill at blogging				
Rate your child's skill at transferring files				
Rate your child's skill at taking digital photos				
Rate your child's skill at using a digital video camera				
Would you be interested in your child teaching you more about the computer?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

Would you like to be able to view and comment about your child's special work achievements during the year (student lead) or are you happier just getting a written teacher report of your child's achievements at set times? Why?

Student Questionnaire

Can you please complete this questionnaire for me now in February and again in June?

For all of these questions 0 = no skill, and 5 = very skilled

	February	June
Do you have a computer at home?	Yes/No	Yes/No
Do you have internet access?	Yes/No	Yes/No
Do you have broadband or dialup?	B / D	B / D
Do you use a computer?	Yes/No	Yes/No
How confident are you at using 'word'? (0=not, 5=high)		
How confident are you at using/making powerpoints?		
How confident are you at using the internet?		
How confident are you at using email systems?		
How confident are you at saving files?		
How confident are you at blogging?		
How confident are you at transferring files?		
How confident are you at taking digital photos?		
How confident are you at using the video camera?		

Would you like to have your parents view and comment about your special work achievements during the year or are you happier just getting a written teacher report about your achievements at set times? Why?

Would you be interested to teach your family more about the computers as you learn?
Give Reasons.

Fig 3

Template Guide for reflecting on work for myportfolio

Title:

Learning Intention:

-

Add photo and or web link

What Have I done?

-

What have I learnt?

-

NSL: Now what do I need to do:

-

Acknowledgements

My Year 6 class of 2009 who willingly created fantastic 'My Portfolios' of their learning journey to share with their parents

Richard O'Brien – Technical computer support

Darren Sudlow – Mahara support

Jen Rodgers –DP Oxford Area School

Jude Elliot – research

Sally Elding – eportfolios Cambridgeshire, England

A huge thank you to the amazing teachers and students in Christchurch, Nelson, England and Stockton, California who gave me their thoughts and allowed me to view their digital journeys.

And thank you to the Ministry of Education for awarding me sabbatical leave to follow my passion of enhancing student learning and to recharge my own batteries.