Welcome

The UWA Personal Learning Environment (PLE) has supported over 1,000 students in 81 ATLAS workspaces during 2014. As we are coming to the end of the year, we thought we would share some interesting system statistics:

- In 2014, there have been a total of 22,064 logins, with an average login duration of 104 minutes
- 3880 assets submitted for assessment
- June 12, 2014 had the most number of logins with 379
- 120 people are sharing their PLE work with others

New Users

Applications for engaging with PLE closed in early November, with a small committed growing interest in areas seeing value in the connection across students’ learning in their Courses, and connections to professional evidence of knowledge, skill, and capacity. Future PLE Newsletters will report on their purposes and learning designs.

Evaluation

2014 PLE users are preparing their annual implementation evaluation reports, and outcomes will be shared in a newsletter in January.

This issue of the newsletter includes a round-up of the PebbleBash 2014 conference held earlier in the year, and a quick look at Workbooks that can be useful for releasing content and assessment gradually over time.

Community news

The ePortfolio Forum and Workshops will be held in Perth next year!

30 Sept - 1 Oct 2015, ePortfolios Australia Forum

The Australian ePortfolio network’s annual forum will be held at Edith Cowan University. [http://eportfoliosaustralia.wordpress.com/forums/2015-eportfolio-forum-home-page/](http://eportfoliosaustralia.wordpress.com/forums/2015-eportfolio-forum-home-page/)
PebbleBash 2014: Personalising the Curriculum
by Astrid Davine

PebbleBash was held in Lancefield, VIC, on 14-16 April 2014 - the first time it has been held in Australia. This conference is run by Pebble Learning every two years, and aims to maximise opportunities for learning, networking, and collaboration about PebblePad and ePortfolios in a friendly, focussed and professional environment.

Image 1: Grange Cleveland Winery was a peaceful setting for reflecting and collaborating.

Delegates were mainly from Australian Higher Education institutions, including Charles Stuart University (CSU), Sydney University, Flinders University, Edith Cowan University (ECU), Southern Cross University (SCU), James Cook University (JCU), La Trobe University, Murdoch University, Canberra Institute of Technology (CTI), and Monash University. Delegates from the UK represented Edinburgh and Keele Universities.

Professor David Boud (UTS) gave a very interesting keynote address entitled ‘Feedback: is there more to it than we think?’. He proposed solutions to address the issues around feedback, namely that despite extra effort being put into providing feedback, students are not appreciating or getting the most value out of the feedback provided. He stated that we should “judge feedback by its effect”. The overall solution proposed is that students should be providing their own assessment and feedback.

The PebblePad system is flexible enough for educators to use for students’ self-assessment. Professor Pirie from Edinburgh University showed an example of this - a Workbook where students are asked to complete their self-assessment. By providing a Workbook or Template in PebblePad, the self-assessment process can be clearly laid out for students, and enables some consistency. Asking students to attach evidence of learning, as well as complete self-assessment ratings is an effective way to track their learning and progress over time. Professor Pirie also proposed that educators should be concentrating on assessing student progress over a whole course. The PebblePad Personal Learning Environment (PLE) is particularly suited to this.

To read more about Professor Boud’s research in feedback, refer to http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2012.694162 and http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2013.769198.

What's coming with PebblePad?
The Pebble Learning team shared their vision for the future of PebblePad, that included:

- A new component called Flourish, which is a personal tutoring system (e.g. particularly suited to supervisors of post-graduate research, or other mentor roles)
- Pebble+ will become a free service, that is somewhat separate to institutions
- Additional paid services will be available, such as Recruitment, Templates+ (like an app store for templates), and Verification.
- Template builder will be separate to Pebble+
- A resource management system for ATLAS - Templates and Workbooks used for assessment can be linked to an institution, rather than kept in individual accounts.
- HTML5 based single page design with more intuitive components, such as prompts for students when they login

More immediately (2014), new features will include:

- Workbook progress indicator
- Font size indicator
- The ability to prevent alteration of a digital signature or details in an assessor only field.
- A scorecard or rubric in ATLAS
- Better statistics (e.g. stats for individual assessors)
- Mobile apps that will enable basic offline asset creation (2015)

Image 2: Summarising the workshops from Day One.
Other presentations of interest:

- Dr Munday (CSU) reported the initial findings from her pilot research study investigating whether Master of Education students continue using ePortfolios for themselves, and with their students, after graduation. She is happy to discuss collaboration with other academics.
- ECU’s ePortfolio competition, as presented by Jacqui Patten, was an effective way to show ePortfolio samples to others in the university, and also an opportunity to hear success stories about student use after graduation.
- Professor Crisp (RMIT) discussed transforming assessment (http://atc21s.org/, http://www.transformingassessment.com/)
- La Trobe University has comprehensive uptake of PebblePad across most courses. Terry Young and Lilian Austin shared their experiences with staff development.

Other learning:

- It would be helpful for educators to use Pebble+ themselves in order to fully understand the system. For example, use PebblePad to develop your own teaching portfolio.
- Using Sets and editing Member Permissions in ATLAS seems to work better for peer review and assessment, rather than relying on students to ‘Share’ assets with Comment permissions.
- Students may not necessarily see the benefit of PebblePad at the start of their course, especially in first year, but this changes over time. (Sydney University)

All the publications and presentations from PebbleBash 2014 are available on the website (http://www.pebblebash.co.uk/2014/).
Did you know? Workbooks
by Silvia Dewiyanti

What is it?
A workbook is a multiple page booklet that can be used for delivering both content and instructions to students, as well as multiple integrated activities or assessments (Fig 1).

A workbook typically contains multiple templates but can also contain holders for users to add Blogs, Foliopages, Collections, and Activity Logs.

What's its educational application?
Teachers typically create the workbook and ask students to complete it for assessment and submit the workbook to the ATLAS workspace.

Workbooks can be particularly useful for scaffolding the learners by releasing instructions and activity pages in a staggered approach.

How does it work?
From the Tools and Resources menu, select Workbook. Then two windows will be opened up.

- Window one is the properties window (Fig 2) is used for managing the workbook, page holders or templates within the workbook and elements within the templates. It includes name of the workbook, titles of pages, page release settings and verification elements.
- Window two is the workbook building window (Fig 3) is for adding and editing pages within the workbook. It can include adding placeholders for student to add collection, folio, blogs and activity logs pages, adding existing templates and creating new templates.

Keep adding templates or resources as necessary. Once the workbook is saved, it will be listed in the By Me section of the Resource Centre. You can make the workbook available for others to use by sharing it from the Resource Centre or adding to an ATLAS workspace.

Further information
A really useful intro to Workbooks from PebblePad is available on http://pebblepad.adobeconnect.com/p9ouckdm3ao/