

ePortfolio and PebblePad Survey Summary Report

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Method

Two surveys, an Institution Survey and a Practitioner Survey, were developed using the SurveyMonkey online survey tool (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/>). Both surveys included a series of questions about ePortfolios, about PebblePad, and about Pebble Learning.

Australian and UK versions of the Institution Survey were created. These were identical except for reference to various weblinks which were altered to reflect '.com.au' or '.co.uk' domain names. The key contact at each institution or organisation using PebblePad was invited to complete the Institution Survey. SurveyMonkey email invitations were used to send the survey link to all key contacts. Separate Australian and UK collectors were set up to reflect the two survey versions. Participants were nominally given eight days to complete the survey with a reminder sent out to those who had not responded after six days. In reality the survey was kept open for almost four weeks to maximise the response rate. Key contacts were asked to nominate an alternative recipient if they believed they were not the best person to complete the survey.

A single Practitioner Survey was used for Australia and the UK. The Practitioner Survey was open to any person facilitating the use of PebblePad with a group of users. The users could be students, staff, members of a professional organisation, or indeed any other group of people using PebblePad for a particular purpose. A weblink to this survey was created in SurveyMonkey and distributed in a variety of ways: the institution contacts were asked to forward the link to practitioners within their organisation; the survey was promoted via the PebblePad newsletter and at the inaugural PebblePad conference; and the survey link was prominently displayed on the homepage of the PebblePad website. The survey remained open for six weeks.

Results

Response Rates

The *Institution Survey* was sent to 85 institution contacts, 70 in the UK* and 15 in Australia. 57 responses were received in total, representing a response rate of 67.1%. This included 44 from the UK* (62.9% response rate) and 13 from Australia (86.7% response rate).

104 responses were received for the *Practitioner Survey*, 63 from the UK and 42 from Australia. Respondents came from 33 different institutions. 19 institutions had single respondents, 12 had between 2 and 8 respondents, one had 13, and one had 19.

A. ePortfolios

ePortfolio Strategy and Policy

The *Institution Survey* asked respondents about institution-wide strategy for eportfolio implementation and formal eportfolio policy. While approximately one third of institutions (both in Australia and the UK) indicated that institution-wide strategy existed, only about one quarter has formal eportfolio policy in place. This was even lower in Australia, which is perhaps not surprising given that eportfolios have been a more recent addition to the education agenda than in the UK.

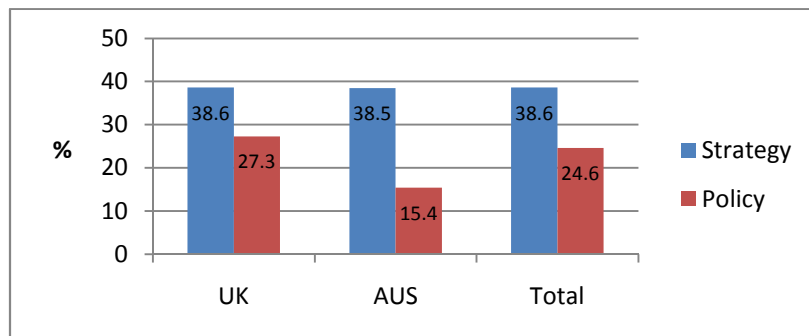


Figure 1: Percentage of institutions with institution-wide eportfolio strategy or formal eportfolio policy

In the *Practitioner Survey* even fewer respondents indicated that formal eportfolio policy existed in their school or department. This may be a reflection of the different institutions represented by the practitioners or that institutional policy is not always known or being implemented at the faculty/school level.

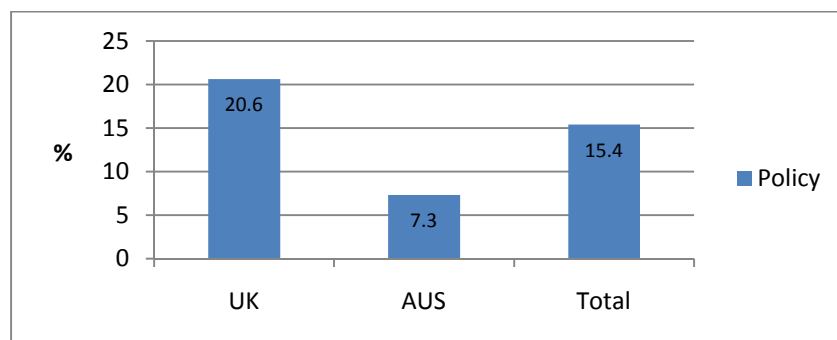


Figure 2: Percentage of practitioners with formal eportfolio in their school or department

Drivers for ePortfolio Use

In the *Institution Survey* respondents were asked to identify the area(s) within the institution from which the drive for eportfolio use had come. Faculties/Schools/Departments were seen as the primary drivers with Centres for Learning and Teaching a close second. This was particularly pronounced in Australia. The strong drive from the School level is likely to reflect the fact that eportfolios have more obvious relevance to certain areas of study, especially those that have a culture of portfolio use, such as Education.

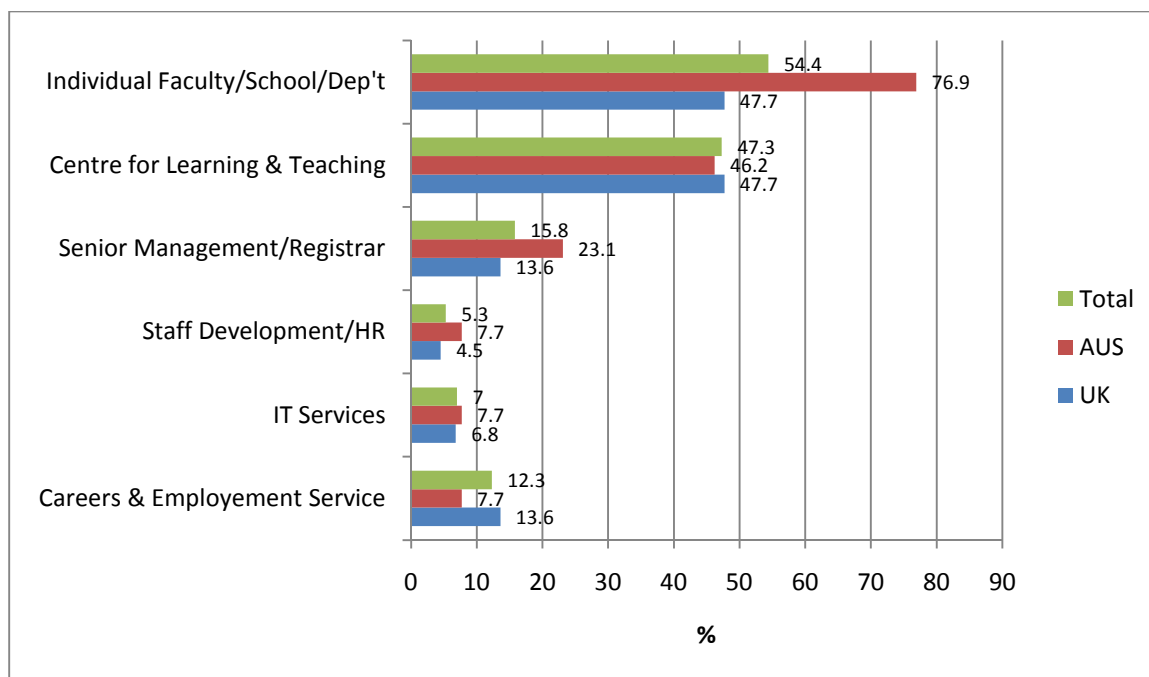


Figure 3: Institution drivers for eportfolio use

An open-ended question also asked respondents to identify the objectives the institution was aiming to achieve through the use of eportfolios. The top five responses were as follows:

1. To support PDP/CPD for students and/or staff (31)
2. To support lifelong learning skills of reflection, self-appraisal and critical thinking (18)
3. To enable richer approaches to assessment (7)
4. To encourage self-managed and personal learning (7)
5. To record and evidence graduate attributes/capabilities (6)

It is interesting to note that all six institutions that identified recording and evidencing graduate attributes/capabilities as a key objective were from Australia. The majority of Australian institutions now incorporate institutionally defined graduate attributes into course and unit outlines and many see eportfolios as a mechanism for students to evidence the development of these attributes.

The *Practitioner Survey* included an open-ended question in which respondents were asked to identify the primary driver for eportfolio use in their area. The top five responses were as follows:

1. Professional portfolios – evidencing standards, meeting registration requirements, etc (23)
2. For staff to support CPD (16)
3. Encouraging reflective practice and self assessment (15)
4. Clinical portfolios/documentation of workplace experience (14)
5. Employability/PDP for students (14)

These responses are undoubtedly influenced by the fact that the large majority of respondents were from the Education and Health disciplines (see Discipline Area below), fields of study where professional standards, work placements, and ongoing professional development are key factors.

Benefits of ePortfolio Use

The *Institution Survey* asked respondents to identify the primary benefit to their institution from the implementation of eportfolios. Of the 57 respondents nine (4 from UK and 5 from Australia) indicated that it was too early to identify benefits. The top five benefits identified were as follows:

1. Improvements in reflective practice (both staff and students) (7)
2. Improved PDP/CPD processes (4)
3. Environmental – not using so much paper (4)
4. Improved assessment procedures – ease of formative feedback (4)
5. Provision of a ‘personal space’ for personal learning over time (3)

In the *Practitioner Survey* respondents were also asked to identify the primary benefit to their area from eportfolio implementation. 23 of the respondents (10 from UK and 13 from Australia) indicated that it was too early to identify benefits. The top five benefits identified were as follows:

1. Reflective learning/practice (10)
2. Student ownership of learning (7)
3. Evidencing learning (7)
4. Ease of formative assessment (5)
5. Preparing students for systems/technologies they will be using in their profession (5)

It is clear from these results that both at the Institution and Practitioner levels improvements in reflective practice is seen as a core benefit of the introduction of eportfolios.

ePortfolio Tools

Both the *Institution* and *Practitioner Surveys* asked respondents to identify other eportfolio tools that have been trialled in addition to PebblePad. The following table presents the top five responses from each survey for both the UK and Australia.

	UK	Australia
Institution Survey	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Blackboard/Web CT (18)2. Paper-based (14)3. Moodle/Mahara (11)4. Open source tools, eg. Ning, GoogleDocs, blogs, wikis, etc (5)5. MS Office tools (3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Paper-based (5)2. Blackboard (3)3. Mahara (2)4. Nuventive iWebfolio (2)5. OSP – Sakai (2)
Practitioner Survey	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Paper-based (27)2. None (10)3. Mahara (3)4. Blackboard (3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Paper-based (13)2. None (9)3. Mahara (2)4. Desire2Learn (2)5. Blackboard (2)

B. PebblePad

Who is using PebblePad?

Respondents of the *Institution Survey* were asked to identify who PebblePad was currently made available to. The following graph compares the responses from Australian and UK institutions. The results are generally similar with current students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) and staff being the primary target groups for eportfolio implementation. However, a greater percentage of UK institutions have included staff and external partners in their user groups and have also extended use to prospective students and alumni. This suggests that as eportfolios become more embedded in the education environment availability is extended to a wider audience. In Australia, where eportfolios are a more recent inclusion, the focus is still on engaging students and staff.

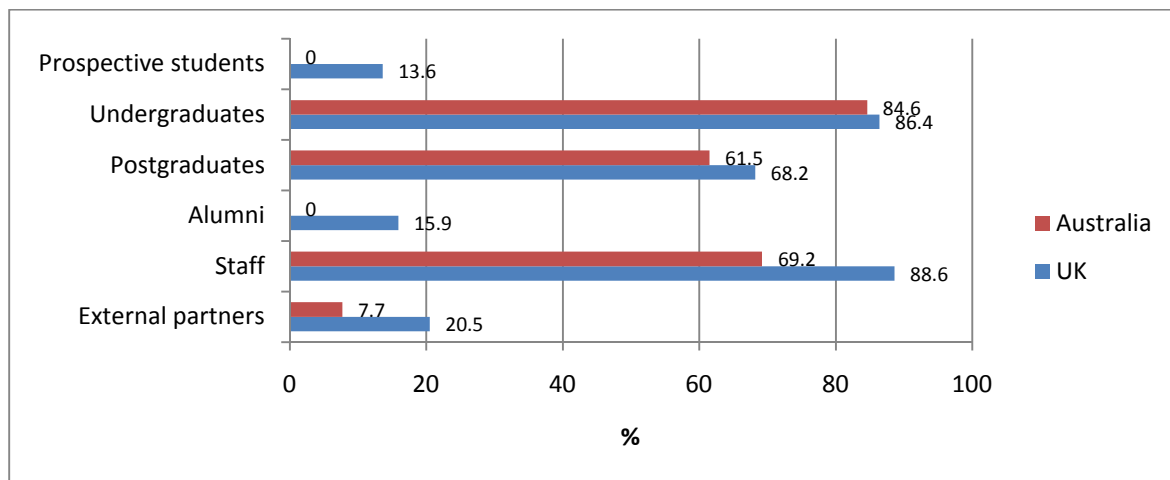


Figure 4: Institution PebblePad User Groups.

The *Practitioner Survey* asked respondents to identify the groups they were using PebblePad with. The pattern of responses was similar to the Institution Survey except that the focus in Australia was clearly on undergraduate students.

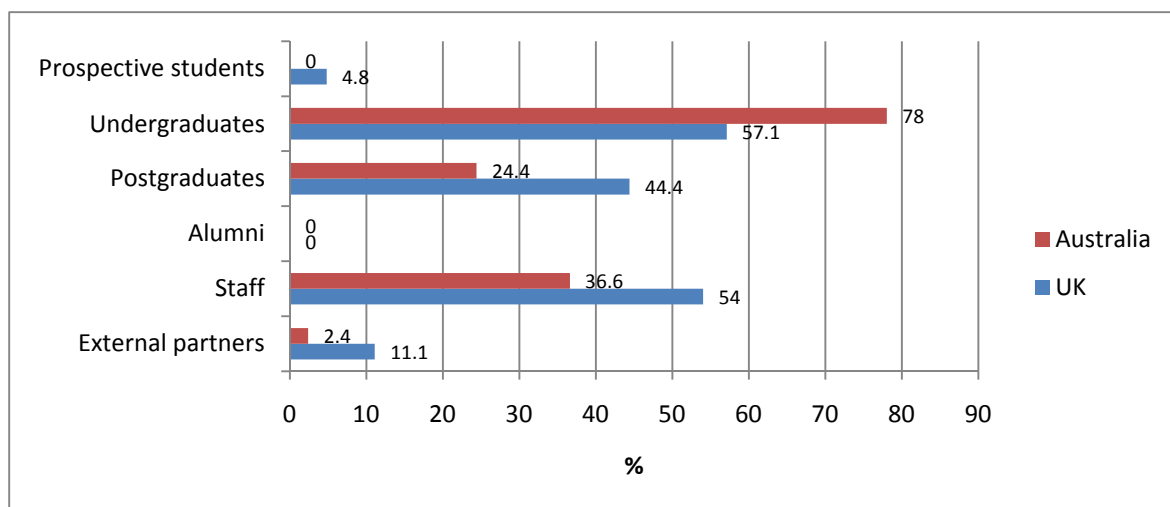


Figure 5: Groups that practitioners are using PebblePad with.

Discipline Area

The *Institution Survey* asked respondents to identify the three discipline areas in which PebblePad was most used. The top six disciplines identified are as follows:

1. Education (25)
2. Health (24)
3. Business & Management (14)
4. Law (7)
5. CPD/PDP (6)
6. Engineering (4)

Education, Health and Law were in the top five for both Australian and UK institutions. Business & Management and CPD/PDP were also in the top five for the UK but not Australia while Engineering was in the top five in Australia but not in the UK.

Respondents of the *Practitioner Survey* were asked to identify the Faculty/School/Department that they belonged to. The top six areas represented were as follows:

1. Health (26)
2. Academic/Learning Support (20)
3. Education (17)
4. Business & Management (9)
5. Law (4)
6. Social Work (4)

The vast majority of UK responses came from the top four areas (78%) while the Australian responses were a bit more spread with Law and Social Work also prominent.

What is PebblePad being used for?

The *Institution Survey* asked respondents to identify what PebblePad was being used widely or strategically for. 15 respondents in total (12 from the UK and 3 from Australia) skipped the question. The results are displayed in the following figure.

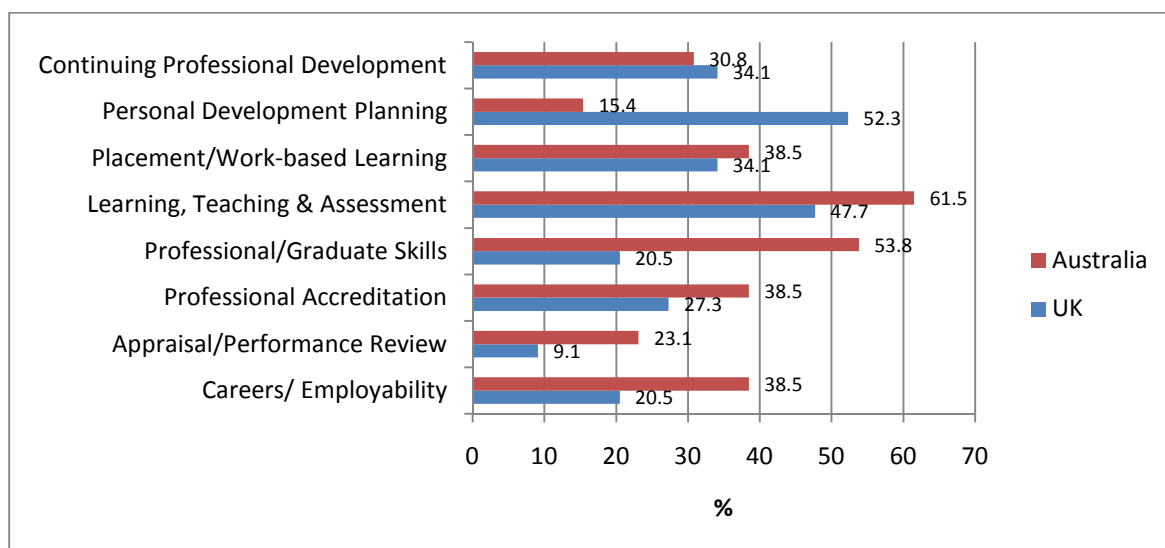


Figure 6: Institution use of PebblePad

The differences of note in the above results are the much higher use of PebblePad for Personal Development Planning and the much lower use for Professional/Graduate Skills in UK Institutions.

In the *Practitioner Survey* respondents were asked to identify both what they used PebblePad for with their user groups and also what they used PebblePad for personally. 14 respondents skipped the first question while 41 skipped the second question, indicating that many practitioners who facilitate the use of PebblePad with other users do not necessarily use it personally. The following figure illustrates these results.

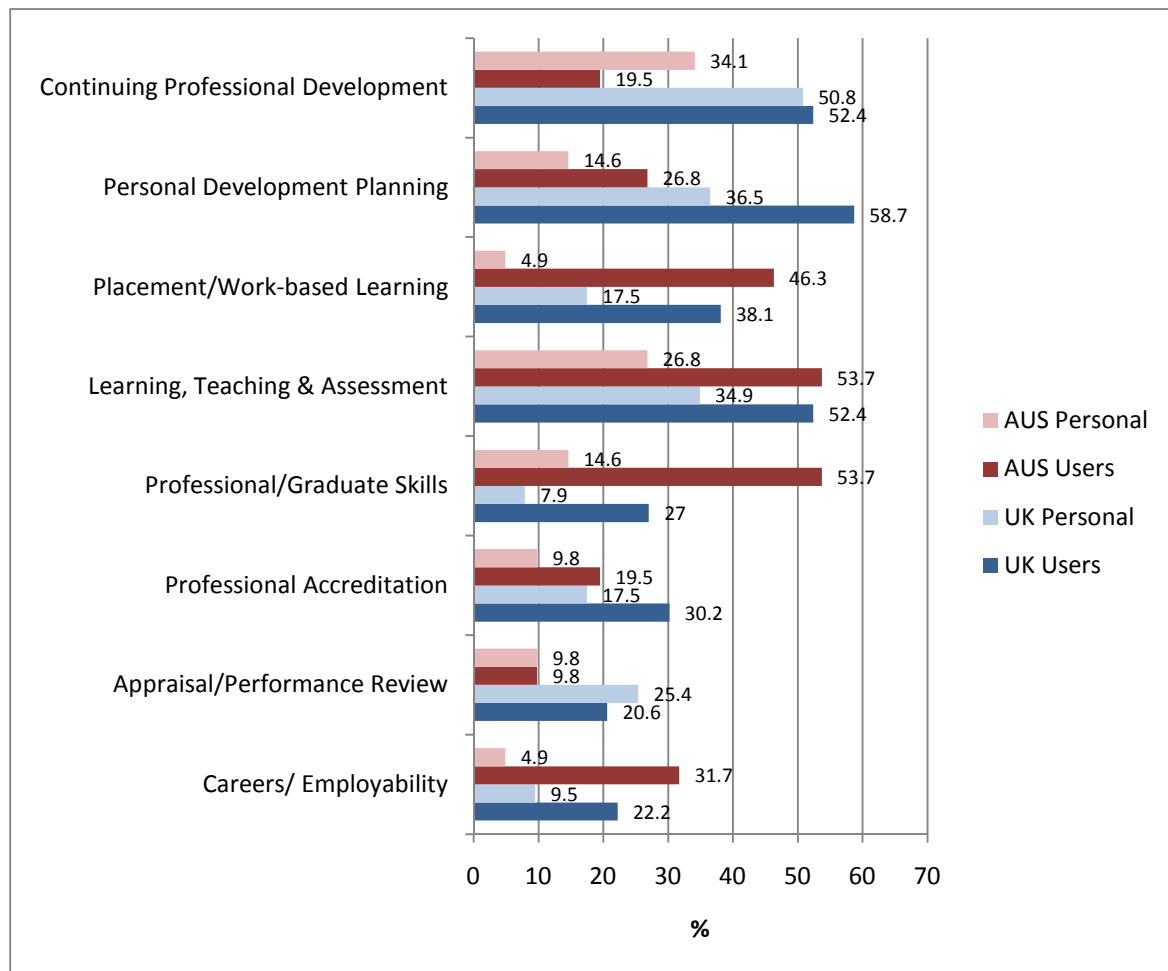


Figure 7: Practitioner use of PebblePad

These results are not dissimilar to the Institution results with UK practitioners more likely to use PebblePad for both PDP and CPD but less likely to use it for Professional/Graduate Skills.

Integration with Institution Systems

Slightly more than half (54.4%) of respondents of the *Institution Survey* indicated that access to PebblePad is institutionally authenticated (via LDAP or Active Directory). This was similar for both UK (56.8%) and Australian (46.2%) institutions.