

LSIS Leadership in Technology (LIT) grant based intervention Impact study template

Provider name & contact details	Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce Training (CWT) Sally Lucas Email: lucas.s@cwtcov.co.uk
LIT Project title	e-assessment: a new journey
The project	
What problem or issue you were trying to resolve or improve with this project	We wanted to transform our approach to assessment, developing an e-solution using open-source technology (Mahara). The aim was to develop a holistic model for assessment, creating a space in which learners could capture their professional development, interact with Trainers and Assessors as well as their peers. Unlike most e-portfolio products, we wanted to create a platform that would enable learners to demonstrate their knowledge and competence across the breadth of their learning and development and not just within the confines of a single qualification such as an NVQ or Diploma. This would enable learners from all vocational sectors to present their work in an electronic format and showcase their progression.
Why did you go for a technology-based solution	We went for a technology based solution for accessibility and flexibility reasons. It also offered a complementary fit to the moodle platform that we already have in place. Our learners are work based and therefore remote of CWT's training facility, this increases the importance and impact that technology can make to the learner's journey.
What did the project cost: LSIS funding + your organisation's contribution	LSIS funding: £6,000 CWT contribution: £9, 375 staff time (25 people x 5 meetings x 3 hours per meeting = 375 hours @ £25ph) Total: £15, 375
Describe what you did and what happened	The main activities have comprised of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a new assessment strategy which makes use of a digital format as a means of empowering individuals to capture, reflect and develop ideas across a lifetime of learning • Deployment of an open-source web based infrastructure (Mahara) to support e-assessment and store media (documents, images, audio, video) • Established effective links between Moodle and Mahara to provide a seamless learning and assessment system

- Created a communications strategy through e-portfolio including student forums and blogs (this requires further development over the coming months)
- Upskilled Internal Verifiers to support Assessors and quality assure assessment practice
- Upskilled Assessors in the effective use of technology based systems
- Encouraged integrated and coherent working across all sector subject areas where best practice is cascaded and used for continuous improvement through sector champions

The project has been the catalyst for CWT to transform its assessment strategy using Mahara, which offers wider benefits than that of bespoke e-portfolio systems which are designed around specific NVQ standards. We regard Mahara as a digital repository for life-long media collection as it affords greater flexibility and longevity, encouraging individuals to develop and extend it throughout their learning journey and beyond. It does not only capture and store evidence, but also offers reflection, giving and receiving feedback, planning and setting goals and supporting collaboration.

We have introduced new ways of thinking and working to support the transformation, improving organisational capacity and capability of managers to lead. In the long term, this change will improve the learning experience, increase learner participation, motivation, retention and timely achievement.

Each strategic and operational manager has taken responsibility for leading the development of a particular subject area; this provides for maximum impact and has enabled expertise to build across a broader range of disciplines. Managers have led sector-based groups in 3 pilot areas (early years care; business administration; hairdressing), embedding use of the tool within each area and reforming the organisation's strategy to place technology as a key driver in shaping assessment. The application of the functionality across each area has been reviewed and shaped by delivery teams, including the establishment of discreet user groups. This has ensured that development has been bottom up, creating buy-in at front-line operational level.

The next stage is to develop user guidelines to support wider roll out to other sectors within the business, including learners and employers.

The benefits and impact		
What benefits/ impact has the project had on:::	a. the work/ effectiveness of your organisation	
	<p>The impact of the project on the effectiveness of CWT has been in terms of refreshing and updating the assessment strategy; enriching it with technology and enabling all vocational sectors to access a system which can be flexibly utilised in a range of context and situations, whether that be for posting professional development evidence or communicating with staff and peers.</p> <p>It has provided the impetus for teams to consider how, in sectors where technology is less prevalent, learners can create and develop an on-line record of their professional development in a holistic way. It has been referred to as an 'on-line professional scrap book' that provides learners with the opportunity to reflect their learning and career development whilst with CWT and thereafter. The intention is to create alumni of former CWT learners who can continue to engage with CWT and their peers on a professional level.</p>	
	b. the cost/ efficiency of activities	
What contribution to the success / smooth running of the project was made by:	<p>The cost/efficiency impact remains in development. It is intended that on-line portfolios will reduce the frequency of face to face, one to one assessments conducted in the work place. The model is currently based upon alternate workplace/e-portfolio assessments which will, in effect, halve the number of face to face assessment and reduce costs of that activity by 50%.</p>	
	c. any other aspect of your work	
	<p>The impact of the project can be seen in terms of the gains to be made in opening up communication channels, enabling Tutors as well as Assessors to ensure an effective 3-way/4-way(employer integrated) communication in a more diverse manner. We intend to extend this further with the use of blogs so that Tutors can communicate with learners/employers key information relating to the off the job element of learning provision.</p>	
What contribution to the success / smooth running of the project was made by:	LSIS funding	essential
	Your mentor	a lot
	LSIS Associate	a lot

Do you have any comments on the funding, mentor or LSIS Associate.	<p>The requirements attached to the funding re: the value attached to the mentor was quite prescriptive and would have been better if it had been more flexible in how much intervention was required at that level and for what purpose.</p> <p>The LSIS associate was constructive and added value to the project. The level/nature of their intervention should be flexed according to the needs of the provider and not follow a prescriptive timeframe. The reporting arrangements need to reflect the value of the funding and project timescales and not become overly onerous.</p>
What lessons did you learn / what tips would you give to other providers	<p>Lessons learnt include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to ensure staff from all levels are engaged, especially front-line operational personnel • Build in scale and pilot new developments in a controlled number of areas before expanding across wider provision • Identify early champions (the staff who are 'sold' on the concept) and use them to drive progress
Telling others	
What have you done to share /disseminate this project with others in the sector	<p>We have shared the development in local, regional and national forums through the existing networks that CWT engages with. These include providers within sub region to those operating through the Chamber network across a national level. Dissemination has involved a 'show and tell' of the story and our vision for creating a more flexible and accessible on-line portfolio.</p>
Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS LIT project.	<p>The project has enabled CWT to expand its ILT strategy, building on the existing foundations of the virtual learning environment (moodle) with an exciting and empowering concept of a digital repository or 'filing cabinet' which enables all learners to demonstrate their professional career development whilst at CWT and as a legacy thereafter.</p>

Are you happy for us to use this and your contact details for marketing and publications?	Yes
Contact details for further information	Sally Lucas Email: lucas.s@cwtcov.co.uk Tel: 02476 231122

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