

Comparison of Electronic Tools for Student Personal Development Planning at SHU

	Blackboard blogs	Google Sites	Microsoft PowerPoint	PebblePad	Other external tools, e.g. Wikispaces, Blogger
What is it?	Blogging tool within Blackboard sites usually set up as a private journal (The wiki tool is less appropriate for PDP - it isn't private for individuals).	A tool for constructing web sites which is available with SHU student email package	Professionally formatted presentations with links to additional documents	An external system which includes structured forms for activities of review, reflection and action planning, and tools for creating portfolios blogs and CVs.	External web based applications offer a range of options for creating portfolios
Easy to construct (for students)	✓ The blogs are reasonably easy to use.	✓ Google Sites are very easy to construct, apply themes, add media, and embed YouTube videos.	✓ Presentations are easy to construct	? Forms and portfolio tools are easy to use but students first need to navigate an unfamiliar system.	✓ Sites are likely to be easy to construct
Easy for staff to organise student access	? The blogs are reasonably easy to setup - but staff may need guidance about the options.	✓ All students have access to Google Sites, (and staff should also have access from Easter 2012)	✓ PowerPoint is available on all student PCs	✗ Staff need to negotiate access with IS&T Services in order for students to access the tool, and deal with forgotten passwords.	? Staff may need to support students in registering on external tools.
Easy to maintain after leaving	✗ Blogs cannot be accessed after leaving and content cannot be exported	✓ Sites can be copied into a personal Google Account and actively maintained. There is no export function.	✓ Presentations can be maintained with Microsoft Office or Open Office after leaving.	✓ It is possible to pay for an individual account on an external system.	✓ Sites can be maintained in <i>situ</i> [providing that external providers remain in business]
Staff can demonstrate ideal use of the tool.	? Staff can create and share an exemplar or a blank structure but students must then create their own.	✓ Staff can create and share an example site, allowing students to copy this to create their own Site.	✓ Staff can easily create and share a blank structure or exemplars	✓ Staff with accounts on the system can easily create a templates or outlines portfolio which can be copied and completed by students.	? Staff can create examples for sharing.
Tutors can easily view portfolios prior to meeting students	✓ Staff have access to all blogs.	✗ Addresses for sites are shared via email and tutors must keep a list of links or keep the emails.	✗ Would need to submit portfolios at intervals via assignment handler	✓ Students can share any aspect of their work with tutors, and tutors can view a list of work shared with them.	✗ Tutors may need to navigate a large number of different interfaces.
Straightforward processes for assessment, feedback, and archiving, ideally via the Assignment Handler and Gradebook	✓ A linked column in the Grade Centre can be created, and grading can be carried out whilst viewing the blog. Feedback can be released via My Grades.	? If staff have 'collaborator' access to sites an archived copy can be taken. This will not copy linked files such as Google Docs or YouTube videos.	? Presentations and linked docs can be zipped up and submitted to the Assignment Handler, but issues of file size (if media are include) and broken links may arise.	✓ Work is submitted to a PebblePad 'assessment gateway' for archiving work, marking, and returning feedback to students.	? Many but not all sites provide export tools.
Minimal cost for students	✓ Integral part of Blackboard	✓ Currently free for students whilst at SHU	✓ Microsoft Office is available via campus desktop and for purchase at £30-£99. Open Office can be installed at no cost.	? Funded by negotiation between course and IS&T Services. Graduates can subscribe to individual accounts in order to maintain a professional portfolio.	? Some tools are free; others levy an annual charge.
Students can record ongoing reflections	✓ The blog tool is appropriate for recording reflections.	? An announcements tool within Google Sites can be used for recording reflections	? A linked Word doc could be used as a journal	✓ The system has blog functionality which can be used for recording ongoing reflections.	? Some tools are free; others have an annual charge.
Students can keep portfolios private or share with selected external audiences	✗ Students don't have control - either to keep Blackboard blogs private from tutors, or to share them with others.	✓ Invitations to view sites are shared via email. (Sites can also be shared with 'the world')	? Presentations could be shared via email, memory sticks, or published via student web space.	✓ Invitations to view sites are shared via email, and sites can also be made public.	? Many external tools require public sharing of content, or require the audience to 'sign up'.
Staff can directly comment on portfolios	✓ Staff have access to all wikis and journals.	✓ If staff are added as 'collaborators' they can comment on a Google Site	✓ Comments can be added via reviewing tools	✓ Comments can be applied to individual elements or to entire portfolios.	? Varies from tool to tool
Students can distinctively format portfolios	✗ No themes are available	? Pre-formatted themes can easily be applied.	✓ Excellent formatting options.	✓ Pre-formatted themes can easily be applied.	? Varies from tool to tool
Availability of support	✓ Support for staff from e-learning advisors in Faculties	✓ Support for staff and students available from Help Desks	✓ Support for staff and students available from Help Desks	? Support is provided within selected Faculties, particularly in HWB and D&S.	? Varies from tool to tool, some support may be available in Faculties.