

Sun™ and Nuventive

Partner Brief



Benefits to ePortfolio Users:

ePortfolio Benefits to Learners :

- Builds an unlimited number of customized portfolios for coursework, focused learning, academic admission, career performance, tenure, job placement and other purposes.
- Controls which individuals or groups access their portfolio, what they can see, and for what period of time.
- Ensures all work is stored in a safe, secure, hosted environment backed by redundant systems and round-the-clock support.
- Permits custom Reviewers, such as potential employers, to give feedback.

ePortfolio Benefits to Reviewers:

- Review, rate and provide feedback to students on their portfolio(s).
- Develop and manage portfolio templates.
- Automatically move portfolios to a group based on template for easy organization.
- Extract assessment data for program and department assessment initiatives.
- Option for combined Reviewer and Owner accounts

ePortfolio Benefits to Institutions:

- Manage reviewer accounts and portfolio templates
- Extract assessment data for institutional assessment initiatives
- View prospective and current employees competencies via a "3D" format

Increasingly, education administrators and policy makers are becoming aware of the need for academic performance management across the enterprise, from the school to the national level.

Standardized testing is only part of the equation in the quest to increase student performance. To create a positive environment for lifelong learning, additional programs must be put in place to harness the power of digital technology to provide a rich, personalized learning experience for everyone.

The Internet, the World Wide Web, and digital technologies have led innovators to rethink the status quo, as they have in areas such as eCommerce and eLearning. The result is the ePortfolio, a set of tools that empower the individual to manage and control the historical record of his or her learning. Sun Microsystems partner Nuventive, from Pittsburgh, PA, is a pioneering leader in this new field.

The National Learning Infrastructure Initiative (NLII) recently defined an ePortfolio as "a collection of authentic and diverse evidence, drawn from a larger archive, representing what a person or organization has learned over time, on which the person or organization has reflected, and designed for presentation to one or more audiences for a particular rhetorical purpose." Since ePortfolios are lifelong digital records, they suggest persistence, and since an official record of a student's work is hosted in a document management system, they also contain the attributes of ownership and authorization.

ePortfolios are not snapshots in time, but rather living documents. They give the individual the opportunity to reflect on past learning, and the choice of how to present and prioritize their learning and accomplishments for different audiences, all in a private and secure environment.

The Nuventive Value Proposition

Nuventive is an education-focused company with a mission to provide individuals, educators, parents, and institutions with the tools and services they need to effectively examine, improve, and manage the learning process. They offer two major articulated tools: iWebfolio and TracDat.

iWebfolio is a web-based tool that gives learners a personalized, flexible online portfolio to store and present a lifetime's worth of educational and professional experience. It also helps faculty members, departments, and schools meet institutional and accrediting goals, review student work, provide feedback, and manage staff professional development. iWebfolio can be accessed over the Internet using a standard Web browser, providing anytime, anywhere flexibility, and is available under subscription pricing, a model which benefits students when they change from one institution, like school, to another, like their first job.

Successful lifelong learning requires personal commitment and motivation and iWebfolio provides a creative environment for an individual to store, organize, and display evidence of personal learning and examples of accomplishment. These individual portfolios can then be provided to others, such as admissions offices, employers, and faculty, personalized and prioritized to the target audience.

Each portfolio has its own user-controlled security profile, allowing the individual to decide who has access to a specific portfolio, and be able to see the date when anyone accesses the portfolio. These portfolios can contain learning goals, educational accomplishments, personal reflections, skills, activities, competencies, and work samples, among other items, in a broad variety of formats including text and multimedia. Since it interoperates with leading enterprise systems such as SunGard/SCT, iWebfolio also provides the ability to interact with institutional improvement and assessment processes, as well as with faculty, mentors, and supervisors.

Nuventive's second product, TracDat, automates the planning and assessment process for institutions by providing a structured framework for continuous quality improvement. TracDat helps faculty master the basic tasks of assessment and assure a uniformity of reporting that simplifies collection, review, management and utilization of the data. It also assists colleges and universities with external accreditation.

Nuventive's Competitive Standing

Nuventive is one of the leaders in the emerging field of ePortfolios. The company's roots are in institutional assessment and came out of an effort to develop a tool to document organizational self-improvement. The product concept evolved into a unique, sustainable process and a set of tools to allow self-examination and to measure continuous quality improvement of an individual through multiple institutions. But Nuventive CEO Dave Raney cautions "for institutional assessment purposes the ePortfolio is an important source of data about student learning,

but not the only source. It is important to provide a structure for capturing, organizing and presenting a broad variety of information and knowledge about student learning, and that's why many schools use TracDat in addition."

Western Michigan University is using both iWebfolio and TracDat products. "We're rolling out iWebfolio as a student development tool to be used eventually by all of our 29,000 students," explained Dr. Linda M. Delene, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

"We start them out with their own portfolio the first semester of their freshman year and encourage them to create sections in their electronic file box to track intellectual growth and career development. "

Sharing is also critical to the faculty's use of iWebfolio. "Faculty love to be able to give someone, a colleague at another school for example, read-only access to intellectual property and grant proposals and be able to track it," said Delene.

"TracDat is a very different type of tool," continued Delene. "We use it to track assessments and student learning outcomes for analysis and regulatory reporting. We do like the interoperability of the two tools which lets you take student reflection from iWebfolio and track and report it in TracDat."

Why Nuventive on Sun?

Sun Microsystems and SunGard/SCT have been key solution partners of Nuventive, whose products are built in Java™. Since iWebfolio is a web service, Nuventive likes Java Enterprise Systems® (Java ES) tightly-integrated Identity Management, Web Server, and Application

Server components. The Java ES middleware stack allows developers to enhance their services with complementary functionality, such as calendaring and messaging, to improve client satisfaction. There are other major reasons Nuventive is high on their assessment of Sun:

- **Scalability and Integration** - Sun provides the degree of seamless scalability necessary for a fast-growing application service providers like Nuventive. Sun combines the power of a 64-bit operating system, Solaris™, a 64-bit CPU, UltraSPARC® IV, and a tightly-integrated Java ES stack to deliver performance where the individual learner's satisfaction is critical.
- **Open Standards** - Both companies' commitment to Java-based open standards means academic customers can build modular infrastructures using combinations of best-of-breed services and integrate them together to meet specific campus requirements.
- **Security** - Sun's multi-layered security, from the Solaris OS, middleware's identify management, authorization and authentication, to the Java-enabled client devices such as smart cards, cell phones and personal computers, provides the level of trust that both service providers and their clients demand.
- **Reliability and Availability** - Sun products and services deliver unparalleled reliability and availability to mission-critical applications in academic institutions. Redundancy and failover features in hardware and the Solaris OS, coupled with a dedicated Sun and partner support organization, allow the attainment of most any operational or service level requirement.

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