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**Submission title:**

Mahara: a trans-disciplinary approach to developing a professional practice portfolio module.

**Abstract:**

Vocational training and developing professional practice have been signature principles of Edinburgh Napier University since it was founded in 1964. More recently, in 2013 Mahara was introduced as an online repository of professional practice evidence that provided an interactive reviewing platform. The MSc Creative Advertising programme began to use Mahara in 2015 with the introduction of a new 60-credit Professional Practice Portfolio module that was inspired by a similar module in MSc Nursing and the Professional Study and Practices module.

A trans-disciplinary approach to pedagogic research opened up an opportunity for innovation in LTA in the Design • Photography • Advertising subject area. Scholes, Webb et al (2004) draw practical conclusions that highlight the attributes required for designing a clinical professional practice portfolio for nursing. Long before Mahara was introduced they were warning of how students can be detracted from clinical learning in favour of learning how to complete the portfolio successfully.

Using student module feedback this study examines the implementation and creative use of Mahara as an online portfolio of professional creative practice. The presentation will critically evaluate examples from two consecutive cohorts of student work to highlight creative opportunities from the range of media that students gathered as evidence of professional practice. It will consider the levels of student engagement during the module and the post-assessment use of Mahara portfolios as a means of seeking employment. Through discussion good practice will be identified and recommendations suggested that not only promote the development of Mahara and its use within postgraduate and undergraduate programmes, but opportunities for other trans-disciplinary LTA inno