

# making the case

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You can view the PebblePad webfolio of my submission at:  
<http://www.pebblepad.com/derby/viewasset.aspx?oid=233926&type=webfolio>  
The following is a text version of it.

I first met PebblePad whilst doing a university module called Working Towards the Future. For this I was asked to create a webfolio which contained:

- reflections from the lectures / evidence building of personal research,
- certificates / qualifications,
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) / personal reference,
- Personal Development Plan.

In PebblePad all these different elements could be held together in one place, together with:

- photographs of my artwork,
- links to videos that inspired me,
- my goals for the future,
- a link to my personal blog,
- my certificates,
- my CV.

This worked really well. Storing all my files on PebblePad turned out to be extremely beneficial as I had an issue with my laptop part-way through the module and if the files had just been saved on my laptop I would have had to start again from scratch. The wizard prompts within PebblePad encouraged me to reflect upon the work I was doing, allowing me to gain more knowledge from my learning, and helped my tutors to understand my thought processes better. I think that being able to include all these elements and also personalise my webfolio in terms of the colour schemes, fonts, layouts and adding images helped my tutor to gain a better picture of who I am. I thought this was far more visually effective and created more interest than if it had been just a bog standard essay.

Being able to share my webfolio with both my tutor and with my Educational Support Worker throughout the time in which I was working on it was very helpful as they could give feedback quickly, whereas when I am submitting a normal essay I would have to arrange a meeting to get feedback. The ability to allow different people to access different areas of my work on PebblePad can help me to maintain confidentiality within my work.

As I care about the environment, using PebblePad reduces the amount of paper and ink used and can encourage both individuals and universities to play their part in looking after our world. On a personal level, it also saves me money not having to print things off or to buy a portfolio which, having a very limited budget as a student, is always a bonus. I can see how using PebblePad can aid people in gaining new IT skills and confidence which could be helpful with future employment.

I have continued to use PebblePad even though the module has ended as I think it is beneficial for me. In the future it will allow me to reach out to potential employers more easily as, due to a medical condition (I have Myalgic Encephalomyelitis), I find it difficult to travel to drop off my CV / portfolio, whereas with PebblePad I can do this online. I really believe that PebblePad has encouraged me to find ways of expressing myself that were far better than words alone.

### **1. Describe one thing that you are able to do in PebblePad that you were unable to do in other tools that you had access to?**

Files can be linked together from one central piece of evidence and access to the links can be individually set for different users; this enables you to give people access to just the files that are relevant to them whilst keeping them all linked for yourself.

### **2. If you had to encourage other students to start using PebblePad, how would you 'sell' it to them?**

I have already been involved in 'selling' PebblePad to other students. I encouraged them to have a go by telling them (1)

that no matter what IT skills you have you will be able to use it, as everybody can work at different levels within the software, and (2) that its flexibility means you can easily personalise your account to give it a distinctive flavour. I was later told that this approach helped to take the fear away and also made it sound more appealing.

### **3. What advice would you offer to lecturers (or course designers) thinking of using PebblePad?**

I would advise lecturers / course designers who are thinking of using PebblePad for course work, to offer hands-on sessions so that students can learn to use it and gain confidence before having to complete their assignments on it. Though I personally

found PebblePad easy to access alone, I know from experience that other students were more wary. Giving students practical hands-on sessions and using peer support (rather than just using a lecture style teaching approach) should help them to quickly access PebblePad's full capabilities. I personally found it beneficial when my lecturer created several separate webfolios for different areas of work and linked them together using a main webfolio; this template was given to all students to use to submit their coursework. I would strongly encourage other lecturers to adopt this approach as it (1) helps students keep their work organised, and (2) breaks it into bite size chunks which should aid the creative process. Finally, a quick reference guide is usually much appreciated.