Wellington, 28 January 2011

Dear users of MyPortfolio,

You may have already seen the press release about the update to MyPortfolio and that it will continue to be free. Now that the update is available, we want to let you know about some major changes and improvements to MyPortfolio.

We would appreciate your feedback on how you like these changes, if you run into problems, and what further changes you would like to see. To facilitate the process and allow for discussions among MyPortfolio users, we created the group "MyPortfolio Discussions". This is a group that any MyPortfolio user can join and participate in.

We have received feedback from MyPortfolio users since the service started in 2008 and have implemented a number of improvements based on these suggestions and others from the wider Mahara community. However, not all of them have made it into MyPortfolio because of the cost involved. The Ministry of Education supports MyPortfolio financially enabling the service to be offered free to New Zealand schools until (at least) the end of 2013. However, it cannot pay for all improvement suggestions. If you have a specific suggestion that you believe will contribute to the expansion of MyPortfolio's features then please contact us [link] and / or communicate it in a forum in the group "MyPortfolio Discussions" This may enable you to find others who would be interested in that feature and sharing the costs.

And now for a list of major changes to MyPortfolio. There are many more changes, some relatively small, so we cannot list all of them here.

User features

- User-configurable home page (Dashboard Page)
- Simpler main navigation
- Language changes, e.g. View → Page, Blog → Journal
- Basic Mahara information & help on home page
- Page/artefact feedback enhancements:
    - can be enabled/disabled on each view
    - recent comments can be edited by the author
    - can be deleted by the author, view owner, admin (triggers notification)
    - multiple file attachments
    - require agreement by author and owner before making private comments public
    - anonymous comments can be enabled/disabled at site level
    - import/export of feedback
    - feedback email notifications in html
    - feedback moderation (makes comments private by default until approved by the view owner)
    - fine-grained permissions (comments can be enabled/disabled for every access list item)
- Collections (sets of pages that are linked to one another)
- Plans (simple task lists)
- Shared Pages: A list of pages that have been shared with a user to make it easier to find them
- Access can be given to multiple pages or collections at once via "Share" in "Portfolio"
- Support for Gravatar profile icons
- Configurable number of items in external feed, blog blocks
- More user-friendly notifications & help text
- External objects that have <embed> or <object> tags can be embedded into blog posts, text boxes or uploaded within an HTML file
- Locking of journal posts and files
    - When views are submitted, journal posts & files in it are marked as locked
    - Editing/deleting of locked artefacts not permitted until page is released
- Atom feeds for public journals and forums
- new flash-based video player with support for .mp4 files (H.264)

Moodle 2 ready

- Portfolio API to allow import of artefacts from Moodle over MNET.
- Moodle Repository plugin support (allows a user's Mahara files to be accessed from their Moodle account)

Groups

- Configurable group home page (Group Homepage)
- Improved ways to add/invite users to invite only and "course membership" groups:
    - from user search page
    - in bulk from group members page
- Page submission from group page and from the view itself
- Group categories
    - Admins can define categories
    - Categories can be assigned during group creation and used in group searches
- Admin group management page
    - Allows group admins to be demoted/assigned
    - Allows groups to be deleted
- Changes to page access notifications
    - Groups can turn off new page access notifications altogether

Teachers who have "Institution Staff" permissions on MyPortfolio can also see the new Moderation Online tool. Moderation Online is a tool for teachers, principals and school administrators to support moderation to be completed in an online space. Moderation Online is a fully electronic resource for teachers to use while moderating the judgment of a student's work with a person, group or cluster of people. This tool is currently being trialled.

We wish to thank you for your support of MyPortfolio by using it, talking about it with colleagues and pondering how you can make even better us of it.

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