

# Using Moodle with Mahara

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## Why & What?

Why talk about Mahara at a Moodle conference?

What is an ePortfolio System?

## Mahara Overview

Core Features

History & Project Context

Project Makeup

Lessons learned from Moodle

## Moodle Integration

Stage 1 - Single Sign On

Stage 2 - Content transferral

Stage 3 - Smarter content

## Two Use Cases

One Moodle to One Mahara

Many Moodles to One Mahara

## Get Involved!

## Why & What?

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## Why talk about Mahara at a Moodle conference?

- ▶ A lot of people are wanting to add ePortfolio functionality to their learning environments; Mahara is a ePortfolio system
- ▶ People are increasingly deploying complete elearning packages containing multiple products
- ▶ Moodle and Mahara are complimentary systems; fit different niches in the big picture

## What is an ePortfolio System?

- ▶ Apparently, very difficult to define
- ▶ Generally agreed to be made up of a few parts
  - ▶ Students have the ability to collect and manage pieces of *evidences of learning* or other content
  - ▶ Group them together and display them in some meaningful way to a number of different audiences
  - ▶ Increasingly, more focus on social networking as well
- ▶ It seems as though there's two distinct feature sets
- ▶ But they both relate to students controlling their own environments

## LMS vs ePortfolio: An over generalised comparison

LMS	ePortfolio
Courses are the central hubs	Users are the central hubs
Teachers make the rules	Users define their rules
Courses provide structure	Unstructured and organic
Grades are given and managed	Grades not given
Content is available to all on a course	Others can only see what users let them see
Social networking revolves around courses	Users determine their own social networking
Formal	Informal
Classroom	Playground/Pub

## LMS vs ePortfolio: Find the boundaries

- ▶ The boundaries can get a bit fuzzy, especially around assessment
- ▶ And often vary a great deal from institution to institution
- ▶ Mahara doesn't want to be an LMS
- ▶ Moodle doesn't want to be a portfolio
- ▶ In general, refer to the Unix Philosophy:
- ▶ "Do one thing, do it well."

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- Core Features
- History & Project Context
- Project Makeup
- Lessons learned from Moodle

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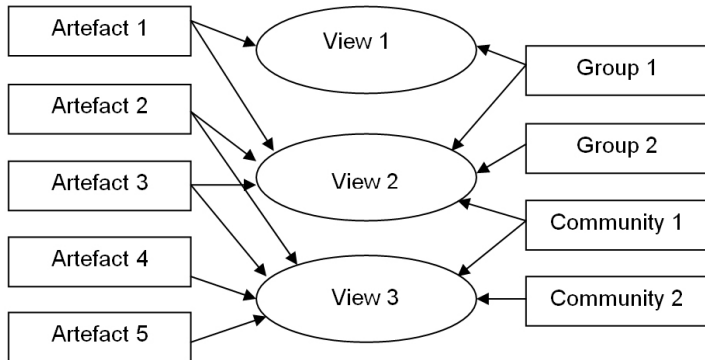
## Core Features

- ▶ Student controlled environment
- ▶ (Can be) Institution agnostic
- ▶ Fundamentally based on Artefacts/Views/Access:
  - ▶ An artefact can be any piece of content
  - ▶ A view is a collection of artefacts and how they're displayed
  - ▶ Access is who gets to see it and when

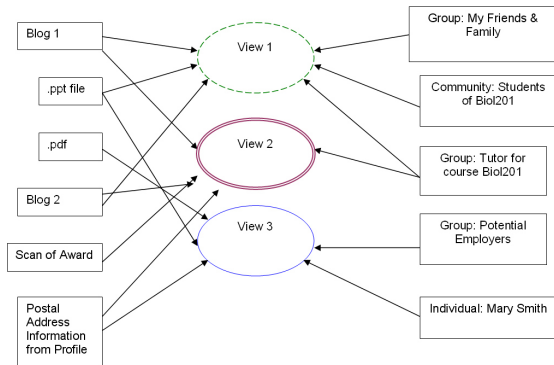
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  - ▶ Access is who gets to see it and when
- ▶ Communities, social networking
- ▶ Collaborative authoring and ownership
- ▶ Interoperability (especially with Moodle)
- ▶ Import/export entire student portfolio

## Artefact/View/Access



## Artefact/View/Access



## Access types

- ▶ Public
- ▶ Logged in
- ▶ Friends only
- ▶ Per community
- ▶ Individual roles in a community
- ▶ Per user
- ▶ Invited user with one off key

## History: FOSS in eLearning in New Zealand

- ▶ Tertiary Education Commission
- ▶ eLearning Collaborative Development Fund
- ▶ New Zealand Open Source Virtual Learning Environment
  - ▶ Moodle
  - ▶ Eduforge.org
  - ▶ Research and Learning Object Repositories
  - ▶ Work on Elgg, another Open Source ePortfolio

## Eye candy - before and after NZVLE

**2003**  
New Zealand



**2006**  
New Zealand



# Project Makeup

- ▶ Originally a consortium of different NZ universities
- ▶ Varied and broad input to the direction
- ▶ Now we have Mahara partners, similar to the Moodle scheme
- ▶ Open source, so developers everywhere
- ▶ We need more though!

## Original Project Deliverables

- ▶ Generate a theoretical framework for student ePortfolios
- ▶ Develop an open source ePortfolio application
- ▶ Facilitate a series of case studies
- ▶ Create documentation for implementation strategies, user guides and suggested policies.
- ▶ Establish an open source community of interest for further development

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- ▶ Establish an open source community of interest for further development
- ▶ So, not just a software project

## Lessons learned from Moodle

- ▶ Code - DML/DDL/XMLDB, more
- ▶ Modularity - many entry points mean easy to customise
- ▶ Flexible APIs - don't be unnecessarily strict
- ▶ Make it familiar to Moodle users, developers, translators
- ▶ Not just open source, but transparent process
  - ▶ Public source control from day one
  - ▶ All documentation on public wikis
  - ▶ Solicited feedback from Moodle community and everywhere else we could think of
  - ▶ Case studies under Creative Commons license

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## Stage 1 (Complete)

- ▶ Since Moodle 1.9 and Mahara 0.9
- ▶ Single Sign On
- ▶ On-demand account creation
- ▶ Builds on top of Moodle Networks Project
- ▶ Very similar setup to normal Moodle to Moodle networking.
- ▶ One to one, many to one, one to many, or many to many.

## Stage 2 (Mostly done)

- ▶ Portfolio API in Moodle 2.0
- ▶ Students can 'export to portfolio'
- ▶ Any Moodle content could potentially be a Mahara artefact
- ▶ Mahara is Learning Management System agnostic
- ▶ Moodle is ePortfolio System agnostic
- ▶ Many potential plugins, currently Mahara, box.net, file download, flickr, googledocs
- ▶ Plugins define the metadata they need
- ▶ Moodle content appears in Mahara rendered to HTML or a file that can be read by common applications (eg PDF)
- ▶ Most important: very solid framework to build upon

## Stage 3 (Roadmap)

- ▶ Smarter understanding of incoming data
- ▶ Example: Moodle blog post becomes Mahara blog post rather than just a HTML representation
- ▶ Looking closely at LEAP2A standard for this
- ▶ Still hopefully before Moodle 2.0
- ▶ My weekends for the next while
- ▶ Also: improve the UI in Moodle

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## One Moodle to One Mahara

- ▶ School wants to add portfolio and/or social networking functionality to existing Moodle setup
- ▶ A walled environment is wanted, often as an alternative to public systems (eg myspace)
- ▶ Can just be used to showcase student work within the school
- ▶ Some social networking but limited within a closed group who already know each other
- ▶ Still a lot of use of communities and forums

## Many Moodles to One Mahara

- ▶ Can fit regional model, or even national
- ▶ Each Moodle feeds into a Mahara 'institution'
- ▶ User Administration in Mahara is controlled per institution
- ▶ More networking ability between users of different institutions
- ▶ Still traditional ePortfolio functionality of course



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## We need you!

- ▶ Install Mahara at your school, university, company
- ▶ Give us feedback!
- ▶ Develop new artefact plugins, themes
- ▶ Translate it to your language
- ▶ Write good documentation

## Questions?

- ▶ <http://mahara.org>
- ▶ <http://eduforge.org/projects/mahara>
- ▶ irc: #mahara on freenode

