Glasgow City College

Demonstrating the potential of digital certification

Glasgow City College's focus on high-quality vocational learning and teaching keeps it at the forefront of digital innovation. Read, for example, an account of e-portfolio development using Microsoft OneDrive in the college's stonemasonry department in our 2015 [Technology for employability: FE and skills case studies – City of Glasgow College](#).

In 2018, staff took up a new challenge – overcoming the technical and cultural issues posed by digital certificates. The aim of [My Skills](#), a Ufi-funded project now underway at the college, is to enable learners to use digital portfolios across a lifetime rather than just on a course.

Working with technology platforms and service providers [APPII](#) and [Google](#), and in conjunction with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), this 12-month long enquiry sets out to demonstrate:

- how digital certificates can be created, managed and used, and
- how access to a personal learning space on a cloud service such as Google can be combined with digital certification to enable learners to certify their identity and qualifications in an efficient, trustworthy, paper-free way

The technical solution could lie in [blockchain technology](#) in which encryption and access are controlled by '[digital keys'](#) creating a unique [digital signature](#) that verifies the identity of the sender. But for Joe Wilson, head of the college's technical and vocational education team , this is not just about technology. The really tricky thing, he says, is facilitating the cultural and organisational change you need to make good use of the technology.

But the stakes are high. Acceptance of digital certificates would truly place e-portfolios at the heart of lifelong learning:

"Currently, the great majority of all education and training provision in the UK certifies the achievement of learning outcomes using paper certificates. This is a slow and cumbersome process that is out of alignment with the digital world we are preparing learners for. What we need is a quick, easy and trusted way of digitally certifying both the learner and the excellent work they record in their e-portfolio." **Joe Wilson, City of Glasgow College**

Find out more

https://myskills.org.uk