

Ideas of how to realize the features "My Glossaries" and "My Bibliographies" in Mahara

presented by Kristina Hoepfner, 4 June 2009; updated 11 August 2009 (new are sections 4.4, 5.5, and 5.6)

1. Preliminary remarks

- These ideas will be posted to the Mahara online community within the next days to receive feedback from others and to discuss these feature requests of the BScE at University of Luxembourg.
- The screenshots do not always include all elements of a page on Mahara. In general, elements that appear on all pages are left out in order to focus the attention on the features and the differences.
- Furthermore, references are made to already existing features to keep descriptions short and again, to focus on what's new.
- The mock-up screenshots are walked through from top to bottom.
- If additional screenshots and / or explanations are necessary for a better understanding, please let me know.
- In order to avoid too many conditionals and "it would be nice", I tend to use simple present as if the feature already existed. It will be up to us to negotiate what can be done and what cannot be done at the moment.

2. Necessity of glossaries and bibliographies

In the BScE students are required to keep a glossary and a bibliography starting in their first semester and to update it continuously. One could argue that students then only need one glossary and one bibliography page on Mahara, but I think that it is best to structure it according to the blogs and leave it up to the learners if they want to break up their glossary and bibliography in smaller junks to keep them organized, e.g. to have a quick overview of what they did in semester 1 and semester 2 etc. or to organize them thematically and so on.

It would be possible to write the glossary in a blog. However, there are a few shortcomings as can be seen below.

As with files, blogs and blog posts, the glossaries and individual glossary entries as well as the bibliographies should be easily put into portfolio views: Either post an entire glossary or an entire bibliography or post individual glossary entries. There is no viewing of individual bibliographic entries as the bibliographies are imported as a whole. Otherwise, a bibliographic reference manager would have to be programmed which is not advisable in my opinion as very good programs exist, e.g. Zotero, Endnote. It might be better to create an interface to link to a Zotero library online. This would be an additional feature which is not for today. ;-)

3. Placement of "My Glossaries" and "My Bibliographies"

As the glossaries and bibliographies are artefacts, they should appear in the "My Portfolio" section next to "My Views", "My Files", and "My Blogs". Thus, they should not appear in "My Profile".

4. "My Glossaries"

4.1. Overview page "My Glossaries"

This page resembles the "My Blogs" overview page.

4.2. Making a new glossary entry

The mock-up entry form for a new glossary term can be seen in Image 1.

- Each glossary entry has a title and a body (the actual text).

- A second editor form is helpful to guide learners to provide the source for their glossary entry, e.g. if they used a quote for a definition. They could do so in the "body". However, there it might be easily forgotten. Having an extra entry field is handy. It should have a WYSIWYG editor for learners to paste bibliographic references in their preferred style.
- A number of resources may have a URL as source. The URL could be included in the source, but having an extra field, the URL can be transformed into a hyperlink automatically. This URL field may also be used for additional information that has nothing to do with the source.
- Tags and the upload of supporting files is the same as for blogs.

The image shows a web interface for creating a new glossary entry. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs: "My Views", "My Files", "My Blogs", "My Glossaries" (which is highlighted), and "My Bibliographies". Below the navigation bar, the main heading is "New Glossary Entry in the Glossary 'Definitions'".

The form consists of several sections:

- Title ***: A text input field.
- Body ***: A rich text editor with a toolbar containing icons for bold, italic, underline, text color, background color, bulleted list, numbered list, indent, outdent, link, unlink, smiley, image, video, table, and HTML. Below the toolbar are dropdown menus for font family, font size, and format.
- Source**: Another rich text editor with the same toolbar and dropdown menus as the Body field.
- URL**: A text input field with a help icon (question mark) to its right.
- Tags**: A text input field with a "Show my tags" link to its left and a help icon to its right. Below the input field is the instruction "Enter comma separated tags for this item."

At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "Upload file" and "Browse my files".

Image 1: New glossary entry form

- In the file repository of a learner, folders are created automatically as for blogs in which all files are placed that were uploaded to the glossaries and the bibliographies (cf. Image 2).

Home

Name	Description	Size	Date	
 bibliofiles	Files uploaded as bibliographies		30/05/2009	Edit
 blogfiles	Files uploaded as blog post attachments		30/05/2009	Edit
 glossaryfiles	Files uploaded as glossary entry attachments		16/09/2008	Edit

Image 2: Automatically created folders for glossary and bibliography files

4.3. View of a glossary

For a visual representation, please refer to the mock-up image (Image 3) below.

- In contrast to blog posts, a chronological order of glossary entries is less advisable. More important is the alphabetical listing of glossary entries. Nevertheless, the view can be switched between alphabetical and chronological.
- The alphabet is displayed in a line and all letters under which entries can be found are linked for easy jumping to these entries.
- The glossary can be viewed entirely or letter by letter.
- Each section is clearly marked by the letter of the alphabet to which it corresponds.
- The glossary entry is displayed including the source and the URL if applicable as entered in the "New glossary entry" form (cf. Image 1) including the post date.
- As with blog posts, glossary entries can be edited and deleted. They can also receive feedback.
- In a portfolio view, either an entire glossary or individual glossary entries can be displayed (same as for blogs).
- Additionally, several entire glossaries can be selected for viewing. When that is the case, all entries are sorted alphabetically and not according to the glossary where they come from.
- The alphabet as well as the section letters appear when one or more glossaries are displayed in its entirety in portfolio views.

My Views
My Files
My Blogs
My Glossaries
My Bibliographies

View Glossary - Definitions ?

Add Glossary Entry
Settings

View Alphabetically
View Chronologically

0 - 9
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
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Source: Doe, J. (2009). Mahara eportfolio. *The Journal* 1(1), 15-36.
URL: <http://www.the-journal.test/mahara.html>
Posted on 2009-05-30 18:27:38

distance learning
Published

✎ Edit
✖ Delete

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Source: Doe, J. (2009). Mahara eportfolio. *The Journal* 1(1), 15-36.
URL: <http://www.the-journal.test/mahara.html>
Posted on 2009-05-30 18:27:38

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e-learning
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Source: Doe, J. (2009). Mahara eportfolio. *The Journal* 1(1), 15-36.
URL: <http://www.the-journal.test/mahara.html>
Posted on 2009-05-30 18:27:38

Image 3: View of a glossary outside of a portfolio view

4.4. Group glossary

Heinz Krettek suggested a group glossary (<http://mahara.org/interaction/forum/topic.php?id=691>), however, did not expand on that. Our portfolios are individual, but with the social networking capabilities of Mahara, such a collaborative effort can be rewarding. As the development of such a collaborative tool depends on how you imagine such tools to operate in Mahara (the level they are situated at for example), I would like to know your opinion on the following questions that I had posted in response to Heinz:

- On which level do you situate the glossary? Institution, group, friends, possibility to have it on any of these levels?

- How do you work on the entries collaboratively? Like on Moodle where comments can be added or more like on a wiki?
- How can you make certain glossary entries "your own"? I like the "copy view" option here (we still run an old version and thus I did not know that feature). That could be used for a group glossary as well: copy a group entry to your own glossary. When that is done, there should be an automatic, inerasable footnote stating the source of the entry (something like "The original glossary entry can be found..."). Of course, it can be changed.

5. "My Bibliographies"

5.1. Purpose of the bibliography tool

In contrast to posts in blogs and entries in glossaries, individual bibliographic references are not entered, but only entire bibliographies. Bibliographic reference managers such as Zotero and Endnote keep references organized and within easy reach for use in text processing documents.

The purpose of this tool is to import an existing bibliography, e.g. in XML, HTML or RTF format, preserve the formatting, in particular italics, and link URLs automatically. Additionally, a second option is to import a tagged file for easier accessibility of the individual bibliographic references.

5.2. Overview page "My Bibliographies"

This overview page is similar to the one of blogs and glossaries (cf. Image 4).

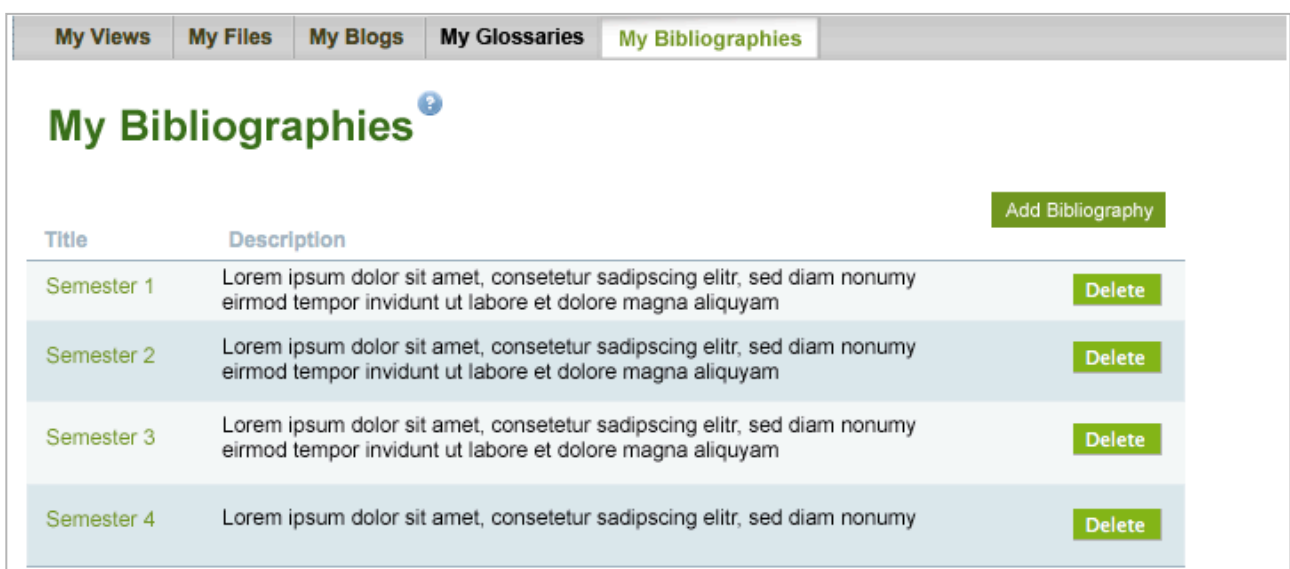


Image 4: Overview page of "My Bibliographies"

5.3. Upload of a bibliography

Prior to including a bibliography in Mahara, a learner needs to assemble it either with the help of a bibliographic reference manager or in a regular text processing document. This upload tool does not change anything on the text. It just uploads it and makes it accessible later on.

Depending on the export format of the bibliography (XML, HTML, RTF), this tool may have more possibilities in showing the references. However, it is necessary that the formatting is kept in any upload so that students can use their preferred citation style and upload their references in that style.

The upload of the bibliography file is pretty straightforward and resembles the one of a regular file (cf. Image 5).

The uploaded bibliographies should be placed in a separate folder for bibliographies that is automatically created in the file repository (cf. Image 2).

Image 5: Uploading a new bibliography

5.4. Display of a bibliography

- Please refer to Image 6.
- Bibliographies can be updated at any time, i.e. a text editor is opened in which the entries can be updated manually, e.g. if there are typos to correct or if a few references have to be added (button "Update Bibliography").
- If the existing bibliography is to be replaced entirely because of major and numerous updates, he can replace the existing bibliography with a new one (button "Replace Bibliography").
- The persons who have access to this bibliography, e.g. the learner in the "My Bibliographies" view and others in the "My Views" section, can download the bibliography as PDF, RTF, and HTML file (button "Export Bibliography"). Any other export file, e.g. XML would be advantageous, too.
- After a bibliography was uploaded, links to web sites are automatically linked.

My Views My Files My Blogs My Glossaries My Bibliographies

View Bibliography - Semester 1

Update Bibliography Replace Bibliography Export Bibliography Settings

1 2 Next page Last page

van Aalst, J., & Chan, C. K. K. (2007). Student-Directed Assessment of Knowledge Building Using Electronic Portfolios. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 16(2), 175-220.

Aguilar-Roca, N., Williams, A., Warrior, R., & O'Dowd, D. (2009). Two Minute Training in Class Significantly Increases the Use of Professional Formatting in Student to Faculty Email Correspondence. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 3(1). Retrieved January 11, 2009, from http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijstot/v3n1/articles/_ODowd_et_al/index.htm.

Akin, L., & Neal, D. (2007). CREST+ Model: Writing Effective Online Discussion Questions. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 3(2), 191-202.

Ashcraft, D., Treadwell, T., & Kumar, V. K. (2008). Collaborative Online Learning: A Constructivist Example. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 4(1), 109-117.

Boyle, R. J., Kacmar, C. J., & George, J. F. (2008). Distributed deception: An investigation of the effectiveness of deceptive communication in a computer-mediated environment. *International Journal of e-Collaboration*, 4(3), 14-39.

Brown, R. E. (2001). The process of community-building in distance learning classes. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 5(2), 18-35.

Bryman, A. (2007). Barriers to Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 8-22. doi: 10.1177/2345678906290531.

Posted on 2009-05-30 18:27:38

Image 6: Viewing a bibliography

5.5. Uploading a bibliography through a tagged file

This option will allow learners to upload their bibliographies using tagged files, e.g. BibTeX, Zotero RDF, and RIS. I call these "tagged files" because they do not have the resources in the final output style, e.g. APA 5th, but tagged so that they can be read by other reference manager software and imported into their database. The advantage of exporting a bibliography from a reference manager as tagged file is that it can be imported into Mahara making the individual entries found in the file visible as individual entries and not just the entire bibliography. Selecting individual entries and associating them with other artefacts becomes easier (cf. Nigel's post of June 9 at <http://mahara.org/interaction/forum/topic.php?id=691> "If you want to be able to put some entries into one View and some entries into another, then Mahara has to know what an entry is - and so needs to be able to figure this out from the imported data.").

Then, the bibliography could be displayed in a similar way to the glossary (cf. Image 7) and individual entries could be extracted. In order to display the entries, the structure of the reference needs to be translated into an output style, e.g. APA.

View Bibliography - Semester 1

Add Bibliography Entry Settings

0 - 9 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 2 Next page Last page

A

van Aalst, J., & Chan, C. K. K. Published Edit Delete

van Aalst, J., & Chan, C. K. K. (2007). Student-directed assessment of knowledge building using electronic portfolios. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 16(2), 175-220.

Akin, L., & Neal, D. Published Edit Delete

Akin, L., & Neal, D. (2007). CREST+ Model: Writing effective online discussion questions. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 3(2), 191-202.

Image 7: Viewing a bibliography generated through a tagged file

5.6. Displaying a bibliography via a plugin to Zotero

The option of generating a bibliography in Mahara through a tagged file seems to be rather tricky in my opinion, as it would require that Mahara take on functionality of a reference manager, e.g. learning output styles, making a form available to add bibliographic entries etc. An easier way would be to develop a plugin / interface to a bibliographic reference manager. That would also allow for synchronization / automatic update of the resources. Furthermore, the data only needs to be updated in one place, i.e. the reference manager, and not in Mahara and then in the reference manager, which is the primary tool.

As we gear our students towards Zotero (<http://www.zotero.org>), a free reference manager that sits in the browser, this would be our point of departure for a plugin.

I do not know if it is feasible for you to develop such a plugin to Zotero or not. Therefore, I propose that the bibliography tool consists of 2 parts:

1. the first option with the file upload from an RTF, DOC, HTML file as outlined in 5.3 and 5.4. This tool could then also be used for any text file upload to allow previously written texts to be immediately displayed in Mahara and not as attachments (cf. my comment at <http://mahara.org/interaction/forum/topic.php?id=691> on June 9: " In my second-to-last Mahara workshop for our students today (for June; more to come in September / October), I was asked by a number of them whether it is possible to upload a word / pdf document and have it displayed immediately in a blog post or view. That means they do upload a file, but the content is automatically extracted and made visible as if they had written the text online. That was interesting because it reminded me of what I had suggested for the My Bibliographies module. In the end it does not matter if the document contains a bibliography or some other formatted text.").
2. the plugin / interface to Zotero.