3.   Distinguishing features & advantages

Digital portfolio	Paper portfolio
Enduring	Can deteriorate over time, susceptible to environmental degradation –moisture, sunlight, etc
Provides continuity and can be lifelong	Often time-bound and discontinuous
Totally mobile	Not easily mobile, transport can be difficult
Freely and easily reproducible	A reproduction can be very time consuming and inevitably will not look as good
Fully searchable – instantly and always available to be searched	Table of contents and possibly an index, requires physical presence. Can be slow to cross reference instances of a given 'term'
Enables collaborative work	Not easily and certainly not simultaneously
Can be a 'live' resource for others	Could be a limited and time-bound resource
Easily reviewable by anyone, anywhere, anytime	Needs to be physically present
Can be read, peer reviewed, or marked by multiple viewers simultaneously. I.e. it has a feedback loop	Needs to be copied and then distributed to enable multiple viewers or markers
Allows different organisational 'views' of the one set of core resource material	Fixed layout and format
The views represent different functions for the ePortfolio: progression, process, showcase, competencies, etc	Different layouts are difficult to produce and are always (paper) media bound or may also contain discrete additional media samples
It may be linear, or hierarchical in structure, or neither, or both	Structure is fixed
Allows learner/teacher interaction	Not unless done within the classroom
Provides student voice – feelings and emotions	Impersonal – generally does not reflect feelings and emotions
Improves the learner's ICT literacy skills	Improves finger dexterity in turning pages
Easily and always available for editing	Not easily editable
Easily communicated to any size, type and location of audience	Expensive to do so – needs copied and transported
Intended/designed to encourage reflective practice	Can be, but more difficult to include reflections
Infinitely extends the classroom	Must be physically transported and present
Anywhere, any time access	Must be physically transported
A personal approach to learning that grows with the learner's maturity	Content and organisation mainly driven by teacher
Development focused	Often tends to be assessment focused
The owner has total control of the sharing and commenting capability	Once out of the owner's hands she/he has no control over access or comments
Does not have to be in possession of the owner to be accessible and usable	Owner could possibly provide remote instructions to direct a third party to access a document/book
Secure – difficult/impossible to lose or misplace	Can be lost or easily damaged
Multi-media – text, charts, graphic images, sound, video and all combinations	Paper-based media only – text, images, diagrams, charts. May have discrete additional media samples
Can include embedded files	What you see is what you get
Can link directly and immediately to other references	Manual references can be provided – often difficult and slow to follow-up

Note: A number of the above points in the digital portfolio column have the underlying assumption that sound ICT practices are being followed particularly in terms of security, privacy and backup.