

# THE ROLE OF DIGITAL BADGING IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

Digital badging is gaining momentum in higher education as colleges and universities begin to adopt innovative practices to augment and extend the traditional transcripts to certify and communicate student competencies and achievements to prospective employers. The purpose of digital badges may vary from recognizing student engagement in a learning activity to certifying the achievement of specific skills and competencies (Dowling-Hetherington and Glowatz, 2017). Digital credentials are integral for transforming the future of higher education generally, and in business schools specifically, with the potential for enhancing student mobility and career success (Choudaha, 2019). According to a recent AACSB research report based on a study to understand how business schools can adapt for the digital generation, digital badges are gaining credibility and interest, with 90 percent of respondents reporting some value as a substitute or complement to degree and/or non-degree education (AACSB, 2018). Further, industry hiring practices will increasingly depend on digital searches for job candidates, and alternative digital credentials will make those competencies easier to discover (BizEd, 2019).

While digital badges span a wide spectrum of competency topics, this presentation will focus on the role of digital badging in business analytics education. The presentation's context is College of Business Administration at a large public university. With the goal of expanding and communicating the range and impact of academic and co-curricular activities that promote experiential learning and career readiness, the College is exploring the integration of e-Portfolios with digital badges into the business curriculum. To this end, the College partnered with a social networking vendor, Portfolium, to provide students with a platform for demonstrating their career-ready competencies, acquired inside and outside of the classroom, through achievement and competency badges. While achievement badges certify the completion of one or more learning activities (e.g., attending a workshop or a campus events), the competency badge certifies a demonstrated learning outcome or skill that has been authentically assessed (Portfolium, 2018). The College is in the very early stages of implementation of digital badges, and is currently piloting an Information Literacy Badge and a Leadership Badge in its First-Year Experience course for a freshmen cohort. Other areas being explored for digital badging initiatives include competencies and skills in business analytics.

This exploratory study will review examples of digital badging in business analytics education. For example, the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University has an Executive Education Digital Badge Program that is designed to provide an introduction to business analytics. The program consists of webinars and quizzes, and students who complete the program receive a digital badge signifying participation and achievement (Indiana University Digital Badge Program). Students who pass an exam after completing the program earn credits that may be applied towards a Business Analytics Certificate.

Another example is of an industry-academic partnership to provide digital badges in analytics. Northeastern University has an innovative collaboration with IBM through which IBM employees, customers, and members of the public can use IBM issued digital badges towards Northeastern professional master's degree programs, including a Master's in Analytics program (Leaser, 2017).

The goal of our presentation is to provide the context for digital badging in higher education, focus on the role of digital badging in business analytics education in particular, and describe early planning efforts to introduce digital badges related to analytics in our college.

**Keywords:** Business Analytics, Digital Badging, Innovative Education

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