

Using Learning Resources:  
Transforming the educational experience

Sharing eLearning Content  
Synthesis Study

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- A desk study externally commissioned (from Nicky Ferguson, Seb Schmoller, Andrew Charlesworth, Neil Smith and Rob Tice), examining the outputs of the following JISC initiatives:

*Digital Libraries in the Classroom, Focus on Access to International Resources, Distributed eLearning, Digital Repositories Programme, SFC Transformational Projects, Exchange for Learning, JORUM...*

- Examining potential barriers to the sharing of elearning content In the following areas:

*Organisational, Cultural, Legal, Pedagogic, Technical*

- in order to inform future JISC work in the Learning Resources and Activities, Repositories and other areas.

- “... a picture emerges showing relatively little formal, large-scale sharing via repositories with appropriate licensing and a lot of informal, small-scale sharing with colleagues and collaborators.”
- “... putting technical solutions in place without institutional commitment or knowledge of user requirements is likely to be unproductive.”
- Many organisations suggest cultural issues are a key concern, but these are often underpinned by concerns, uncertainties and misconceptions about intellectual property rights.

- Authorship and “emotional” ownership of material

*“...three quarters of participants [in the Rights and Rewards project] wanted the author of contributed material to be attributed...fewer participants wanted their institution attributed”*

- The “web 2.0” effect

*“The challenge is in finding ways of linking the institutional online world with the expanding online environment that users engage with on the wider web...” [SPIRE project]*

- A culture of sharing?

*“It needs a cultural change within institutions for people other than enthusiasts to share...”*

- A legal “minefield”

*“The current difficulties arise from an unwillingness to face up to the question of why FHEIs and associated organisations have been unable to construct and drive through a coherent and cohesive agenda that systematically addresses those issues...”*

- Trust

*“IPR is a lightning conductor for issues of ownership, control, power [and] status” [TrustDR]*

- Policy and process

*“Many institutions either don’t have a clear policy on who owns the rights in the materials produced by staff and students, haven’t publicised it if they have, or don’t adhere to it”*

- Instructional approaches

*“We believe that sector resources would best be concentrated on sharing that that involves institutions or communities that have a common ‘delivery endeavour’ [...] where sharing is part of the solution to an immediate problem...”*

- Sharing between institutions, between subject areas

- Technology-organisation mismatch with culture

*“the implicit ‘organisational and business models’ of the technologies do not match the culture into which their proponents attempt to introduce them.”*

*“the contrast between the way in which people use the Internet and web-based systems in general, and the way that use of the Internet and web-based systems is built into institutional processes.”*

- Policy vacuum

*“few institutions have a policy in place to encourage or to help staff consider sharing of elearning materials... The implication .. is that all institutions and funding bodies have a responsibility to move quickly towards establishing clear policies...”*

- No business case

*Lack of a “credible business, legal and organisational case for sharing elearning content, rather than simply a background view that ‘sharing is a very good thing’”*

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## ■ Interoperability

*“claiming adherence to a standard is no guarantee of performance. The suitability of any software solution is highly dependent on the quality of the implementation.”*

## ■ ‘Push’ (alerting) or ‘pull’ (resource discovery)

*“RSS/Atom is also often used as a transport mechanism for the syndication of search results using the OpenSearch specification.”*

*“The parameters of what constitutes successfully creating a searchable service are changing and developing.”*

## ■ Format – metadata?

*“consideration of metadata, how to use it and how to create it has very important cultural and organisational elements as well as far-reaching economic, policy and strategic implications.”*

*“vocabularies may represent a barrier to uptake if they are seen as obscure or complex by end users (particularly users familiar with ‘looser’ tagging structures such as those used in del.icio.us).”*

*“increasingly be using services which order things ‘on the way out’ according to approbation criteria and attention metadata which have nothing to do with catalogued descriptive metadata.”*

- The final report: <http://ie-repository.jisc.ac.uk/46/>
- JISC Infonet Infokit (under construction): <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/themes/lra/>
- Briefing paper on repositories
- This conference.

*Please respond to the questions linked to this report on the “wall”*

- *What are the main challenges to sharing and re-use of content?*
- *What are the main messages about effective use of content to support learning?*
- *'The future is learner-created content': discuss*
- *What skills do staff need to support effective creation, sharing and use of content?*