

# A Wiki-based approach to Open Educational Resources: TRUE

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# Our Constituents



# Uses of OERs by economists

- Syllabi/module handbooks/  
reading lists
  - Informal benchmarking
- Lecture slides/ handouts
  - “Bread and butter”
  - Idiosyncratic / new ideas
  - Alternative perspectives
- Assessment materials

## Other resource types

- Classroom experiments
- Data tables and graphs
- Case studies
- Jokes!

# Strengths of the wiki approach

- Ownership (Personal and group)
- Collaboration
  - Non-hierarchical
  - Natural division of labour
- Immediacy

# Weaknesses of the wiki approach

- Unstructured content
  - Inconsistency of style and navigation
  - Duplication
- User frustration
- Initial skills hurdle

# The wiki balancing act

- Enough freedom for individual authors to express creativity
- Enough structure to have a good end product

# Academic tribes

Intermediate Microeconomics

Intermediate Macroeconomics

Agricultural Economics

Comparative Economic Systems

Consumption and Households

**Development Economics**

**Econometrics**

Economic Growth

Economic History

Economics of Gender

**Environmental and Resource  
Economics**

**European Economics**

**Experimental Economics**

Financial Economics

Game Theory

**Health Economics**

**Heterodox Economics**

History of Economic Thought

**Industrial Economics**

**International Economics**

**Labour Economics**

Law and Economics

Managerial/Business Economics

Mathematical Economics

**Monetary Economics**

Philosophy and Methodology of  
Economics

Political Economy

Public-sector Economics and Public  
Choice Theory

**Regional and Local Economics**

Socialist and Marxist Economics

Specific economies/countries

Structural and Institutional  
Economics

Transition Economics

Welfare, Inequality and  
Redistribution

Other/specific topics

# Health Economics education

- Grew out of a research community
- Initially run on PBWiki free wiki service
- Mostly one academic, one techie
- No formal budget
- Yielded 59 learning resources
- <http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/health>

## Co-opetition

- Appeal to co-operative ethos of academic community
- And simultaneously to the competition between departments, schools of thought or courses

# TRUE

- Teaching Resources for Undergraduate Economics
- Fourteen subject wikis
- Each led by a senior academic in that field
- Personal visit to acquaint them with wiki software and issues

# Call goes out... resources come in



- There are over 26,000 undergraduates currently studying economics in the UK... **TRUE!**
- They are studying on over 1,900 modules across 96 universities...**TRUE!**
- Sharing resources can benefit both experienced and inexperienced lecturers, disseminate opinion, invite discussion and increase opportunities for networking and publication – all **TRUE!**
- We want you to help us populate an online resource – **TRUE!**

“Keep your fears to yourself, but share your inspiration with others.”

Robert Louis Stevenson  
(Author 1850 - 1904)

“the best ideas are common property”

The Epistles of Seneca  
(Roman dramatist, philosopher, & politician 5 BC - 65 AD)

#### Get in touch

To find out more or offer your contribution, visit [www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/our](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/our)

Alternatively please contact any of the specialist subject co-ordinators listed overleaf or:

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TEACHING  
RESOURCES FOR  
UNDERGRADUATE  
ECONOMICS

**true**  
A KNOWLEDGE SHARING NETWORK

# Under the bonnet

- Drupal
  - Free, open source
  - Very customisable
  - Sophisticated system of users and roles
  - Download from [Drupal.org](http://Drupal.org)
- [JORUM.ac.uk](http://JORUM.ac.uk)

## So far

- 400 resources uploaded
- Other materials linked

## From a syllabus

“You can sleep in class all you want. Be my guest. Really: I don’t mind. And bring any friend, parent, child, dog you want. No problem: no need to ask. **But you cannot read, talk, eat, slouch insultingly [guys: listen up], pass notes, pick your nose, look bored** (*being* bored is another matter: these rules are about externals that hurt your classmates, demoralizing them and me), **dress inappropriately, do homework, chew gum, come late, leave early, or more generally act like a high-schooler.** [...] Think of the class as a *business meeting*, with Deirdre as your boss.”

- Deirdre McCloskey, University of Illinois at Chicago, syllabus for *Principles of Microeconomics*

## Lessons learned

- Perhaps be more prescriptive: have a template site and publicity that coordinators work from?
- Foot-of-page comments: a mixed blessing, probably not worth having over all.

## The future

- Integrate wikis with database-driven external links
- Unified shop-front for UK OERs, other OERs and other resources, tailored to an specific academic community.