

OER Pilot Programme: synthesis and evaluation

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Strand Specific Evaluation

Individual strand: Isobel Falconer

individual practices, attitudes, behaviours, personal and collective benefit

Subject strand: Helen Beetham

practices and cultures in subjects, link between open content and open curricula, collective practices of content creation

Institutional strand: Lou McGill

institutional strategies/practices, business cases, content management, rewards and responsibilities

High level findings

CC licensing and release to an open repository is achievable for the majority of L&T content

Different benefit cases → different technical and organisational solutions (institutions/communities)

Institutions becoming strategic about managing content: in some cases around an open content agenda

Communities vary widely in approach to sharing

Risk-averse culture around IPR, integrity of content, and reputation

Individual rewards are mainly intrinsic; institutional rewards are mainly in the long-term

Sustainability = embedding institutionally AND communally

Benefits cases and associated approaches

- **Individual showcasing**
reputation enhancement, personal/prof rewards, individual values (openness, public interest, quality), learner focus
- **Institutional showcasing**
attracting students, learner choice, (international) reputation, potential learners and partners as end-users, influencing
- **Share and share alike**
tightly-knit subject/topic communities, learners and other teachers as end-users, sharing practice, scholarship, collaboration
- **Capacity building**
staff skills, institutional strategies (e.g. LTA, content management), change awareness, sustainable development

Benefits

- Some evidence (we need more) that OER release can:
- have institutional marketing potential (OLNET)
 - enhance visibility to stakeholders: employers, potential learners, franchise/partner colleges
 - catalyse change in institutional strategy and practice
 - support new partnerships around content development
 - support sharing/discussion of teaching practice
 - be part of development strategy for centres of excellence (scholarship/teaching)
 - be attractive to established scholars (legacy) and to new ones (building reputation)
 - *enhance access to opportunity for e.g. work-based, international, lifelong learners*
 - *support new modes of learning e.g. P2P, self-directed*

What works (across all strands)

Close loop with re-use i.e. development/repurposing/reuse cycle NOT one-off development or retrofitting

Stage release to manage risk, give more control

Maximise value of assets: development, discovery, re-usability (granularity, guidance), enrichment

Focus on intrinsically valuable resources
(high relevance/high specialism/high development costs)

Deposit once (institutional/subject repository), syndicate
(open repositories = JorumOpen, Merlot; third-party sites = iTunesU, YouTube, flickr, scribd, slideshare)

Describe at an appropriate level of detail – metadata tagging, pedagogy 'wrapping', user comments

Raise awareness, share ownership (blogs, feeds, events)

Build in tracking and monitoring

Different strokes

Different motivations to release → different definitions of 'open' and different priorities for open content, e.g.:

- Re-usability vs integrity (granularity issues)
- Generic, e.g. skills-based vs specialised (high value, low use, linked to research?)
- Professionally produced vs 'shared back of envelope'
- Context-free vs various means of representing educational context, level, values, purpose
- Personal, institutional, community branding vs no branding/third party branding
- Different hosting solutions (web 2.0/repository)
- Linked-to vs embedded content elements (updating?)

Sustainability issues

Institutional

Rationalise admin and support

Communicate clear policies esp IPR/licensing

Embed into everyday practice e.g. CPD, content development

Demonstrate benefits and raise expectations

Integrated content management

Communal

Technologies of participation: profiles, linking, reviewing, commenting, following, sharing

Build on existing practices; address cultural (mis)conceptions

Individual

Intrinsic rewards, especially linking to learners as end-users

Early career/late career reputational benefits

Develop champions

Supporting transformational change

*Many individuals are keen to see their content openly available but lack knowledge, skills, time, support
Individuals need reassurance and guidance on legalities: who owns their content, and how to ensure legal release
Individuals are often concerned about 'mis-'use: a staged release to trusted others can reassure*

Key success factors cited by projects:

- accessible, easy-to-use repository
- local expertise in technical, legal and educational issues
- time and opportunity to experiment (funding!)
- flexible quality processes
- senior management support

We still need to find out much more about reuse...

Who, when, what, why?

With what benefits?

Needing what support/skills?

From what host sites? Using what search and web 2.0 tools?

Based in what kind of communities or institutions, if any?

With what impact on learning strategies and approaches?

With what impact on staff practices and roles?

With what impact on institutional marketing and outreach?

We still need to develop...

- Single deposit across multiple sites (better syndication of metadata)
- Means of x-searching/aggregating resources from different sites and with heterogenous descriptions
- Better exchange of information between web 2.0 applications and repositories
- More useable tools/interfaces to support needs of developers, contributors, managers and users of OERs
- Skills for OER use/release e.g. incorporated into HEA accredited training, capacity building among specialists
- OER quality strategies
- Case for open scholarship across the board, linking research, teaching, professional practice
- Institutional and community exemplars