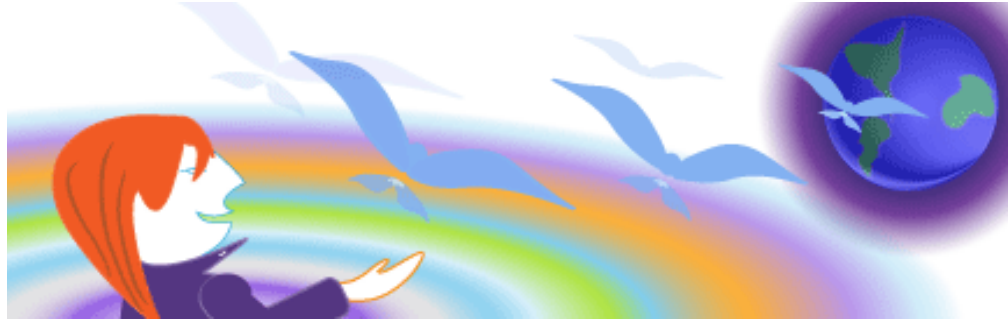


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eLearning Papers



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Editorial: Open Educational Resources

This issue of eLearning Papers is dedicated to the thriving work around Open Educational Resources (OER) by committed individuals, institutions and user communities. Five selected papers by the guest editors investigate the organisational, social, cultural, pedagogical and technical aspects of implementing OER.

Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning and teaching materials that are offered freely to anyone under licenses that allow to use, modify and distribute the items. But that's not all. Through the world-wide movement of OER, magnified with user-generated content and underlying Web 2.0 technologies, the advantages and opportunities are numerous for teachers, authors, eLearning practitioners, developers and content providers, researchers and decision-makers, and last but not least: learners.

We have two papers that investigate how higher education institutions work OER into their policies and practices. "Open Educational Resources for Management Education: Lessons from experience" elaborates on a French faculty which created a digital distribution place to share and disseminate university courses. The initial resistance of the faculty members evaporated as they started receiving positive feedback on their courses, as well as international interest in their French content. On the other hand, "Reflections on sustaining Open Educational Resources: an institutional case study" shows how first gaining high level policy support within the institution for the initiative of OER was turned into a sustainable institutional practice.

The following two papers talk about tools for teachers and faculty members to create and share content. Both initiatives go further than just making content available; the important factor of creating a community of like-minded users around the content is well elaborated in both platforms. We first have the paper "OER models that build a culture of collaboration: a case exemplified by Curriki" followed by a second paper on the LeMill educational authoring environment, "Simplicity and design as key success factors of the OER repository LeMill ". Both contributions emphasise the ease of use.

The last paper presents an idea of transferring successful practices from Free and Open Source software development to the collaborative process of creating OER. "Applying software development paradigms to Open Educational Resources" presents a case study that investigates how the idea of software developers working on the same code and keeping track of changes can be applied to the collaborative construction of learning content.



Sandra Schaffert, Salzburg Research
Riina Vuorikari, FLOSSE Posse (Free, Libre and Open
Source Software in Education)
Roberto Carneiro, Director, eLearning Papers



Marc Humbert



Jean-Philippe
Rennard



Cécile
Rébillard

Grenoble Ecole de
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“ We pointed out the main motivations and barriers relative to the production and use of OER and showed some significant differences between Economics/Management faculty and “other” faculty, the first ones being less advanced than the second ones. ”

Keywords

Open Educational Resources (OER), distance learning, management education, e-learning, OpenCim

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media16676.pdf>

Open Educational Resources for Management Education: Lessons from experience

“Open movements” have gained increasing importance in various areas. In this paper we are interested in the particular case of Open Educational Resources (OER) and more specifically in the use of OER in Management Education.

We first present the results of a two years length exploratory study concerning faculty’s knowledge, experience and perception about OER with a particular focus on Management Education. This was so far an unstudied subject and our findings were interesting as a first step of understanding. We pointed out the main motivations and barriers relative to the production and use of OER and showed some significant differences between Economics/Management faculty and “other” faculty, the first ones being less advanced than the second ones.

We’ll then come to describing our OER experience in Grenoble Ecole de Management. After our first study in 2006, we decided to launch an OER initiative in our Business School and developed our OpenCim website with the aim of providing open educational resources for Management Education. We deliberately focused on resources in French Language to address the francophone academic community (faculty and students).

This initiative has so far been very successful. We gather a large and highly satisfied number of readers, among them many Africans. Moreover the feedback of producers (participating faculty) is, again, excellent and we think we have overcome the main barriers identified two years ago.



Andy Lane

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University, UK

“ The paper concludes by looking at the different sources of funding for OER projects and issues of both financial and social sustainability. ”

Keywords

Open Educational Resources (OER), distance learning, OpenLearn, Open University, content, educational materials

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media16677.pdf>

Reflections on sustaining Open Educational Resources: an institutional case study

This paper reviews some of the literature on the sustainability of Open Educational Resources (OER) and what it has to say about successful or sustainable open content projects on the internet.

It goes on to argue that OER need to be considered with respect to the different types of economy - market, public and social - that operate for educational materials in particular and education in general. The paper then examines what sustainability means to different actors in these economies and the relationships between them, notably within organisations, between organisations and amongst communities and individuals, but not within or with political institutions. This is followed by a case study of one project within one higher educational organization: OpenLearn at The Open University in the UK.

The case study outlines the objectives of the OpenLearn project; notes its relationship to The Open University's mission; lists the major internal and external benefits that have arisen from the project; and sets out the future directions for the project. These traits are then compared with some key factors for successful projects listed in Guthrie et al (2008). The paper concludes by looking at the different sources of funding for OER projects and issues of both financial and social sustainability. It notes that sustainability for these projects, at least within organizations, depends upon the activity fitting closely with the goals of the organization such that most of the activity is absorbed into existing systems and practices. It also argues that they can act as a test bed for extending activities and securing a mix of new or improved funding streams.



Barbara
(Bobbi)
Kurshan

Curriki

“Curriki, an online community for creating and sharing open source primary and secondary education curricula and instructional resources, is a pioneer in applying an open source approach to classroom content and curricula development.”

Keywords

Open Source, Curriculum, Collaborative, Learning, Accessibility, Content, Online Community, Network model

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media16678.pdf>

OER models that build a culture of collaboration: a case exemplified by Curriki

This article explores the impact that Open Educational Resources (OER) can have on eliminating the “Education Divide.” Advances in information technologies have created unique opportunities for the free exchange and access to knowledge on a global scale. To this end, a growing number of education organizations and foundations are finding that an open source approach can bridge the educational content gap.

Open Source Curriculum (OSC), which refers to instructional resources and is based on the open source software model, empowers educators to freely exchange ideas and leads to the development of best practices and exemplary curricula. Curriki, an online community for creating and sharing open source primary and secondary education curricula and instructional resources, is a pioneer in applying an open source approach to classroom content and curricula development. Drawing on the social network model, Curriki is advancing a collaborative culture of learning, creating and sharing that is paramount to a networked learning environment.

Committed to the idea that access to knowledge is a basic right for every child, Curriki is a “disruptive change” (Christenson & Overdorf, 2000) that is transforming the traditional model of how content is developed, published, distributed and evaluated. The opportunity exists today to build a sustainable community that empowers teachers that want to teach and students that want to learn with high-quality open source educational resources at no cost.



Tarmo
Toikkanen

Media Lab, University of Art
and Design Helsinki, Finland

“ The success of LeMill shows that a grassroots OER repository can grow to be so valuable that it attracts new members and new resources by itself. ”

Keywords

Open Educational Resources (OER), collaborative environments, Pedagogy, teachers, simplicity, LeMill, trinary economy

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media16680.pdf>

Simplicity and design as key success factors of the OER repository LeMill

This article focuses on the OER (Open Educational Resources) repository LeMill, which is a web community for finding, authoring and sharing learning resources, provided as a free and open service to everyone at <http://lemill.net>.

Unlike many OER repositories that have authoritative content, LeMill relies on grassroots activity to get new content. All resources are created and edited by volunteer teachers and content authors. The success of LeMill shows that a grassroots OER repository can grow to be so valuable that it attracts new members and new resources by itself. The technology behind the community is not spectacularly ground-breaking, but the extensive design and simplicity are what make LeMill different from most other OER repositories.

As a premise, this article claims that it is the emergence of simple enough tools that allow fundamental changes in people's behaviour. Based on the experiences of developing LeMill, the most critical design recommendation for an OER repository is to involve actual teachers throughout the development project. Teacher feedback must be accepted at all times, although it should not be taken at face value.

As a closing of this paper, we describe an innovative “trinary economy” business model for OER repositories which involves teachers, educational administration and text book publishers.



Seth Gurell

Center for
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Sustainable

Learning, Utah State
University

“ Comparisons between how open source software handles errors and feedback from users are analysed with similar functionality in the OER Handbook project. ”

Keywords

Open Educational Resources (OER), open source, wiki, educational resources, open texts

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media16681.pdf>

Applying software development paradigms to Open Educational Resources

This article is a case study in the development of the OER Handbook¹ on the website WikiEducator. WikiEducator is a website run by the Commonwealth of Learning dedicated to the creation of OER for the classroom. Open educational resources² are defined as content that is licensed that allows for modification and distribution without the copyright holder's permission.

The handbook is meant to guide educators (an admittedly broad category) in finding, creating, adapting and sharing open educational resources. Parallels are drawn between the development of the OER Handbook and typical open source software development, especially in the development of a polished product. The idea of open texts having a release cycle similar to open source software is explored. Comparisons between how open source software handles errors and feedback from users are analysed with similar functionality in the OER Handbook project.

Difficulties in wiki development, such as renaming of pages, organizing pages, formatting text and image manipulation are outlined, though it is noted that many wiki projects are successful. The suggestion to use Subversion, well-known tool for managing software development, as a model for a new tool to develop OER is also addressed. This paper discusses the similarities between the software development process and tools with OER creation and provides best practices from both perspectives.

¹ http://www.wikieducator.org/OER_Handbook/educator

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources