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Adapting, adopting and analysing the potential of open educational resources

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Title:

Adapting, Adopting and Analysing the Potential of Open Educational Resources

Abstract: (Your abstract must use **Normal style** and must fit in this box. Your abstract should be no longer than 500 words. The box will 'expand' over 2 pages as you add text/diagrams into it.)

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The use of technology to enhance access to educational possibilities and learning opportunities is the goal of many organisations. Indeed there has been a rapid expansion in the use of educational multimedia since the early 1990's [1]. Such systems can provide a forum for student collaboration, which has the potential to transform educational practice [2]. Although teachers are under enormous pressures to harness this type of technology [3], little has been done to evaluate whether success is achieved in terms of students continual assessment and exam performance.

The OpenLearn project (funded by the Hewlett Foundation) is taking open learning in a new direction. Open Educational Resources (OERs) distributed freely worldwide are accessible to all. A learner is considered to be anyone and everyone. The project is adapting multiple media materials based heavily on print for delivery as OERs on the Web. These materials are taken from the original Supported Open Learning version of a course (which includes tutorial support and assessment). In the OpenLearn context the materials called 'Units' will be standalone, without tutorial support or assessment.

The aim of the research discussed in this paper is to investigate what changes are required to internal procedures within organisations (institutions and other bodies (those not associated with educational establishments)) to enable them to adopt these standalone OERs as part of their curriculum and assessment strategy.

This paper will report findings from an established programme of work which involves ten organisations based nationally and internationally. The organisations would be using the OpenLearn material but providing the tutorial and assessment functions themselves. Particular consideration is being given to the procedures already in place within organisations. These procedures and policies are being assessed to gauge the extent of change needed in order to adopt OpenLearn OERs. The questions being answered are as follows:

How will organisations provide their own tutorial support and assessment for OERs?

How would organisations adapt OERs (not supported by tutorial guidance) within their courses?

Where would the material fit within their present curriculum?

How would institutions and other bodies assess the value of OERs for their students or members?

What policies and procedures would need to be used or changed to allow the adoption of OERs for assessment?

How would the material be assessed, as part of an assignment, as part of an exam, as part of an aural?

Would organisations consider the possibility of an external body providing tutorial support and assessment for OERs?

This research provides useful and important baseline guidance for future research into the many possibilities of how tutorial support and assessment of OERs could be undertaken.

References

[1] T. Boyle (2002). Towards a theoretical base for educational multimedia design. JIME - Journal of Interactive Media in Education - Special issue on Theory for Learning Technologies, 2002, 2. Available at: <http://www-jime.open.ac.uk/2002/2>

[2] R.Hartley (2000). On-line Collaborative Learning Environments. Journal of Educational Technology & Society 3(3) 2000 ISSN 1436-4522 available at http://ifets.ieee.org/periodical/vol_3_2000/hartley.html

[3] J. Biggs (2004). Teaching for Quality Learning at University. Open University Press, UK

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