Opening up for OpenLearn: issues in providing open educational resources

Conference or Workshop Item

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Opening up for openlearn

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Open Content Initiative: openlearn

• $10m+ two year programme
  – supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
• Strands
  – Academic
  – Technical: Production
  – Technical: Tools
  – Research and Evaluation
open learn research

• Producing:
  – How to transform for open content?
  – What tools do we need?
  – Can we bring in content from the world?
  – Do we give new life to things the world values?

• Learning:
  – Do we have users?
  – Can we reach the world?
  – What do they do?
  – Does anyone learn anything?
Activity system (Engeström)
Design view

Tools: Workshops/meetings/guidelines/advice

Subject: Academic

Object: Open content

Rules: Models/Suitability/Research/Faculty satisfaction

Community: Open University/Colleagues/Hewlett/interested world

Division of Labour: openlearn team/Volunteers
Implementation view

Tools: XML editor/
Moodle/ Pro-forma/
Transformation forms/
eroom/ learningspace/
labspace

Subject: Academic

Object: Openlearn unit

Rules: Integrity Model/
Guidelines/ Proposal
targets/ Steering group

Community: openlearn
team/wider OU/ World/
Collaborators

Division of Labour:
Academic team/ Media
team/ External editors/
Contracted staff/ Faculty
liaison/ OU staff/ Volunteers
Analysed producer contradictions

- Academic team/ Media team and OU staff – who has final sign off
- Remove the sign-off process: improve after release
- Users- XML Editor
- Add in other formats and models
- Models for unit production
- Proposal targets
- Include new factors in the targets
Does the analysis help?

- Behind the scenes: based on observation
- Presentation tool to others: feedback and refinement
- Method for recording factors: neutral view
- Applied in other situations and projects
- Remains to be validated for this case
openlearn research

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How we will work with others

• Collaboration with Brazil:
  ➡ translation of openlearn units
  ➡ cross-cultural issues (context, language, institutional discourses and policies)
  ➡ Two phases: implementation 1 and 2
  ➡ Method: drawing on ethnography and action research
  ➡ Disruptive?
  ➡ Formal and informal learning
Summary

⇒ Activity theory can provide a useful mechanism to understand complex practices within openlearn and help us to identify contradictions;

⇒ The challenge for us is to balance applied research (fast feedback) and academic research in order to develop a greater understanding of the field.