Opening up for OpenLearn: issues in providing open educational resources

Conference or Workshop Item

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Opening up for openlearn

Andreia Santos, Patrick McAndrew and Steve Godwin
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
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making educational resources freely available

I think openlearn is a superb concept. I find the project exciting in a practical, philosophical and theoretical way!

Rachel MacDermot, Children’s Workforce Learning Network

Case Studies
Tony: a Technology Lecturer
read more

openlearners say...

spotLight on: William Wilberforce

March 2007 marks two hundred years since a Parliamentary Bill was passed to abolish the slave trade in the then British Empire, but how much do you know about William Wilberforce? Read more...
openlearn 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
Analysed producer contradictions

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