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
New to openlearn? Browse units and register for extra free resources. Returning to openlearn? Log-in now.

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making educational resources freely available

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openlearners say...

“ 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”

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
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
- 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.
Andreia I Santos
openlearn
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA
www.open.ac.uk/openlearn
a.i.santos@open.ac.uk