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Archives at a distance

Ruth Cammies, University Archivist
November 2020
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

• Created in 1969

• Headquarters in Milton Keynes – with offices in England, Wales, Scotland, Belfast and Dublin

• The UK’s largest University, with over 168,000 students in 2019

• Students are taught at a distance – the majority do not visit the main OU campus
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVE

- Donated “special collections”
- Institutional Archives
- OU teaching materials
  - Materials for over 3000 OU modules, including over 22,000 audio visual titles
THE AUDIO/VISUAL ARCHIVE

Some examples of OU programmes:

A100 1971 “Retrospect” – Actor Tom Chadbon performs part of the famous “To be or not to be” Hamlet soliloquy for a TV programme for the first OU Arts course

T100 1972 Materials and Mechanics: the Moulton Bicycle
A 20 minute programme for the first technology course featuring Alex Moulton and his development of the Moulton bicycle

The Audio visual archive also contains recordings of key moments of OU history. This was the ceremony to open the first buildings on the OU campus with Lord Mountbatten in 1970
AVA PROJECT

AVA: Access to Video Assets 2008-2011

Over 1000 tapes digitised from obsolete formats

Prototype database set up – including online streaming of digitised programmes
Some of the original key system requirements:

- Dedicated metadata profiles for a range of archival content, including images, audio, video, text, archived web sites, and OU course records
- Able to display relationships between items – e.g. video “x” was part of course “y” which is part of collection “z”
- Different levels of access – essential due to copyright restrictions
- Creation of a cataloguing/upload interface for the archive team
Use of the “available online” filter

1 - 10 of 1001 items available to view online.

Remove the 'Available online' filter to see all results.

Use the filters to narrow down the list of items (eg video, image).
Historical OU Images

Images relating to the Open University, including images of the main Walton Hall campus in Milton Keynes and events such as the first graduation ceremony of the University. The OUDA collection represents a small sample of the full image archive.

Historical OU images collection browse page
Historical OU TV and Radio

The Open University has produced a number of series to inform students and a wider audience about the University. Series such as 'Open Forum' and 'Countdown to the OU' covered various topics such as methods of teaching, information about modules and guidance on areas such as summer schools. The OUDA Historical Television and Radio collection includes a small sample of the archive. The collection will grow as more contents are added.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Forum 10 (1971) : general Assembly at Cranfield Institute of Technology</td>
<td>General assembly at Cranfield Institute of Technology, discusses consultative committees. the...</td>
<td>25 September 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Forum 03 (1971) : programme 3</td>
<td>A discussion on how to study, levels of study and allocation of time.</td>
<td>23 February 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Forum 02 (1971) : Programme 2</td>
<td>James Barber with part-time staff and students discusses the counselling service.</td>
<td>26 January 71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Historical OU TV and radio collection browse page
OU Study Materials

The Open University has been delivering modules/courses to students since 1971. The Study Materials collection is a comprehensive archive, including printed, audio/visual, multimedia and web materials. The collection also includes associated materials, such as transcripts of audio/visual content, set books, prospectuses and a selection of home experiment kits. The OUDA collection of Study Materials contains a sample of the full archive. The collection will grow as further materials are added.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Resource Type</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Delivery: Health Service Version</td>
<td>701HSSD</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Delivery: Social Service Version</td>
<td>701SSSD</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An arts foundation course</td>
<td>A101</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An arts foundation course</td>
<td>A102</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An introduction to the humanities</td>
<td>A103</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices, texts and material culture</td>
<td>A105</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices and texts</td>
<td>A150</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sense of things: an introduction to material culture</td>
<td>A151</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start writing for the internet</td>
<td>A171</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start writing essays</td>
<td>A172</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start writing family history</td>
<td>A173</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Module view – users can see basic information about the OU module and browse the different types of materials associated with that module.
Clip: Introduction to Unit 17 of S100

Description
Stephen Hurry gives an introduction to Unit 17 of S100 which is about mitosis in living cells.

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Restrictions on use: This material can be used in accordance with The Open University conditions of use. A link to the conditions can be found at the bottom of all Digital Archive web pages.
Duration: 00:01:22
Keyword(s): Mitosis, cell division.
Contributor(s): Professor Michael Pentz, Stephen Hurry.

Related Archive Content
Examining a coastal environment to understand geological processes
Professor Pentz gives an explanation of how we can find out how rocks were made by...
ONLINE EXHIBITIONS AND FEATURES

• Showcase OU Archive content
• Tell a particular story with archive content – mixing images, audio and video with a narrative
• Give students a sense of shared history/community – despite not being on a physical campus

Exhibition: The OU Story

The Open University was one of the world’s first successful distance teaching universities, founded on the belief that communications technology could bring high quality degree-level learning to people who had not had the opportunity to attend traditional campus universities.

This exhibition is a brief journey through the history of the University, using materials held in The Open University Archive to look at some of the main events and developments - from Harold Wilson’s initial plans in 1963, the creation of the University in 1969 and developments through to the present day.

Explore themes

1963-1969
How the OU was established

The first 10 years 1969-1979
The OU gains a Royal charter, teaching begins and the first students graduate

The 1980s
Finance pressures, technological change and expanding curriculum

1990s
Validation services, the 25th anniversary of the University and Baroness Boothroyd becomes OU Chancellor

2000 - present day
Expansion of Library services, creation of OpenLearn and the OU/BBC Partnership

List all items in this exhibition
A page from the Historical OU campus tour online exhibition – showing the Betty Boothroyd Library Building and Baroness Boothroyd in 2006 at the building naming ceremony with the then OU Vice Chancellor Brenda Gourley.
OU in Scotland

Replying to @OUScotland

‘Jennie Lee: from Lochgelly to the Lords’ is a free exhibition at Glasgow’s Mitchell Library from now throughout November & then at the Lochgelly Centre from 6 December ‘til March 2020. But if you can’t make it in person, there’s an online version at bit.ly/OUjennielee #OU50
Examples of Archive-related posts using the OU Library social media accounts. 239 people “engaged” with the snowy campus pictures in February this year on Facebook!
OU ARCHIVES IN TEACHING

The Time to Think collection on the Digital Archive and the Coping in Isolation: Time to Think course on the OU’s OpenLearn platform
THE "STUDENT HUB LIVE" ARCHIVE

A current project to catalogue and transfer over 500 videos of Student Hub Live sessions to the OU Digital Archive.

We are aiming to provide various ways of filtering the videos to produce useful "playlists" of videos on various subjects for students – such as revision or note taking.
THANK YOU

- The OU Digital Archive: https://www.open.ac.uk/library/digital-archive

- OpenLearn course Coping in Isolation: Time to Think https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/coping-isolation-time-think/

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