Reaching out with OER: the Public-Facing Open Scholar and the benevolent academy

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The problem

Photo Credit: Extranoise, http://www.flickr.com/photos/10508943@N00/154211994/ CC-
From supply-push to demand-pull
The solution?
The background

James Gillray, Scientific Researches! New Discoveries in Pneumaticks! or an Experimental Lecture on the Powers of Air (1802) – Public Domain

Henry Howard, Humphry Davy (1803) – Public Domain
The background
Watch the video at http://youtu.be/ACU5T2x2tPE
A digital scholar reaches out
The Public-Facing Open Scholar

1. Find a community and identify its OEP readiness
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**Participation**
- Sustained over time
- Commitment from a core group of participants
- Emerging roles and hierarchy

**Cohesion**
- Support and tolerance
- Turn taking and response
- Humour and playfulness

**Identity**
- Group self-awareness
- Shared language and vocabulary
- Sense of Community

**Creative capability**
- Igniting sense of purpose
- Multiple points of view expressed and contradicted or challenged
- Creation of knowledge links and patterns

**Community Indicators**

[Diagram showing the above information]
The Public-Facing Open Scholar

1. Find a community and identify its OEP readiness

2. Listen to the needs of the community
The Public-Facing Open Scholar

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3. Search OER repositories and collections for resources that might meet those needs

4. Share those resources with the community

Photo Credit: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/12142935@N08/7402012502/">Patrick Gensel</a> via <a href="http://compfight.com">Compfight</a> <a href="http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/">cc</a>
The Public-Facing Open Scholar

1. Find a community and identify its OEP readiness
2. Listen to the needs of the community
3. Search OER repositories and collections for resources that might meet those needs
4. Share those resources with the community
5. Disseminate information about the community’s unmet needs.
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Findings

• Creative capability stage reached
• Frequent posts requesting help (emotionally draining?)
• Interpersonal/counselling dimension
• Anonymity creates a level playing field
• Different approach to information-gathering
Implications

• Being a public-facing open scholar is likely to require long-term involvement + substantial time commitment

• Extend Step 2 – ‘Listen to the needs of the community’ – to include learning about culture & interaction modes

• Consider the need to explain how resources relate to community needs

• The challenge of anonymity
Summary

Public-facing open scholars have the potential to:

• Extend the beneficial impact of existing OER
• Prompt institutions to release new OER to meet the needs of people outside HE (e.g. the VCS)
• Help VCS communities become self-educating

BUT.....
Real-world challenges and the Benevolent Academy

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