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GCSE Comp Sci Teachers' OER: Good practice

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FRI: GCSE Comp Sci Teachers' OER: Good practice (Jonathan/Jonty Leese).

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Jonathan Leese
6 January 2019

Abstract:

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OER (Open Education Resources) are teaching and learning resources such as textbooks distributed under a Creative Commons license that often facilitate the free use and repurposing of these resources by others (Hilton, 2016). In state secondary education in the UK (age 11-18) school budgets have been reduced in real times in the recent past whilst OER resources are not well adopted despite offering a financially efficient solution (Rolfe and Fowler, 2012). For example, text books cost the average student $132 in Poland per academic year (Hagemann and Hugyecz, 2016) up to $900 pa in universities in America (Hilton *et al.*, 2014). It could be seen that in the UK, secondary education are not at the forefront of using technology to its full potential, with few schools using open source products effectively. In the UK it has not been helped that there has been complete intransigence from the government in response to the requirement to "make a strategic response to the 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan set out by UNESCO to make publicly funded educational resources available to improve the learning experience for all" (WonkHE, 2018).

Many schools used ICT to support learning (through SIMS for registers, teachers2parents for texting parents and parentpay for making electronic payments without the need to bring cash to school). Therefore what applies to schools as innovation around OER may not be truly cutting edge but relative to the setting they find themselves in, embracing the spirit of OER may well be seen as such. The key principles of OER materials are in sharing, remixing and repurposing (Wiley, 2014) which allow the use and reuse of resources, often with no copyright restrictions.

To address this, and as part of the Open University H818 online conference around innovation, a website has been created highlighting key resources to signpost teachers. This will include a presentation where key principles, educational underpinning and some cutting edge examples of OER from around the world will be shared, highlighted and discussed.   The focus is aimed at GCSE (years 10 and 11 in the UK) Computer Science teachers who teach the specifications of these UK exam boards.

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There have been small projects before, but not focussing exclusively on Computer Science where 69,000 people sat the GCSE exam in Summer 2017 (Ofqual, 2017). The research that has been completed focusses at university level where the culture of OER (such as the adoption of Moodle – an OER platform) is established. Can an online resource engage teachers and learners at GCSE level in using OER resources?

This presentation will include defining key terms of OER, sharing best practice of both e-textbooks MOOCs looking at examples that are specific to Computer Science whilst reviewing exemplar materials from other subjects. In the sense of innovating, we will also consider common barriers to the successful usage adoption of OER and finally we will discuss barriers to adoption of OER resources. The presentation will conclude with opportunities to engage with the author around any questions you may have.

References:

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Please see my Presentation in the link below

Extra content

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[Jonathan Leese](#)
14:10 on 10 January 2019

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Jonathan Leese
14:11 on 10 January 2019

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Contribute

Discussion (14)   Links (0)   Academic References (0)

Jonathan Leese
2:09pm 10 January 2019 (*Edited 2:10pm 10 January 2019*) Permalink

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Samantha Bennett
3:30pm 23 January 2019 Permalink

I'm intrigued by your project Jonty and would love to debate the pros and cons of 'traditional textbooks' vs 'open textbooks' - especially as I'm now an editor of traditional textbooks.

When I used to teach (secondary Geography), I used OER for the majority of my lessons, mainly teacher-generated content that had been uploaded to various resource sites (such as TES resources). I even shared some of my own teaching resources to these sites. I was not really familiar with the term 'OER' and if I was looking for teaching resources today then I would probably just go to one of these sites and search for the specific topic, age-group etc.

One of the main issues I found with OER was the time taken in: a) finding the right resource in the first place, b) checking it for accuracy, grammar, permissions etc. and c) adapting the content and format to fit my own context (e.g. exam specification, student level, prior knowledge, sharing via VLE etc.). In the end, it was often quicker and easier to create something of my own from scratch!

I also question the quality of many teacher-generated resources which are shared on these sites. They rarely use creative commons attributes and I have often identified resources which have infringed copyrighted content. Maybe this is changing as the new generation of teachers are more likely to enter teaching with better critical and digital literacy skills. What do you think?

Munir Moosa Sadruddin
9:34am 25 January 2019 Permalink

Hi Jonty! Your topic has alot of potential and scope for Pakistan because there is a need of resources on science but government spending is less. We are using outdated textbooks in classrooms which are not yet updated fr the last 20 years.

Does the copyright laws in UK have some reservations with related to OER, or are they in support of it? Unfortunately, unavailability of OER in regional language is a drawback, i think! What are your views?

Are you planning to expand your project after H818? Let me know so we can network and collaborate :)

Munir Moosa Sadruddin
7:51am 29 January 2019 Permalink

Hi Jonty

I can say that OER has a lot more potential in Pakistan for local board examinations because of limited access to books and affordability. When comes to GCSE, many students in Pakistan appear in the examination conducted by the British Council but those students are highly affordable and from a very very good financial background. They can afford any books.

I am unsure if this is the same case in the UK. Are children studying at schools free? Are their parents affordable? Are their local examinations or only GCSE?

Munir

Jonathan Leese
9:59am 29 January 2019 Permalink

Thanks for your comments Sam -

I am actually thinking of changing the theme slightly of my presentation having reflected upon my work which will answer (I hope) many of your questions.

Personally many resources (I taught Comp Sci and ICT) were bought in and of variable quality whereas the bespoke resources were better (created in house). As you identified they were never flagged up as OER which meant licencing issues/what could be done with them was a grey area. Furthermore, with the drive for people to sell their resources via TES etc, there was a drop in people wanting to share for free.

You sy:
One of the main issues I found with OER was the time taken in: a) finding the right resource in the first place, b) checking it for accuracy, grammar, permissions etc. and c) adapting the content and format to fit my own context (e.g. exam specification, student level, prior knowledge, sharing via VLE etc.). In the end, it was often quicker and easier to create something of my own from scratch!

I say:
a) Yes I agree!
b) Yes I agree especially where English is not a primary language
c) This is where bought resources linked to a spec has a huge advantage

The wider challenge is around people having ownership of resource and accepting online praise as a suitable reward rather than financial incentives.

From my experience in schools, there is very little changing, ICT is being used more centrally across MATs (Multi Academy Trusts) but at the end of the day, they are bough for resources with little OER principles embedded.

[Jonathan Leese](#)
10:46am 29 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

I appreciate you taking the time to ask this question Munir.

My feeling in the UK is that OER doesn't have traction as people in schools are happy to have the confort of a paid for book, often it is "approved" by the official examining board for either GCSE (16 year olds) or A-level (18 year olds). To my knowledge I don't think that there is a case of an exam board approving an OER book.

I will talk in my presentation about how my perspectives have changed on OER, with a focus on the UK, but there are some key drivers as to why I think it would be more successful in other parts of the world. My initial thoughts around the barriers to OER have been altered hugely, and not always in the way I was expecting - some examples of where it has worked has been interesting, and also how OER has been adapted to engage learners has opened my eyes. Please watch the presentation to find out how!

You said:
I am unsure if this is the same case in the UK. Are children studying at schools free? Are their parents affordable? Are their local examinations or only GCSE?

I reply:
In the UKm all students are entitled to a free education upto 18 but some pay - for public schools (they are available to all the public who can pay) - alhtough these are also called private schools as you have to pay to go - the free schools in the UK are called State schools as they are paid for by the state - the UK government.

As such, there are no open financial commitments to education but there are of course bills, uniforms, trips, bags, lunches which can be a barrier. There are GCSEs which all students sit, although a school can choose which exam boards specs they sit. They are all similar to some degree to ensure the quality of education remains constant.

Hope that helps Munir and I look forward to seeing your presentation too.

[patrick shearer](#)
11:54pm 29 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi Jonty,

I am fascinated by the philosophy behind the idea of OER.I n As a teacher with a strong vocational motivation - i find the idea of not sharing/being closed/charging for educational resources - as being slightly 'immoral'. i find that i have to signicantly change my basic minsdset from a sharing to a business model to fully understand why sorme resources are so expensive, and designed primarily to make a profit. However, i do know that i am being naive. We use Moodle at College and i am constantly frustrated by the metaphorical doors that are closed between departments in the same organisation. For example, i work in Sport and Fitness - quite a bit of anatomy and physiology content. There is considerable cross over with the Science Dept biology content. But can i get the Science dept to agree access? Absolutely not. Can i get the Managers to grant access - absolutely not. Even though most of the content is College 'owned' - there is resistance to sharing - all the way down to sharing textbooks and resources such as anatomy models and rescucitation equipment for example. Therefore, anything that tries to remove barriers in terms of cost and ownership is always going to be innovative.

Phill Grimes
9:56am 2 February 2019 Permalink

Good to read Patrick's take on this as Ironically I was going to say something almost identical.

I find FE really guarded with indiviiduals. I put it down to competitiveness , a reluctance to share your stuff in case they use it for credit and that it wasn't always easy to share stuff.

Like Patrick, I work mostly in Sport and Fitness, but I also work in Science (as does another of my colleagues). Science are really appreciative of the OER we share, but it begs the question of why did this not happen before and why only now. It isn't the first time there has been a crossover in departmental teaching.

From my project's perspective I put much of it down to G Suite's ease of application in sharing and working collaboratively. We do it, because we can and it's EASY. Whereas before, we could do it, but it wasn't easy.

As for OER v trad textbooks, I feel that the pressure to do well overides the economics. Trad books are specific to the qualification and therefore, a safe bet. Buy it, and you know the right info is there. Would you gamble that a free book has everything you need? As a teacher in vocational subjects I think I can gamble, but A-Levels (and therefore, GCSE) and the uncertainty of the exam questions - perhaps not.

Munir Moosa Sadruddin
6:53am 9 February 2019 Permalink

Hello

Can you please suggest any OER platform where I can publish my book free of cost. I founded Bill Gates Open Foundation but sadly they charge- then I wonder how to call it open :)

Awaiting

Munir Moosa Sadruddin
7:39am 12 February 2019 Permalink

Dear Jonty, I have the following question:

Where do you see the future of Open Educational Resources in teachers training in your context?

Is there any research which highlights the example of adapting OER and its realistic benefits?

IHave you come across any research on the attitude of teachers towards OER in your context?

I found two general papers on attitude, and here are the links:

https://zenodo.org/record/161282/files/ROER4D-ch12-advance.pdf

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101847.pdf

Munir

Phill Grimes
1:42pm 15 February 2019 Permalink

Great presentation. Enjoyed the subtle humour.

Providing a scalable solution to increasing adoption and improving image will be a very useful step.

Look forward to seeing the future progress

Dr Simon Ball
3:29pm 18 February 2019 Permalink

Hi Jonty

Well done on a great presentation! Here is a summary of the comments and questions you received following your presentation (including those you may have addressed verbally). Please respond in whatever way you choose.

Best wishes

Simon

- ▷ What can be done to maximize meaning full participation on your site? Are you planning discussion forum or something to incorporate or collaborative activity?
- ▷ Need to inlude a form of impression management? Perception: cheap/free stuff gives a poor professional image?
- ▷ What role do you think wanting to maintain the status quo (ie a financial model) have in the continued suspicion of OER in the UK?
- ▷ Development v. Accreditation?
- ▷ Do you think that those who like OER's already have an interest in this area and we are only just starting to reach others, so attitudes may change?
- ▷ High cost of textbooks prevents uptake of other technology in schools

[Jonathan Leese](#)
11:19am 20 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Munir:

You said:

Can you please suggest any OER platform where I can publish my book free of cost. I founded Bill Gates Open Foundation but sadly they charge- then I wonder how to call it open :)

I think there are a number of strategies:

a) https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/ You could publish to Amazon via ebooks/kindle format - set it at a reasonable price (Remembering that they take profits) but you have a world wide market place.

But this is not OER

b) https://www.lulu.com/ Something like Lulu.com - free to publish but again, it's a money making enterprise.

c) create your own book, and host it on your own website/ work space if it doesn't break any laws etc.

d) Do it through your work as part of your linked CPD (Professioal Development) if they have capacity for it?

I'm not an expert in (self) publishing so these are just my immediate thoughts

[Jonathan Leese](#)
12:27pm 20 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Appreciate you taking the time to contact me Simon:

You said:

- What can be done to maximize meaning full participation on your site? Are you planning discussion forum or something to incorporate or collaborative activity?
- Need to inlude a form of impression management? Perception: cheap/free stuff gives a poor professional image?
- What role do you think wanting to maintain the status quo (ie a financial model) have in the continued suspicion of OER in the UK?
- Development v. Accreditation?
- Do you think that those who like OER's already have an interest in this area and we are only just starting to reach others, so attitudes may change?
- High cost of textbooks prevents uptake of other technology in school

I say:

Opening sentence - many of these are huge issues which have been wrestled with unsuccessfully for a long time!

- What can be done to maximize meaning full participation on your site? Are you planning discussion forum or something to incorporate or collaborative activity?

Nope - I think this site will stay "live but inactive" in that I'll tidy it up and amend where necessary but certainly no major updates and improvements. Extra features (forum, place to highlight great resources etc) would be great but staffing it is the challenge.

- Need to inlude a form of impression management? Perception: cheap/free stuff gives a poor professional image?

Correct! Some stuff you can use for OER is terrible Bohannon (2013) talks about the fact that plenty of publishers accept fake articles in Open Journals with no real quality control. It's a bigger challenge, not only where people read but what they do with the materials is the challenge.

- What role do you think wanting to maintain the status quo (ie a financial model) have in the continued suspicion of OER in the UK?

Massive - Again Weller (2013) states that "Reed Elsevier reported revenue of over 6 billion GBP in 2012 of which over 2 billion was for the Science" through paid for access to research. It's not in their interest to "push" the free material (But I'm not trying to sound like a conspiracy theorist at this point).

Stacey (2013) suggests using peer-to-peer pedagogies over self study which have been seen as a chief weakness.

- Development v. Accreditation?

Unsure what this is pointing at. In terms of developing skills in terms of using OER, or developing resources, or getting them published by one of the many OE journals? Either way, upskilling and having a recognised badge of quality (a kite mark!). Anything (Merlot website for example) has peer reviewing experts around useful OER resourcesto ensure

that hopefully fake info would be highlighted and weeded out early on.

> Do you think that those who like OER's already have an interest in this area and
> we are only just starting to reach others, so attitudes may change?

It's possibly a bit like the "we only have 20 years of coal left" or "we're only 10 years away from discovering nuclear fission" argument. We are told that next (insert time frame here) will be when it goes big – FE/HE already it is pretty well established. Some countries have a national buy in, and it works –some of the presentations covered this week show the excellent work done in S Africa, Namibia etc. I think potentially there the drivers are money saving, as a higher priority than we have in the West. The topic of OER is something that seems to engage and resonate with people when they see the hypothetical benefits.

> High cost of textbooks prevents uptake of other technology in schools

Agree! But it's all the extra issues such as support which people want- hence the Noba Project and Flat Earth Project being so popular where you can buy in some extra resources which possibly schools like as a comfort blankets. If budgets were reallocated, then other technologies could be invested in, I agree.

That's all folks!

Contribute to the discussion