

## Open Educational Resources (OERs) Introduction Booklet and Webinar <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/openeducation>



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### Context

During the past five years, thanks to innovative universities and educational projects from around the world, the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement has appeared and grown rapidly, addressing major educational issues such as the "knowledge divide" and access for all to relevant information. Opening Access to Education, by sharing high quality courses and training material is now considered as a necessity by major Universities and International Organizations, such as the OECD or UNESCO.

OER represents a tremendous opportunity for youth, teachers, schools, NGOs, governments and any entity or citizen involved in the field of education and vocational training around the World. The quantity as well as the quality of available resources are exponentials. It is time to

sensitize everyone.

In this context, the Development Gateway [Open Education Resources \(OER\) dgCommunity](#) drives a Community Awareness & Sensitization project which includes **a free Booklet and Webinar introducing the concept of Open Educational Resources** and its potential to serve Education and Development programmes and practitioners, with a special emphasis on Developing Countries. The Booklet and the Webinar both provide:

- a definition of Open Educational Resources,
- an introduction to Open licenses and Standards,
- an introduction to the Production and Distribution of OER,
- a list of OER content repositories, search engines and projects.

This project directly serves the OER dgCommunity main objective, which is to sensitize Development practitioners and citizens to Open Educational Resources, for the benefit of all. The Booklet and the Webinar are also to be considered as gateways for beginners to major OER projects, content repositories and search engines. An important part of its content introduces third part initiatives and portals in the domain of Open Education.

The Webinar uses real-time Web conferencing tool, enabling trainees to interact with the trainer and to discuss together at the end of the session. The associated Booklet is published under Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 license and can be used freely.

### How to apply?

This one hour e-learning course will be opened for subscription on a regular basis. Any dgCommunities member may subscribe freely. During the fall 2007, at least one session will be organized each month allowing up to 12 trainees to follow the online course.

*To contact the project or register for the next Webinar session, please contact Thomas Bekkers: [tbekkers@dgfoundation.org](mailto:tbekkers@dgfoundation.org) introducing your profile and your motivation to follow the Webinar.*

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## Definition of Open Educational Resources

As the OLCOS project reminds, there is not yet an authoritatively accredited definition of Open Educational Resources.

At the OER dgCommunity, we define Open Educational Resources as digitized materials, offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners, to use and re-use for teaching, learning and research. OER includes open access to both the content and the technology such as Open Softwares, Open Standards and Open Licenses to distribute the material.

Historically, the term "Open Educational Resources" was first adopted at UNESCO's 2002 Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries.

The concept of Open Educational Resources can be compared to the Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) movement. It is also quite similar to, and inspired by, the Open Access (OA) movement willing to share access to the scientific literature.

*"Just as FOSS allows users to modify software as needed, OER allow*

*users to adapt content to suit their own needs." IIEP / UNESCO<sup>1</sup>.*

After the generalization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and its appropriation by educational institutions and educators, a natural and also philanthropic evolution was to share freely educational materials already digitized with students and peers.

The emergence and the growing maturity of Content (CMS) and Learning Management Systems (LMS), offering for example the ability to build course repositories using FOSS, brought valuable advantages such as:

- to reuse and complete each others material,
- a good accessibility of the material,
- a good record keeping of the material.

At the same time, the "Open Access" movement offers today a wide set of Open Standards, Open Licenses and even Open Networks (such as the OCW) employed by OER practitioners in the phase of distribution of the produced material.

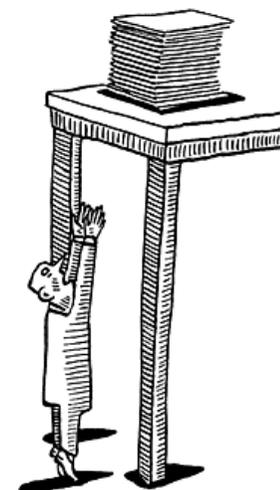
The convergence of Open Access to content, technology and standards in the field of Education could be considered as a definition of OER.

*"free sharing of software, scientific results and educational resources reinforces societal development and diminishes social inequality. From a more individual standpoint, open sharing is claimed to increase publicity, reputation and the pleasure of sharing with peers." Jan Hylen, OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.*

Additional resources:

- [Introduction to OER by the OLCOS project](#)
- [Why are individuals and institutions using and producing OER?](#)

- 1 Extracted from the [background note](#) of the IIEP / UNESCO Forum 1 Session 1 : "Open Educational Resources and open content: an overview"



By Jan Hylan - IIEP / UNESCO

### What is the difference between educational content accessible for free and OER ?

It is important to understand the difference between an educational content accessible for free and an Open Educational Resource.

A resource accessible for free over the Internet does not always signify that it is not protected by a copyright nor forbidden for reuse and reproduction. In fact, most of the time, the content is protected by copyrights not allowing reproduction. Where else an OER is distributed, licensed and shared with the background willingness to enable the user to adapt and use the content freely. Therefore, the model of distribution and the license is always clearly mentioned.

Users should always consider the distribution model and the associated license of any educational content accessible for free over the Internet before using it.

### **Open Licenses and distribution models: getting started**

OER main rule is to open access to an educational content by sharing it according to various free models of distribution. Models of distribution over the Internet mainly rely on the type of license the producer is going to choose to diffuse its work. Using an Open License model does not mean the author is going to lose his rights. It is exactly the opposite.

Open Licenses help the owner of any Open Content to protect it, by defining conditions under which the material can be used, modified and distributed. Will you allow commercial use of your training material ? Should I mention the source if I use it ? Can I distribute a new version of your work under any type of license ? All this depends on the type of Open License chosen by the Author.

Two different types of licenses used by OER producers are recommended by the OER dgCommunity:

- Creative Commons licenses (CC licenses)

The Creative Commons (CC) is a non-profit organization devoted to expanding the range of creative work available for others legally to build upon and share. The organization has released several copyright licenses known as Creative Commons licenses. (Source: [Wikipedia](#)). Globally, a CC license answers [two different questions](#): do you allow commercial use of your work ? Do you allow modifications of your work? For the second question, the answer can be Yes, No or under "Share Alike" (Which means the licensor permits others to distribute derivative works only under a license identical to the one of the original work). This mechanism is also known as [copyleft](#).

- GNU licenses

[GNU licenses](#) are widely used to license Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) as well as Documentation. The GNU General Public License (GNU GPL), a widely used free software license, was originally written by Richard Stallman for the GNU project. The GPL is the most popular and well known example of the type of strong copyleft license. (Source: [Wikipedia](#)). An other interesting GNU license is the Free Documentation License. GNU FDL or simply GFDL, is a copyleft license for free documentation, designed by the Free Software Foundation (FSF) for the GNU project. (Source: [Wikipedia](#)).

- Historically it might be useful to introduce the Open Publication License (OPL). [The Open Publication License](#) is a license used for creating free and open publications created by the Open Content Project. The license is generally focused at academics, however some artists have found it suitable to their tastes. The OPL is now largely defunct, and its creator suggests that new projects not use it. (Source: [Wikipedia](#))

Finally, the notion of [Public Domain](#), which as now became a type of license offered by Creative Commons is also important to understand. Being in the public domain is not a license, it means the material is not copyrighted and no license is needed.

A good illustration of various licenses used in the context of OER, is the difference between the OCW Consortium and Wikiversity (by Wikimedia Foundation). OCW Open Educational Resources is delivered under Creative Commons license, not allowing to use the materials in the context of for profit activities where else Wikiversity is shared under GNU Free Documentation license allowing to use all the content for any purpose, including in the context of for profit activities.



Finally the content itself, such as text, pictures or videos should be produced using Open Standards. In a tutorial dedicated to the production of OER, the OLCOS project extracted a list of Open standard reproduced below:

- for images: PNG, SVG, OpenEXR
- for audios: FLAC, Ogg Vorbis
- for videos: Ogg Theora, XVID
- for texts and documents: PDF (for documents), OpenDocument Format
- for Office Applications (for office documents and suites), LaTeX (a document markup language), TXT (an unformatted text format), HTML/XHTML (a markup language), XML (markup language)
- and others: DVI (a page description language), SQL (Structured Query Language), 7z (data compression format)

To learn more about Open Standard please consult the Wikipedia definition of [Open Format](#).

Additional resources:

- [Open Content Licensing \(OCL\) for Open Educational Resources by Professor Brian Fitzgerald](#)
- [OER:Choose a license tutorial - by OLCOS project](#)
- ["Open Education License Draft" By iterating toward openness Blog](#)
- [Open Format by Wikipedia](#)
- [Producing an OER tutorial - by OLCOS project](#)

## **Production of Open Educational Resources: Getting started**

Producing OER is very similar to the production of any pedagogical support. The producer needs a general knowledge about creating digital learning materials such as instructional designs and/or web-design. Producing OER means to apply this knowledge to the field of OER by respecting an model of Open production and distribution (Open licenses and standards).

Beginners will find plenty of free material accessible online about instructional design and how to develop digital learning materials.

The major difference within the field of OER, is the ability to use and remix available content. Remixing existing OER is being part of the philosophy of OER at a whole. Therefore any instructor may start designing a course or a lesson by finding the most relevant OER already available.

Doing so means being able to identify material and to find the right tools to create the new educational resource.

The OLCOS project provides a 60 minutes tutorial untitled "[PRODUCE & REMIX OER: author and modify](#)". This excellent tutorial is surely the best way to produce its first OER.

The OEDb also provides an interesting article introducing [80 tools for publishing OER](#),

In this field, the UNESCO/IIEP OER community has recently initiated a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) development resource for OER. The project emerged out to address the need for opportunities, collaboration, and support in developing and using OER. The idea was embraced by the community as a project with a potential to advance the OER movement by empowering users and creators from marginalized nations. The project is accessible on [the UNESCO/IIEP OER wiki space](#).

## **Diffusion of Open Educational Resources: Getting started**

Once you have produced a set of OER, your project will need to ensure the diffusion of the content. The volume of OER produced is a key issue in defining where and how to diffuse the resources produced.

If your project produces a low quantity of resources, you may wish to index your resources within existing content repositories and OER search engines. For getting started, this booklet provides a wide range of repositories and OER search engines accepting new resources. This solution will make your project benefit from a good visibility and high traffic already generated by most of OER content repositories and search engines. An OER hosted and distributed on an institutional portal not fully devoted to OER nor associated with an "Open" distribution model will be underexploited. Also it will not fully respect the philosophy of the movement based on content sharing and collaboration in between different actors.

If your project or institution produces a lot of OER, then building a new content repository might appear as a necessity, be useful and valuable for your organization. It will ensure a good accessibility of the material as



well as a good record keeping.

[EduCommons](#) is a good technical solution to build an OER content repository. It is a FOSS Content Management System fully dedicated to OERs, produced by the Center for Open and Sustainable Learning (COSL) widely used by OCW projects.

Any major Free and Open Source (FOS) Content Management System (CMS) might be also a good technical solution to build an OER content repository. Most of them allow to classify content resources per topic and key words, offer multilingual features as well as attractive Web 2.0 features enhancing the participation of the community and visitors. Such solutions allow users to rate and comment resources and to get involved in discussion forums and discussion lists when settled. Building an OER content repository should be always accompanied by a communication campaign including to index your portal, or even better, each OER within content repositories and OER Search engine.

For getting started and choosing the right Content Management System and mechanism of diffusion, the OEDb provides an interesting article introducing [80 tools for publishing OER](#), including FOS Learning an Content Management systems such as [Atutor](#), [EduCommons](#), [Eduforge](#), [ELGG](#), [LeMill](#) and more.

[WCET's EduTools](#) also provides independent reviews and side-by-side comparisons of main Course management Systems to assist decision-making in the e-learning community. Their Online Course Evaluation Project (OCEP) provides access and functionality to give users of this content an effective tool to search and compare course evaluations.

Moving forward, your project may wish to join an existing OER network such as the OCW consortium dedicated to Higher Education. Interested in starting an OpenCourseWare project at your institution? Then read [this article](#) published by COSL.

## **OER Content repositories, Search Engines and Projects**

### ***Concrete examples of Development projects related to OER***

Those examples are extracted from the OER dgCommunity highlights. They present Development projects using OER:

- [The People Open Access Education Initiative](#)
- [The Fahamu Open Course Ware](#)
- [Copyright, Copyleft and everything in between](#)

### ***OER content repositories***

Many new initiatives have been launched during the past five years in the field of OER. This short chapter provides an overview of main projects as a gateway for beginners in the field of OER.

#### Common Content

Common Content was set up by Jeff Kramer with cooperation from Creative Commons, and is currently maintained by volunteers. It shares Web content using Creative Commons licenses.

<http://www.commoncontent.org/>

#### Wikiversity

The Wikiversity is an ambitious project aiming to build a free online learning community more or less similar to "Open Universities" projects. Practitioners will find a set of Wikibook, Wikisource, Wikimedia Commons, Wiktionary and all other accessible Open Content based on wikimedia technology.

<http://en.wikiversity.org>

#### Connexions

Connexions is a unique web-based teaching and learning environment that provides free access to thousands of modular, interactive course

materials. Connexions supports multiple languages and enables rapid updating and re-use of educational materials. Users may share their knowledge, build courses, and collaborate with other authors.

<http://cnx.org/>

#### The OpenCourseWare Consortium (OCW Consortium)

The OpenCourseWare Consortium is a collaboration of more than 100 higher education institutions and associated organizations from around the world creating OER and using a shared model. The mission of the OpenCourseWare Consortium is to advance education and empower people worldwide through [opencourseware](#). It is known as the first, largest and most complete OER program and network in the field of higher education.

<http://www.ocwconsortium.org>

#### OER Commons

OER Commons is a free network of high-quality open teaching and learning materials. Created with and for educators, students, and learners, OER Commons provides a broad selection of open educational resources for K-12 and higher education enhanced using collaborative and social networking features such as tags, ratings, and reviews. OER Commons is created by [ISKME](#), a recognized leader in applying educational research to educational practice.

<http://www.oercommons.org/>

#### The Open Training Platform - UNESCO

The Open Training platform makes available training and capacity-building resources developed by a variety of stakeholders worldwide. The objective of this platform is to provide trainers and learners with the learning resources, and a space where they can share and use material.

<http://www.opentrainingplatform.org>

#### OpenCourse.org

OpenCourse.org hosts virtual communities developing, evaluating and using open, non-proprietary learning objects in their discipline. [Opencourse.org](#) is a free collaboration platform for educators, and is designed to facilitate teachers helping one another to use web technology

to teach better.

<http://www.OpenCourse.org>

#### Merlot

Merlot stands for Multimedia Educational Resources for Learning and Online Teaching. It is a free and open resource designed primarily for faculty and students of higher education. The service is developed and maintained since 1997 by the California State University Center for Distributed Learning (CSU-CDL). This Web site provides links to peer-reviewed online learning materials.

<http://www.merlot.org>

#### Carnegie Mellon Open Learning Initiative

Carnegie Mellon's Open Learning Initiative provides a collection of "cognitively informed," openly available and free online courses and course materials that enact instruction for an entire course in an online format. Through the OLI project, Carnegie Mellon is working to help the World Wide Web make good on its promise of widely accessible and effective online education.

<http://www.cmu.edu/oli/>

#### The Open Learn Initiative

The OpenLearn website aims at providing higher education for all, whoever and wherever you are. It offers online free learning material taken from Open University UK courses but it does not require visitor to become an Open University student. According to the project, by April 2008, 5,400 learning hours of content will be available online.

<http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/>

### ***OER search engines***

#### OERSearch: The Open Education Search Engine

ccLearn is working with the Hewlett Foundation and Google to build an "open education web-scale search", part of a larger effort to offer web users simple, overarching mechanisms for discovering OERs. This tool aims to direct search engine traffic to the incredible diversity of OER

repositories and communities.

<http://learn.creativecommons.org/projects/oearch>

#### OpenContentOnline

OpenContentOnline is a search engine which allows users to find OCW courses offered by MIT, UTAH, TUFTS, ADUNI and much more. The main strengths of this search engine are fast query processing and an intuitive user interface.

<http://www.opencontentonline.com/>

#### Curriki

The Global Education & Learning Community is a nonprofit dedicated to improving education by helping teachers, students and parents with universal access to free and Open Source Curricula. The organization aims at creating a world-class educational environment that is community developed and supported. Founded by Sun Microsystems in 2004, Curriki now operates as an independent nonprofit.

<http://www.curriki.org/>

### ***OER Projets and initiatives***

#### Commonwealth of Learning

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education. The Commonwealth of Learning has initiated some important OER projects such as [Wikieducator](#).

<http://www.col.org>

#### The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (WFHF) OER Initiative

The WFHF Education Program has initiated in 2002 a specific component called "Using Information Technology to Increase Access to High-Quality Educational Content". This component rapidly became known as the Open Educational Resources (OER) Initiative. From 2002 to the present the Hewlett Foundation has invested about \$68 million in the OER program granting projects such as the MIT OpenCourseWare, Connexions, Creative

Commons, Internet Archives, the OER dgCommunity and more.

<http://www.hewlett.org/Programs/Education/OER/>

#### IIEP's virtual institute

The IIEP's virtual institute drives various major initiatives in the field of OER such as the [Open Educational Resources \(OER\) Community](#), the [OER Community Wiki](#), and [the Virtual University and e-learning Web site](#). A Community of over 500 members from 90 countries discusses the important issues related to the promotion, development and use of OER on a regular basis.

#### COSL, the Center for Open and Sustainable Learning

The Center for Open and Sustainable Learning helps people access high quality learning opportunities. COSL develops and maintains [eduCommons](#), The OpenCourseWare Management System.

<http://oslo.usu.edu/>

#### OLCOS, the Open Learning Content Observatory Services

The Open Learning Content Observatory Services project, observes and promotes the production and sharing of Open Educational Resources, in particular, open digital educational content in Europe and beyond. The project produces a set of [OER tutorials](#).

<http://www.olcos.org/>

#### ccLearn - the education division of Creative Commons

ccLearn is dedicated to realizing the full potential of the Internet to support open learning and open educational resources (OER). Its main mission is to minimize barriers to sharing and reuse of educational materials — legal barriers, technical barriers, and social barriers.

<http://learn.creativecommons.org/>

#### Eduforge

Eduforge is an open access environment designed for the sharing of ideas, research outcomes, open content and open source software for education. Users are welcome to use the community resources or start your own project space. The Web site delivers plenty of relevant online resources for educators and practitioners.

<http://eduforge.org/>

#### China Open Resources for Education (CORE)

China Open Resources for Education (CORE) is a non-profit organization. Her mission is to promote closer interaction and open sharing of educational resources between Chinese and international universities such as the OCW network.

<http://www.core.org.cn>

#### WCET

The Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications is a membership-supported organization open to providers and users of educational technologies. Its mission is to promote and advance the effective use of technology in higher education. The [WCET's EduTools](#) provides independent reviews and comparisons of main Course management Systems.

<http://www.wcet.info>

### ***Additional resources extracted from the OER dgCommunity***

#### A Review of the Open Educational Resources (OER) Movement

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has just released a Review of the Open Educational Resources (OER) Movement untitled "A Review of the Open Educational Resources (OER) Movement: Achievement, Challenges and new Opportunities". This report examines The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's past investments in Open Educational Resources, the emerging impact and explores future opportunities. Central to the report is the idea of "The Brewing Perfect Storm" and the creation of an Open Participatory Learning Infrastructure. This report was written by Daniel E. Atkins, John Seely Brown and Allen L. Hammond. It is published under Creative Commons License. A PDF version of the document is available on the OERdrevs new Blog.

[http://www.oerders.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/03/a-review-of-the-open-educational-resources-oer-movement\\_final.pdf](http://www.oerders.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/03/a-review-of-the-open-educational-resources-oer-movement_final.pdf)

By the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP): OER glossary

This Wiki space maintained by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) shares an open glossary of terms that have been used in the IIEP community discussions on Open Educational Resources (OER). It is an interesting list of expressions for beginners not familiar with the "jargon" of Open Educational Resources, Free and Open Source Software and non traditional copyrights such as Creative Commons licenses.

[http://oerwiki.iiep-unesco.org/index.php?title=OER\\_glossary](http://oerwiki.iiep-unesco.org/index.php?title=OER_glossary)

### By the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP): OER useful resources

This list of links to OER initiatives, resources and tools was compiled following the first IIEP discussion forum on Open Educational Resources (24 October - 2 December 2005). It owes a considerable debt to Zaid Ali Alsagoff, who put together a first list of OER initiatives as an outcome of the forum. practitioners will find some useful lists of Web sites related to OERs including portals, tools, OER development and publishing initiatives, communities, journals and more. This Wiki space can be completed by visitors.

[http://oerwiki.iiep-unesco.org/index.php?title=OER\\_useful\\_resources](http://oerwiki.iiep-unesco.org/index.php?title=OER_useful_resources)

### 80 Open Education Resource (OER) Tools for Publishing and Development Initiatives

This very complete list of existing OER tools for publishing and development initiatives has been released by the Online Education Database (OEDb): "While some OERs include OpenCourseWare (OCW) or other educational materials, they may also offer the means to alter those courses through editing, adding to those courses through publication, and the ability to shape the tools that share those resources. Additionally, they may maintain forums or other platforms where individuals can collaborate on building educational tools and documentation and the reach for those materials. To that end, the list below — arranged in alphabetical order — includes 80 online resources that you can use to learn how to build or participate in a collaborative educational effort that focuses on publication and development of those materials. Although some choices focus solely on publication, development, or tools used to accomplish either effort, some provide multifaceted venues that offer communities a space to collaborate on one or all of these efforts. Collaborators can include institutions, colleges or universities, educators, students, or the general public." OEDb currently contains reviews of 1,004 programs from 86 accredited online colleges. Please read the full article and discover resources on Oedb's official Web site. Many Open Education Resources (OER) that have been introduced by governments, universities, and individuals within the past few years. OERs provide teaching and learning materials that are freely available and offered online for anyone to use. Whether you're an instructor, student, or self-learner, you have access to full courses, modules, syllabi, lectures, assignments, quizzes, activities, games, simulations, and tools to create these components.

<http://oedb.org/library/features/80-oer-tools>

### Open Educational Resources (OER) and dissemination of knowledge in developing countries

This article was contributed by David Steve Matthe. Why should anyone give away anything for free? When purchasing the educational resources for dissemination of knowledge in developing countries where there are many poor students the majority may not get education, and those who can afford are few. The open sharing of softwares, scientific articles and educational materials can only be available through the fees paid by a few students in urban areas, and is worse in rural areas. The apparatus for the laboratories in schools textbooks, etc., must be afforded. Increased costs and vulnerability, social inequality, and slower technical and scientific development are other retarding entities. Therefore, free sharing means broader and faster dissemination, and more people get involved in problem-solving, which means rapid improvement and faster technical and scientific development, and that free-sharing of software, scientific results and educational resources movements reinforces societal development and diminishes social inequality. For development of education in developing countries, free and open source software, open access, and open educational resources movements, are progressing and many get involved. Open sharing increases publicity, reputation and the pleasure of sharing peers. Software developers, educationists, and scientists, will not experience negative effects when they share their work openly. Members recommend knowledge and information resources to each other, including practical online tools and guidelines across key domains of expertise.

<http://topics.developmentgateway.org/openeducation/rc/ItemDetail.do~1087859>

### Why are individuals and institutions using and producing OER?

This article was written by Jan Hylén working at the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, and published by UNESCO's virtual university. This excellent paper introduces findings from a recent OECD study. Introductory remarks: "The first and most fundamental question anyone arguing for free and open sharing of software or content has to answer is – why? Why should anyone give away anything for free? What are the possible gains in doing that? Advocates of the Open Source Software (OSS), Open Access (OA) and Open Educational Resources (OER) movements of course have arguments in favour of their specific cause. But there are also general arguments that apply to all three. These can be divided into pull arguments, which list the gains that can be reached by open sharing of software, scientific articles and educational materials, and push arguments that registers the threats or negative effects that might appear if software developers, scientists and educationalists do not share their work openly. Starting with the push side, it is sometimes argued that, if universities do not support the open sharing of research results and educational materials, traditional academic values will be increasingly marginalised by market forces. The risk of a software monopoly if everyone is using Microsoft programmes, or a combined hardware and software monopoly by too many using Apple's iPod music

player and listening to iTunes, is often used as a reason to support the Open Source Software movement. The same is true regarding the risk of monopoly ownership and control of scientific literature, according to opponents of the large-scale, commercial scientific publishing model. The possibility for researchers to keep a seat at the table in decisions about the distribution of research results in the future is sometimes said to be at risk. Increased costs and vulnerability, increased social inequality and slower technical and scientific development are other concerns." Please read and download the full report on UNESCO's Virtual University Web site.

[http://www.unesco.org/iiep/virtualuniversity/forumsfiche.php?queryforumspages\\_id=27](http://www.unesco.org/iiep/virtualuniversity/forumsfiche.php?queryforumspages_id=27)

### Getting Started with reusability? An introduction to reusability for digital learning resources

This article, published by the Reusable Learning project, provides an interesting overview about the concept of "reusability" and knowledge transmission from the early age to today's modern societies to finally introduce reusability for digital learning resources and the systems that support them. From the introduction: "In the oral tradition stories and parables were passed from person to person and generation to generation. As they were told and retold they were updated, modified and fitted to new cultures and new contexts. In many cases, only parts of the old teachings found their way into new ones. This is the process of reuse and repurposing, and it has been going on since before the advent of the written word. Today, reuse is familiar to the educational world based on printed media. The educational marketplace overflows with text books, lesson plans, activity books, kits, and other materials designed specifically to be reused many times in many different places. The existence of an educational marketplace itself has contributed to improved access and better quality by providing distribution channels, creating competition and enabling the financial returns needed to invest significant resources in the development of good content." Learn more on the Reusable Learning project's Web site.

<http://www.reusablelearning.org/index.asp?id=15>

### Open educational resources and practices: a slide show with audio introducing OERs

This slide show was published on Flickr.com and produced by Leigh Blackall. It includes audio, pictures and an article exploring Open Educational Resources (OERs) and practices in a tertiary educational institution: "Listen to me attempting to talk my way through these slides at the WIAOC at 12 midnight GMT on May 18th." introduces Leigh Blackall. "In this article I take a look at what constitutes an open educational resource and consider the issues and benefits to an educational institution. An institution which is moving to participate in open educational resource development and adopt more open educational practices. There is a description of the initial steps being made by the Educational Development Centre at Otago Polytechnic - a tertiary education and vocational training institution in Southern New Zealand."

<http://flickr.com/photos/leighblackall/sets/72157600223371021>



This Booklet was produced and supported by [the OER dgCommunity](#) of the [Development Gateway Foundation](#). It is released under Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 and can be used remix and shared freely. Please feel free to contact, the Author [Thomas Bekkers](#) for any additional information, to add an url or to contribute content to this Booklet.