



The Challenge of OER to Academic Practice

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OER on the Horizon

One year from now...

*"The movement toward open content reflects a growing shift in the way academics ... are conceptualizing education to a view that is **more about the process of learning** than the information conveyed in their courses."*

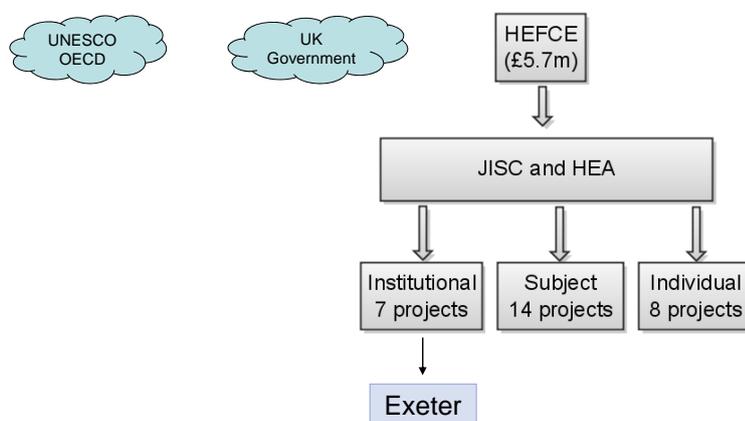
*"Information is everywhere; the challenge is to make effective use of it. As **customizable educational content** is made increasingly available for **free over the Internet**, students are learning not only the material, but also skills related to finding, evaluating, interpreting, and **repurposing** the resources they are studying in **partnership** with their teachers."*

(Educause Horizon Report, 2010)

Its time has come!



Open Educational Resources Programme



Project Focus = Supply-side Agenda

Tangible deliverables:

- Release 360 credits equivalent of materials
- Create an 'open' repository (Open Exeter)

And explore impacts:

- Embedding educational cultural changes
- Sustainability - life after the project

2 projects – tangibles + story

Why should Academics contribute to OER?

- Altruism: Contributing to the public good
- Raise personal profile: Get you and your work known
- Career enhancement: TRN; virtuous circle
- Share knowledge: Creating worldwide communities

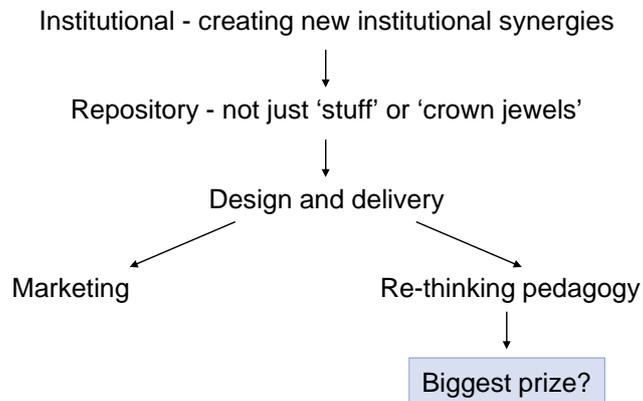
If no academic buy-in → no OER

Why should an Institution invest?

- Relevant strategies
 - Education
 - Research and Knowledge Transfer
 - Marketing and Internationalisation
 - Employability
- University reputation
- Student satisfaction

Academic buy-in must be underpinned by institutional mission

Potential Impacts



Impact upon Curriculum Design and Delivery

OER has potential to:

- support widespread transformations in L&T
- encourage sharing and reusing
- promote active, independent, student focused learning which can 'range' across disciplinary boundaries
- be integral component of curriculum design and delivery
- underpin research-informed learning and teaching

Utopia!

Challenges to Practice

- Staff awareness
- Reward and recognition
- IP issues
- Quality and reputation
- Confidence and trust
- Staff resources

"There needs to be much more consideration for lecturers workloads if Exeter is going to push this"

Time (and as proxy for other challenges)

Staff Awareness

Start with promoting *demand*-side, into staff development:

+ve

"I found some very useful courses which are relevant to my teaching"

"Reduces the uncertainty whether a particular material may be used legally"

-ve

"Unless I have invested in creating course content I feel I lack the authority to teach a course"

Initial sensitisation

Reward and Recognition

Focusing on the supply side:

+ve

"All I'm really interested in as a contributor is making my resources more freely available to other educators to use as they see fit - I think there is some value in my resources that I'm happy to see others take advantage of if they wish"

-ve

"Making this material available as OER is the equivalent of giving away research that would otherwise be patented (and hence could earn income) and would not be in the best interests of either the staff or the University"

"Spending time putting my work on to OER is not going to help me in my career at Exeter"

Need institutional policy incentives



IP Challenges

Quality

"Having reviewed some material ... [it] is so riddled with copyright sensitive images that there isn't going to be much left ... As a result it isn't going to resemble the polished diamond we hoped"

Coherence

"I am having some trouble, in that the IPR requirements mean very, very drastic changes are necessary to the existing material. I am concerned that academic credibility is being lost, because of the ferocious requirements of IPR."

Time

"I'm slightly disillusioned after wasting several hours over the last couple of weeks chasing permission to use a map only to be told no, and that was just one map"

Exeter taking 'risk averse' approach



Copyright a Perpetual Problem?

*Despite the numerous studies, reports and recommendations that have been produced over the past decade by JISC, HEFCE and others, attitudes towards intellectual property rights, and specifically copyright, remain an **inhibiting factor** in the adoption of innovative teaching and research strategies. This has been exacerbated by the increased importance attached to intellectual property rights in the digital environment and the resulting need to **pay more than lip service** to the concept of **legal compliance**.*

(Charlesworth *et al.*, 2007)

- Moving from 'complete' to 'representative' volume of material
- Not sustainable to 'convert' existing material

Loads of studies but are we making any headway?



Quality and Reputation

"An OER repository definitely does give an impression of the institution and the staff (team) that produces it"

(Philip *et al.*, 2008)

Different motivations lead to different outcomes:

- Formal (cf peer review journals)
 - Some resistance in-house
- Informal (e.g. community blog)

Materials will always reflect upon Exeter so quality must always be 'high'



Confidence and Trust

- Licence-in: non-exclusive, so author can use/licence material elsewhere
- Licence-out: concerns re CC 'derivative' option having their material mangled
- Challenge: move away from what you don't want to allow
- To: Realising the potential of liberal access

Trust of greater concern than copyright!

Support Issues

Concerns similar to old arguments re. VLE:

"We will have to invest massive amounts of resources in supporting teachers to deliver OER material"

"Noting the heavily resourced models such as MIT and the UK Open University's OpenLearn and even worse, the community driven Wikipedia, would it not be better to let them get on with it and merely promote a demand-led model?"

- So why bother?

But OER is marginal cost

Staff Development

- Essential - A substantial staff awareness programme
- OER must be seen as an integral part of scholarly endeavour
- Incorporate into accredited staff development programmes:
 - programmes for Associate and Fellowship status of the HEA
 - 'capture' all new staff

However:

"I have been advised by senior academics that we should not strive for teaching excellence if this undermines the delivery of grants and publications."

Problem transcends OER agenda

Provisional Ways Forward

Incremental steps to retain senior engagement:

1. Embed awareness into HEA-accredited courses
2. High quality exemplars per College
3. Allow some time for mature debate of issues
4. Institutionally embed supply agenda in design and delivery

Incrementally require more resources

Question

“OER projects will become another service that the public simply expects of every HEI , and each institution will find the will and the resource within itself to engage in these projects.”

“In the intervening years until that time comes, pilot open educational resource projects must navigate the highly contextual waters of sustainability.”

(Wiley, 2007)

Institutional motivations in alignment with academic motivations?