



Open eLearning Content Observatory Services

The OLCOS Roadmap 2012 for the further development of Open Educational Practices and Resources

Online Educa 2006, Berlin, November 30th, 2006

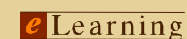
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- Brief project information
- Road mapping activity
- Selected results
 - Educational policies
 - Business models and institutional frameworks
 - New tools in the box
- Key observations



Project information



Open eLearning Content Observatory Services

- OLCOS is a Transversal Action funded by the European Commission under the eLearning Programme
- Function: A (virtual) observatory and information service
- Focus: Promotes the production, sharing and re-use of Open Educational Resources (OER) with special respect to open (e-) learning practices
- Duration: January 2006 – December 2007
- Project partners
 - European Centre for Media Competence, Germany
 - European Distance and E-Learning Network, Hungary
 - FernUniversitaet in Hagen, Germany
 - Mediamasteri Group, Finland
 - Open University of Catalonia, Spain
 - Salzburg Research Ltd., Austria = project co-ordinator

Project activities & products



Open eLearning Content Observatory Services

- (1) Road mapping to provide orientation & recommendations
 - OLCOS Roadmap 2012, will become available in January 2007
- (2) Web-based services
 - OER tutorials, examples of best practice, awareness videos
 - http://wikieducator.org/Open_Educational_Content
- (3) Co-operation with other projects and communities of practice
 - Consultation with other research and expert consultation activities
 - OECD – Centre for Educational Research and Innovation: OER project/survey http://www.oecd.org/document/20/0,2340,en_2649_35845581_35023444_1_1_1_1,00.html
 - UNESCO – International Institute for Educational Planning: Community of Interest in OER <http://oerwiki.iiep-unesco.org>
 - Exchange of experiences with leading projects that develop and provide access to OER
- (4) Dissemination of information and “OER evangelism” beyond established communities



(1) Objectives

- Road mapping to provide orientation in the emerging OER landscape
- Identify drivers/enablers and inhibitors of open educational practices and resources
- Provide a set of recommendations for decision makers – from political and institutional level to individual teachers and students!

(2) Scope – in comparison to OEC-CERI and UNESCO-IIEP activities

- (a) Longer time-horizon: 2012(+)
- (b) Broader than Higher Education, also including Secondary Education and Lifelong Learning in general
- (c) Beyond “courseware” of the currently typical variety:
 - Any kind of relevant “open content” repositories
 - Content that is shared making use of Social Software tools (e.g. Wikis, Weblogs, online content and bookmarks sharing, etc.)
 - RSS-feed channels with or without an educational label
 - Sharable Learning Designs based (e.g. IMS LD based courses)
 - Knowledge resources such as ontologies – arguably the most valuable OER that domains of knowledge and learning can share





- (1) Policy increasingly demands educational institutions to “change” and to “innovate”
 - Massive investment in ICT over the last 10 years, but little change in educational practices (teacher-centred “knowledge-transfer” model still dominates)
 - Concerns about non-alignment of educational institutions with demands of knowledge society
- (2) Importance of easy access to OER and online learning for Lifelong Learning agendas
 - Securing high-value jobs in knowledge-base industries, but also issues of inequalities, social inclusion, integration of migrants, ...
 - However, often e-coaches or “blended learning” will be required
- (3) The Bologna Process could become a (longer-term) driver for cross-boarder collaborative development and sharing of study material in Europe
 - Particularly in the context of Joint Programmes and Degrees



- (1) Healthy competition among leading institutions in providing free access to educational resources
 - Many OER initiatives started after the extensive media coverage for M.I.T.'s Open Courseware project; e.g. the international Open Courseware Consortium at present has over 100 members
 - Currently we see much provision of static “courseware” (in closed formats)
 - First movers in OER have gained much recognition, now it is about more than “being involved in OER”
- (2) Yet, business models in open educational resources are tricky
 - The right mix of income streams must be found – public or/and private funding, sponsorships, donations, fee based services...Growing competition on scarce funding resources (also within institutions)
 - Often lack of clear-cut regulations regarding IPR/copyrights for material that could be made available





- (3) In order to see researchers and educators excel in OER, academic and educational institutions will need to implement incentives / reward systems
- Greater value is often attached to research than to teaching, in particular, when it comes to academic promotion
 - Altruistic motivations or the possibility “to gain reputation” may not be strong enough drivers to invest the required time and effort to create OER
 - Reliable and significant incentives are the factor that could make or break OER initiatives
- (4) Repository initiatives will need to think more thoroughly about how to be useful for communities of practice
- This is of critical importance if OER initiatives want to grow based on user contributions and sharing of content among users



(1) Widespread tried and tested know-how in distributed open access repositories

- Allows repositories to become active information access providers
- Main technological approaches are
 - Open Archive Initiative approach of metadata harvesting (OAI-PMH); e.g. OpenDOAR lists 760 quality assured OA repositories (from an initial selection of 1000)
 - Peer-to-Peer & Simple Query Interface (SQI) approach; e.g. GLOBE (Global learning Objects Brokered Exchange) consortium: ARIADNE (Europe), Education.au / EdNA Online (Australia), LORNET (Canada), MERLOT (USA) and NIME (Japan)

(2) RSS feeds enrich educational portals and learners can directly subscribe to thematic content feeds – including podcasts [audio] and videocasts

- Students will also gain from feeds of non-governmental agencies, scientific organisations, business information services and individual consultants

(3) Licensing open content will become easier through plug-ins for widely used software packages and standardisation of licensing information for user

- For example, in June 2006, Microsoft and Creative Commons announced the release of an add-in for Microsoft Office





(4) Social Software tools and services empower learners to easily create and share content

- Tremendous use of Social Software tools and services (Weblogs, Wikis, social networking, content and bookmarks sharing, etc.) outside the educational sector.
- Even a smaller “spill-over” could have a considerable impact in terms of changes in educational practices
- There already exists some experimentation by individual teachers and educational projects

(5) New systems for creating, handling and sharing group-based Learning Designs are in the pipeline

- IMS Learning Design based applications are currently in prototype stage
- The somewhat simpler system of the LAMS Foundation (which is not based on IMS LD) has already been widely trialled

(6) Semantic applications offer new ways of accessing knowledge resources

- Allow for connecting teachers and students to the body of codified knowledge in certain domains (e.g. thesauri, classification systems, domain ontologies)
- Examples: concepts-based access, semantic filter & browser applications (e.g. Magpie [OU-UK], semantic Wikis [e.g. IkeWiki [Salzburg Research],...])



Key observations



Open eLearning Content Observatory Services

- Priority of open educational Practices rather than OE-Resources
- Focus on developing competences and skills for the knowledge society – students and (!) teachers
- The urgency of the Lifelong Learning agenda in Europe and beyond makes OER initiatives targeted at driving participation particularly welcome
- Need for much more know-how with respect to OER business models
- Important role of incentives/reward systems for institutional OER initiatives
- OER “latecomers” will need to convince through highly useful OER – active user communities are of critical importance
- Many new tools will allow for more open learning approaches and environments (in particular, Social Software tools and services)
- Think OER as an evolving Web of openly and easily accessible and reusable content, tools and services (often very different from typical current “courseware”)