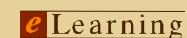# Open Educational Practices and Resources: OLCOS Roadmap 2012:
## Selected observations and recommendations

Education Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency
Cluster Meeting of eLearning and Minerva projects:
*Session: Content and Resources*
Brussels, March 5, 2007

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# Overview

- – Project basics, activities & products
- – Road mapping work
- – Why OER? – priority of open educational practices
- – Content and service paradigms
- – Selected OLCOS recommendations

# Project basics, activities & products

(1) OLCOS is a Transversal Action under the *e*Learning Programme

(2) Main goal: To promote the production, sharing and re-use of Open Educational Resources (OER) in Europe and beyond

(3) Project duration: January 2006 – December 2007

(4) Six partners, co-ord. Salzburg Research, EduMedia Group

(5) Core project activities
- Road mapping to provide orientation & recommendations
- Web-based services: OER tutorials and examples of best practice
- Co-operation with other projects and communities of practice
- Dissemination of information and "OER evangelism" beyond established communities

(6) Main Products
- OLCOS Roadmap 2012, Wiki-based "how-to" OER tutorials incl. examples of best practice, OER awareness material
- Websites:
  - http://www.olcos.org
  - http://wikieducator.org/Open_Educational_Content

OLCOS - Open eLearning Content Observatory Services

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**Open eLearning Content Observatory Services**

(1) The OLCOS roadmap, published in January 2007,

- provides orientation in the emerging OER landscape,
- identifies drivers/enablers and inhibitors of open educational practices and resources,
- provides a set of recommendations (25 recs.) for decision makers – from political and institutional level to individual teachers and students!
  - The roadmap (~150 pages) is available for download at http://www.olcos.org/english/roadmap/
- Required future work: Monitoring progress in open educational practices and resources

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## OLCOS road mapping /2

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## (2) Related activities

- **OECD – Centre for Educational Research and Innovation:**
  - OER survey on present situation in Higher Education, http://www.oecd.org/document/20/0,2340,en_2649_35845581_35023444_1_1_1_1,00.html
  - Survey leader Jan Hylén has participated in one OLCOS expert workshop
  - OLCOS has participated in one OECD expert meeting and provided written comments to the survey report
  - The OECD report will quote some OLCOS findings and recommendations
- **UNESCO – International Institute for Educational Planning, Virtual Institute:**
  - Community of Interest in OER (more than 600 members from 94 countries), http://oerwiki.iiep-unesco.org
  - Has run online forums on topics of the OECD survey with participants worldwide, final forum focused on results of the OECD survey
  - The Virtual Institute, Susan D'Antoni, will include a link to the OLCOS roadmap when disseminating the results of their final forum

# Why OER?

(1) High participation in Education and Lifelong Learning is critical in Europe's competition with other increasingly knowledge-based economies and societies

(2) Access to (digital) Open Educational Resources (OER) and ICT-enhanced learning is considered important to realise Lifelong Learning agenda

(3) OER comprise content for teaching and learning, software-based tools and services, and licenses that allow for open development and re-use of content, tools and services

(4) OLCOS' perspective: OER can make a difference, but it is important to also promote innovation and change in educational practices

(5) Delivering OER to the still dominant model of teacher-centred knowledge-transfer will have little effect on equipping teachers, students and workers with knowledge society competences and skills

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Two major content and service paradigms…

(1) Repositories that gather and provide access to educational content

(2) Social Software tools & services based creation and sharing of learning content

…two worlds:

(1) "Top down": Repository initiatives (e.g. national content portals) follow a strategy that tries to deliver "critical mass" of "learning objects" to teacher-centred education

(2) "Bottom up": Open sharing of own ideas, various content, lessons learned, etc. by teachers and students in an evolving Web of learning resources

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(1) At present most available content is static teaching and learning material in closed formats

(2) Lack of rich educational metadata

- For example, the International LOM survey found that elements from the Education category (e.g. age range, difficulty, learning time,..) are "surprisingly underutilized for metadata that is ostensibly and primarily educational" (Norm Friesen 2004, 4)

(3) Most repositories/portals lack knowledge tools

- It would be important to better connect teachers and students to the body of codified knowledge in certain domains – e.g. thesauri, classification systems, domain ontologies

- Ontologies are among the most valuable OER that domains of knowledge and learning can share, but development process is slow

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(4) Repositories often are "content silos" that need to be searched one by one through different search interfaces (some may also require registration)

- Open Archive Initiative approach of metadata harvesting (OAI-PMH) allows for enhanced discovery of, and access to, resources
  - The largest OAI service OAIster on March 1, 2007, had 10,802,809 metadata records from 746 contributors
- In the educational sector also the Peer-to-Peer & Simple Query Interface (SQI) approach may find a broader use
  - e.g. GLOBE (Global learning Objects Brokered Exchange) consortium: ARIADNE (Europe), Education.au / EdNA Online (Australia), LORNET (Canada), MERLOT (USA) and NIME (Japan)

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**(5) Institutional barriers to develop open content repositories**

- Lack of incentives & reward mechanisms for academic and other teachers to excel in producing and openly sharing of high-value teaching material

- Often lack of clear-cut regulations regarding IPR/copyrights for material that could be made available

- Often content incorporates some material from third parties under the assumption of copyright exceptions or "fair use" (copyright clearance is costly!)

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(6) Established and new repositories will need to think more thoroughly about how to be useful for communities of practice

- Providing access to content is not enough, users must be enabled to do and achieve something themselves
  - Example: Connexions platform (http://cnx.org) allows to create, manage and share (cc-by license) course modules, and offers excellent print-on-demand service
- This is of critical importance if repositories want to grow based on user contributions and sharing of content among users
- More importantly, this supports teachers and learners in developing competences and skills

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(1) Social Software tools & services allow for easy creation, sharing and re-use of content

- Tremendous use of Weblogs, Wikis, social networking, content and bookmarks sharing services – mainly outside the educational sector

- Content on the "Web 2.0" tends to be open content

- There already exists some experimentation by individual teachers, educational projects and institutions (e.g. use of Wikis for project-work, edu-bloggers,…)

- Combining Social Software tools and services (e.g. RSS feeds) allows teachers and students to create and manage their own content environment

- "e-learning 2.0" vs. institutional LMS and VLE

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(2) A stronger "spill-over" in the education sector could have a considerable impact on teaching and learning <u>practices</u>

- Shift from teacher-centred, "knowledge transfer" education to developing competences and skills for the knowledge society – students and teachers (!)

- Teachers as facilitators of learning processes – active, constructive and collaborative engagement of students

- Requires change in educational mind-set/culture, new professional understanding of teachers

- There exists little experience in assessing and crediting the results of Social Software based study work

**Open eLearning Content Observatory Services**

(1) From the (4) recommendations for educational policy makers and funding bodies

- Rec.3: Support the further development of widely used, state-of-the-art and sustainable open access repositories

(2) From the (4) recommendations for boards, directors and supervisors of educational institutions

- Rec.2: Promote sharing and reusing of OER and experiences from open educational practices

(3) From the (4) recommendations for teachers

- Rec.3: Make use of tools and services that support collaborative learning processes and learning communities

(4) From the (4) recommendations for students

- Rec.3: Develop an own ePortfolio and make accessible study results to others

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**Open eLearning Content Observatory Services**

(5) From the (5) recommendations for educational repositories

- Rec.1: Do not follow a top-down strategy of delivering learning objects, empower teachers and learners

- Rec.2: Support individual content creators and communities of practice through useful tools and services

(6) From the (4) recommendations for developers and implementers of e-learning tools & environments

- Rec. 3: Privilege institutional learning environments that support group-based, collaborative learning practices

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