

CALL FOR PAPERS

Exploring the Educational Potential of Open Educational Resources

Open Educational Resources (OER) are defined as the ‘... technology-enabled, open provision of educational resources for consultation, use and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes. They are typically made freely available over the Web or the Internet...’ (UNESCO, 2002).

The idea of providing free access to knowledge of virtually any subject area was taken on by high profile institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with the OpenCourse Ware (OCW) and the Open University UK with OpenLearn. All initiatives have received tremendous attention in higher education and have been inspiring other institutions to follow the OER movement, as evidenced by the growing membership of the OpenCourseWare Consortium.

Along with the increase of OER programmes there has also been an increase of research into the development, circulation and use of these resources. However, such research has so far focused on technical, legal, and political issues to the detriment of the core issue of education.

For example, the meaning of the term ‘educational’ in OER is open to question: ‘Does it mean that only materials produced with the intention of being used within formal educational settings should be included?’ (Hylén, 2006). In addition to that, conceptual work on the question of ‘openness’ in relation to pedagogy is also needed. Pioneering work has been undertaken in the OLCOS Roadmap 2012 (Geser, 2007) and in the UNESCO report quoted above, but it has been argued that we must also move to Open Educational Practices, i.e., that providing free access to content is only half the story. In a similar vein, Sclater (2011) claims that OER can demonstrate new form of course structure and pedagogy as they are able to free learners from traditional requirements (e.g., admission criteria).

With this special double issue of **E-Learning and Digital Media** we seek to investigate these claims and bridge this gap in research. We are inviting contributions that deal with the following aspects:

- Conceptual work that describes teaching and/or learning with OER
- Which educational constructs or theories are of importance in conceptualizing OER?
- Looking back in the history of education, which events have had similarities with OER and can thus be utilised to conceptualise OER today?
- Empirical work reporting on experiences with the sharing, re-using and repurposing of OER using a specific instructional or pedagogical approach such as case studies or best practices

References

Geser, G. (2007) *Open Educational Practices and Resources*. OLCOS Roadmap 2012. Salzburg Research.

Hylén, J. (2006) *Open Educational Resources: opportunities and challenges*. Paris: OECD.

Sclater, N. (2011) Open Educational Resources: motivations, logistics and sustainability, in *Content Management for E-Learning*, pp. 179-193. New York: Springer.

This special double issue will also include articles by invitation. Please signal intent by May 1 2011 by sending abstracts (300 words) to the editors:

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DEADLINE FOR FINAL TEXTS: September 30 2011