

2015

NIACE

Alistair Lockhart-Smith



Regional Analysis Report NIACE, United Kingdom

Open Educational Resources uptake in adult education



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

THE OERup! CONSORTIUM

 **MFG** Innovation Agency
Media and Creative Industries

 **UOC** Universitat Oberta
de Catalunya

 **NIACE** The National Voice
for Lifelong Learning


SOPHIA
R & I


Institutul Român de Educație a Adulților
Romanian Institute for Adult Education Timisoara



TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1. Methodology.....	4
2. OER for adult education in the regional/national context	5
3. Current implementation of OER in adult education in the regional context	8
3.1. Perception and attitudes	8
3.2. OER usage and practice	9
3.3. Availability and quality of OER	11
3.4. Barriers and drivers for the use of OER.....	12
3.5. Impact of OER use in adult education institutions.....	13
4. Recommendations for the development of the training package to support the use of OER for adult education stakeholders	15
4.1. Need for training and recommendations for training content	15
4.2. Format of the training and ways of organizing learning	16
5. Conclusions and further recommendations	17
Bibliography	18
Legal Notice.....	19
Annex I	20
A selection of relevant platforms and initiatives.....	20
Annex 2	25
Table 1: Interview contacts.....	25
Annex 3	26
Table 2: Roundtable participants.....	26

INTRODUCTION

The OERup! project takes up the need to promote and foster the successful implementation of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Educational Practices (OEP) in adult education in Europe in order to widen participation in Open Education. Addressed are adult learning institutions, and educational professionals as well as decision and policy makers across Europe with the objective to:

- Identify the status quo of OER use in adult learning
- Raise awareness of the value of OER and OEP
- Foster quality frameworks of OER and OEP
- Improve digital competences of educational professionals to ensure inclusive approaches to OER
- Set in motion a new culture of Open Education, hence a modern and innovative learning environment
- Support education institutions and professionals in developing and implementing sustainable OEP (including integrative business models)

This national report presents the data collected by the consortium during the need analysis phase led by the German partner MFG, on the use of OER in adult education.

The need analysis conducted within the OERup! project illustrates the status quo on the current use and development of OER in adult education. Also, the purpose of the need analysis was to map existing policies on OER at a national, regional and European level, as well as to identify training needs of adult education staff in relation to the use of OER in their teaching and educational practice.

All statements are based on the results of qualitative research. Whilst making no pretence to being an extensive scientific study, this report provides a useful overview of the current situation.

1. Methodology

Up to 6 semi-structured interviews were conducted with adult learning professionals, institutional decision makers and experts from adult education. The purpose of the interviews was to explore the current use and development of OER in the educational practice of the interviewees, as well as to identify their specific training needs in relation to OER development. In addition, a round table workshop was organized to explore the main drivers and barriers identified during the interviews, which also allowed participants to provide input for the development of the OERup! training package.

Semi-structured interviews in the United Kingdom:

Using the results from a stakeholder map and desk research, NIACE conducted seven telephone interviews in February 2015 with OER experts from a variety of organisations including ALT (Association for Learning Technology), JISC (Joint Information Systems Council), WEA (Workers' Educational Association), and Leicester City Council. An interview grid, designed by IREA and reviewed by all project partners, provided questions for:

- Institutional decision makers (managers or administrators); and
- Educational professionals (professor, teacher, curriculum designer, learning technology specialist, trainer, etc).

The interviews focussed on interviewee experiences on the implementation of OER in their organisation or educational practice; and identified training needs in the use of OER. All seven interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Roundtable in the United Kingdom:

The roundtable workshop took place virtually as an online webinar on April 2nd 2015. 9 relevant actors participated in the webinar. Represented were Leicester City Council, WEA, ALT, Loughborough College, and the University of the West of England. The focus of the discussion was "OER and OEP implementation in adult learning: drawbacks and drivers, needed measures and next steps". A recording of the roundtable webinar can be accessed by clicking on the following link:

<http://niace.adobeconnect.com/p81b7e1f2er/>.

2. OER for adult education in the regional/national context

In 2002 the term “open educational resources” was adopted by UNESCO, an organisation that has done much to promote OER as a driver for educational change across the globe. In 2012 an historic declaration by UNESCO, following a world-wide survey, called on all governments to make all educational materials freely available.

In the UK, the idea of OER was rapidly developed by communities of enthusiasts, but was given a considerable boost by HEFCE¹ in 2008 through a funded programme of development² managed by the Higher Education Academy (Academy) and JISC to promote the sharing and reuse of learning resources, and to provide a reputational benefit to UK HE through the promotion of high quality learning resources worldwide. Around £16 million over three phases supported more than 80 projects, many with multiple partners across a wide range of sectors. The institutions involved experienced significant benefits and the UK HE sector as a whole has experienced increased academic reputation as a result of the work undertaken by this programme. The pilot phase³ (April 2009 – April 2010) was designed to support institutions, consortia and individuals to release open educational resources for use and repurposing worldwide, by assisting the development of appropriate processes and policies to make this process an integral part of the learning material creation workflow.

Phase 2⁴ (August 2010 – August 2011) built upon and expanded the work of the pilot phase around the release of OER material, and commenced research and technical work which examined the discovery and use of OER – specifically by academics. This £5million programme was comprised of three activity areas, as follows:

- The release of OER.
- The use of OER.
- The discovery of OER.

Phase 3⁵ encompassed a number of activities which included:

- OER Phase 3 "Themes" projects: These projects investigated how OER approaches can work towards particular strategic, policy and societal goals (October 2011 – October 2012).

¹ Higher Education Funding Council for England

² The Higher Education Academy/JISC Open Educational Resources Programme (UKOER)

³ [OER Programme – Pilot Phase](#)

⁴ [OER Programme – Phase 2](#)

⁵ [OER Programme – Phase 3](#)

- UKOER rapid innovation projects: Small short technical projects funded from March to October 2012.
- Communications and dissemination work: a briefing paper for senior managers.
- Evaluation and Synthesis project: Findings from all three phases of UKOER are fully documented at the Evaluation and Synthesis wiki, managed by a team led from Glasgow Caledonian University.
- Support for institutional change: Including an institutional change academy project, support for embedding the findings from existing work and a set of projects developing materials for staff development regarding OER.

National government funding in the UK has helped education institutions, predominantly HE institutions, face significant challenges related to OER over the last few years. Funded initiatives have helped to support the development of policies that foster openness and access, adopting, enabling or encouraging in the creation, sharing and provision of educational resources; addressing organisational, cultural and pedagogical issues within an institution; and the development of well reasoned ICT strategies and clear e-learning policies that are able to deal with the opportunities (and threats) posed by the OER movement.

Institutions such as the University College London (UCL) and the University of Birmingham have been proactive in addressing many of these issues (cultural and pedagogical) – UCL made a commitment to make all of its research available online, and has released some excellent learning resources through externally funded OER projects (also as part of the Open Educational Resources Programme (UKOER)).

In 2010 the University of Birmingham and the London School of Economics worked collaboratively on the Academy and JISC funded DELILA⁶ project; the main aim of the project was to release a small sample of OERs to support embedding digital and information literacy education into institutional teacher training courses accredited by the Academy including Postgraduate Certificates and other continuing professional development (CPD) courses. One of the main barriers that the project found to sharing resources in information literacy was copyright that belonged to commercial database providers.

On a national level, the OER Wales Cymru Project⁷ showcases the best open education resources in Wales and promotes open educational practice across the Welsh HE sector in Wales. In September 2013, Wales confirmed its pioneering status in the world of OER by

⁶ <https://delilaopen.wordpress.com/project-co-pilot/>

⁷ <http://www.oerwales.ac.uk/>



becoming one of the first nations to fully embed the concept of 'Open Education' within a national strategy. The main aims and objectives of the project are to:

- Establish an Open Education Resources Portal.
- Establish a network of Open Education Practice Champions and Promote and Embed Open Educational Practice across the HE Sector.
- Launch an all Wales sMOOC (Short Massive Open Online Course) aimed at helping students to survive their first few weeks in University.
- Manage and co-ordinate the hosting of the international OER15 Conference in Wales in April 2015.

On both a national and international level the Open University (OU) is a world leader in the development of OERs in the field of HE, lifelong learning and AE. The OU now ensures it provides around 5% of its course materials as free open educational content every year; and over 4m learners every year start a learning journey with the OU's open accessible materials via the free learning platform OpenLearn⁸.

It is clear that OER in the AE and FE sectors in the UK is less pronounced than in HE however there are a number of organisations and projects that have adopted a cross-sector approach: Jorum, the UK's largest repository for discovering and sharing OER is inclusive of FE and skills; the Institute of Education provides Lifelong Learning OERs; and NIACE continues to explore how AE providers can make best use of a wide range of learning resources that are freely available over the internet, for adult learners. Some of these resources have been explicitly published as OERs, and they include traditional learning materials and also resources such as video, audio and software. To make best use of them teachers are adopting new practices to help them locate, adapt and adopt what they find.

The UK has some of the largest OER projects in the world, including the OU's 'Open Learn' as already mentioned; the UK also has an extensive commercial educational publishing sector; and along with the US and Canada, the UK is a large exporter of e-learning services. Despite this there is clearly a long way to go for the AE sector on the theme of OER, and the challenge remains to provide learning opportunities for all, especially disadvantaged groups who need them most.

⁸ <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/>

3. Current implementation of OER in adult education in the regional context

3.1. Perception and attitudes

Perceptions and attitudes in the UK show that OER is both useful and appropriate for educational practices within the sector, and the motivation is clear:

“Our motivation is to make our resources and expertise we have more easily available to the public, but also to our members.” – ALT

It is important that OERs remain open and available as this fits with the values of many AE institutions – *“that learning and accessibility to learning should be freely available to all, irrespective of the ability to pay.”* – Educational Professional

Organisations such as JISC do exactly that – they run a number of programmes to support the development of OERs, and to support provider organisations in the UK in utilising education in more effective ways, which is one of their core activities (and values).

JISC is also dedicated to running the National Repository of Open Educational Resources, a free service managed by Mimas⁹ that functions across the FE, skills and HE sectors in the UK. There is a clear perception however that the majority of resources are produced and distributed by the HE sector and make up the majority of content in the National Repository:

“I guess you could say at the moment that for further education and skills, about 15 percent of the resources come from the sector. The rest have been produced or uploaded in higher education... about 15 percent from further education, about 85 percent from higher education.” – JISC

For some organisations such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or voluntary sector organisations, OER is seen as being ‘the most useful model’ to their educational offer, especially when working with tight budgets and a commitment to collaboration and coproduction. As such it is important to build on what is already out there rather than having to ‘reinvent the wheel’.

“We recognise that those are the spaces people are going to anyway, so if we can use educational tools that link in to tools or software programmes that people are already aware of then that could have distinct advantages for us.” – WEA

⁹ <http://mimas.ac.uk/>

On a regional level, OER is seen as having a range of benefits both for staff and the local community:

- *“OER is an important way of supporting staff development in terms of knowledge and practice relating to copyright, and being able to model that practice in the classroom.*
- *OER is an excellent way for schools and staff to promote the work they are doing and share their resources.*
- *OER helps to fulfil commitments to equality of learning for everyone, both in local communities and further afield.*
- *OER helps in the development of digital literacy skills.”*

Leicester City Council

On a national level, recent debate in the UK has looked at how open education needs to move forward – the term ‘open educational resource’ was coined over a decade ago, so it is no surprise that such comments are appearing on social media or in webinars about how individuals and institutions have not changed.

Audrey Watters suggests that the term ‘open’ has lost its authentic roots¹⁰ having been hijacked by initiatives that are not considered to be open at all. ‘Open’ can mean so many different things to different people but the original underlying philosophy was always about altruism, authenticity and opportunity:

“If we believe in equality, if we believe in participatory democracy and participatory culture, if we believe in people and progressive social change, if we believe in sustainability in all its environmental and economic and psychological manifestations, then we need to do better than slap that adjective “open” onto our projects and act as though that’s sufficient.” – Watters, 2014

3.2. OER usage and practice

OER usage and practice is being undertaken in a variety of ways, for example at Leicester City Council OER work focuses on AE and school staff development as well as workforce development; it is also part of wider project work, in particular looking at digital literacy skills of school staff.

In other organisations such as the WEA, there are pockets of good practice however it is clear that there is an issue around OER being developed as part of a wider, strategic policy level:

¹⁰ <https://newsletter.alt.ac.uk/2015/02/oer-a-langusing-teenager/>

“I don’t know that we have one policy position on it at the moment. I think there is a willingness and recognition that we need to be looking at this... At the moment... it’s about individuals who have the skills, the interest, the motivation...” – WEA

As such the WEA is developing a much more coordinated approach to the development of OERs – being part of a learning pool community and having their own virtual learning environment (VLE) they are able to draw on existing models of OER to support the development of their own learning modules which reflect the WEA’s values and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment:

“We’re very keen to look at that kind of pedagogy as online learning in terms of collaboration and communication and critical thinking and active learning and how we can build that in as much as possible within what we develop. We’re at the point of doing both...” – WEA

JISC has a very clear approach to OER; they have recognised experts in the field of open resources such as David Kernohan who works on online learning, research data management, student innovation and open education. JISC also has strong links with OER centres across Europe, and a clear policy that states that any resources produced with JISC funding must be made available through OER. JISC encourages the hosting of OERs in the learning and skills sector by linking them through NCFE¹¹, and Curriculum Kitchen¹², an awarding body which identifies resources matched to particular qualifications. OERs are also being used and shared on Jorum¹³ (part of the Digital Resources division of JISC), a one-stop shop for OERs.

ALT builds in the idea of OER right from the start when they develop resources – most of what they do is openly licensed under Creative Commons licensing. ALT also has an open access repository. In terms of practice:

“We look at the metadata really carefully of things that we publish. We try and think about the longevity. So, if we’re putting it on the internet, openly, we always try and put it into our repository so that it has got a long-term and stable URL... We name everything and date it so that people who come across it know who has written it, when it was last updated. Hopefully the metadata makes it quite easy to find.” – ALT

So we can see that there is activity, usage and practice across the education sector within schools, FE, HE and with adult learners. Many of these individuals and institutions

¹¹ <http://www.ncfe.org.uk/>

¹² <http://www.curriculumkitchen.co.uk/>

¹³ <http://www.jorum.ac.uk/>

championing 'open' were supported by the UKOER programme of funding (2009-2012) led by JISC and the Academy, which was instrumental in transforming the sector. Activities have grown and expanded way beyond the funding, and a passionate community exists.

3.3. Availability and quality of OER

The availability and quality of OERs, on the whole, is variable:

“Some of the time you can come across a really well organised repository where you can find things... But most OERs can be more difficult to find because they’ve been written and published with a very specific audience in mind.” – ALT

Many OERs are transferable across different learning contexts and different sectors however they would have to be written with the intent that someone else will be able to use them out of context, and this poses a challenge of being able to know where to look and what to look for.

“OERs are not as available as they should be, but that’s partly because the awareness levels amongst teaching staff and learners is not as great as it should be. So I think they could be more accessible if people knew about them.” – Educational Professional

According to JISC, problems do not necessarily arise with the volume or availability of OERs, but instead organisational policies at a local level with regards to e-safety and e-security often unnecessarily block access to OERs, and this also comes back to the point of people being unclear with regards to licensing.

At a leadership and governance level there is a greater need for senior managers and those involved in the governance of providers involved in AE to be more aware of:

- a) What open educational resources are; and
- b) How they can best be used.

“It probably needs some form of explicit policy and I would guess that most adult education providers in the further and higher education sectors in the UK haven’t got those explicit policies and haven’t really explored the potential impact and value of OERs across the range of their operations.” – JISC

As has already been mentioned, many OERs have been written within an HE context which aren’t always appropriate (issues around transferability):

“Things like OpenLearn with the Open University might be more appropriate but it isn’t always tailored to what we need within our sector (AE).” – WEA

According to Leicester City Council, a big change in terms of the availability of OERs in AE has come in the form of MOOCs which have helped to raise the profile of OERs in the AE sector. This does not guarantee quality however, and on a local level Leicester City Council has looked at a number of basic issues with schools:

“So one of the things we’ve talked to schools about is... making sure that you haven’t got spelling mistakes in there, making sure things are factually correct, making sure that there aren’t any elements within your openly licensed work that you don’t have permission to openly license, and also making sure that you’re aware of accessibility checks in terms of electronic resources.” – Leicester City Council

The issue of quality is an important one – the WEA looks at access and equality issues and undertakes equality impact assessments in terms of language and images. The source and reputability of that source, and whether or not there are any references also help to discern the quality and credibility of a resource. Therefore the quality of OERs in the UK also varies, not just in content but in how they are sourced, referenced and labelled, and many people are unclear about what licensing actually involves.

3.4. Barriers and drivers for the use of OER

Many people lack the training, and thereby the confidence, to have the necessary skills to search for OERs as well as use OERs, and are unable to use the tools available to do so:

“They think I can use a website but I can’t – I don’t understand how a blog is different from a website or – and the same could apply to an authoring tool – I can use this authoring tool but I’ve never used that one so I’d never try to use that one.” – WEA

So there is a clear barrier, a sense of someone not being able to problem solve and critically evaluate a new tool and think how they might use that tool in a teaching capacity.

Other barriers can be more technical, for example being able to produce an OER that can sit across different platforms; how to create, share, and disseminate OERs and ensure that it builds on what is already out there rather than replicating what already exists; and not being able to create a personal learning network for example on an organisational level, so that everyone can benefit rather than working in silos.

JISC believes that one of the barriers perceived by many practitioners is not knowing where to look, which comes back to organisational strategy. OERs can be, potentially, a huge resource but a key driver to this is investment – organisations have to invest in the training and support needs of their staff in order to:

- a) Learn how to locate them most effectively; and

- b) Realise that OERs are rarely perfect in any given context or classroom situation, and that resource is needed to develop or adapt those resources.

JISC also has a slightly contrasting opinion to that of Leicester City Council with regards to MOOCs – JISC sees the use of MOOCs as a potential barrier:

“The idea that everything can be like a MOOC where people just plug in, or the Khan Academy, they plug into resources and take them away, I don’t think is a very useful model within adult community education.” – JISC

This is because the participative nature of adult community learning (ACL) requires a more personalised use of those resources to best meet the needs of the learner, the use and development of which is recorded so that they can be utilised in other local learning contexts. Therefore the strength of OERs is the ability for practitioners and organisations to be able to contextualise them in *“very specific ways for specific learner needs or specific community needs.” – JISC.*

There are also cultural barriers to using OERs – on the face of it the UK is exceptionally good at producing OERs, but AE institutions on the whole are not culturally aware, or have not adapted their strategies to incorporate them. The promotion and using of OERs is a first step that the sector needs to take which will involve a major cultural shift as to how OERs are currently implemented. This needs to be a top-down approach – the government does not do enough to incentivise open licensing and the use of OERs – it’s done often through publicly funded research, and there is a real reluctance to give up intellectual property rights of resources that are created at the highest level, and this ultimately impacts on organisations’ reluctance to using OERs more widely.

“The second barrier is that people can’t find them. Many OERs are stuck in institutional repositories which aren’t indexed by the web. I think if you need to know a repository in order to find an OER, you’re never going to find it.” – ALT

Therefore although there is a strong willingness to use OERs, there is a much stronger consensus to produce them, and this imbalance needs to be addressed.

3.5. Impact of OER use in adult education institutions

There are a number of significant impacts – many AE institutions, regardless of where they operate or what they do, waste an enormous amount of time and effort creating resources that are already available:

“They’re spending all their time from scratch instead of trying to refine or build on something that already exists.” – ALT

By adopting OER strategies AE institutions can:

- Save money.
- Utilise their resources more practically (rather than having to reinvent the wheel).
- Enhance their reputation by producing good OERs.
- Enhance/ support CPD and professional development of staff, particularly for individual trainers or smaller organisations with limited in-house provision.
- Grow their networks through the development, sharing and dissemination of OERs.

AE institutions need to realise the potential of using OERs for their learners and staff – because OERs have been produced by practitioners working with learners they are already appropriately contextualised, therefore the variety and quality of OERs available to the sector can play an integral role in the delivery of learning, and also access to learning. The impact of OERs can be further enhanced by ensuring that practitioners and learners *“have their specific needs identified and appropriate routes into repositories for OERs or search strategies identify resources that they can use, adapt, and pass on to the next collaborators.”* – JISC

The development and use of OERs can also have a positive impact on collaboration. Lancashire Adult and Community Learning Service worked to produce British Sign Language vocabulary at the Level 1 and Level 2 qualification stage for people who have hearing loss or are working with the deaf community. The project began with a small working group which went on to produce a complete set of vocabulary videos by working in partnership with their learners, staff, and other institutions to produce what has turned out to be a significant resource. The benefit and impact of this is clear as the group has continued to work together and expand the resources that they are producing in a self-sustaining way.

“In terms of collaborative also I think I’d say it’s not just collaborative within the organisation, it’s collaborative across networks.” – Leicester City Council

By developing collaborative approaches to online learning and module development, and embedding teaching, learning and assessment approaches, the knock-on effect for learners would be that the pedagogy of online learning (collaborative online learning theory, e-moderation and discussion boards) would be built in and therefore filter down to the learners themselves and impact on their (positive) experiences of blended and online learning. This would then have the potential of filtering out further afield, influencing other learners, teachers and organisations within the sector.

This is one of the great strengths of OER – an ability to connect communities and expertise to either develop practice on an individual level, or on a group level:

“...organisations, disciplines, can really bring fresh approaches and insight to those kinds of collaborations. So it is extremely valuable.” – Leicester City Council

4. Recommendations for the development of the training package to support the use of OER for adult education stakeholders

4.1. Need for training and recommendations for training content

- There is a need for training because staff have a wide range of skills (job roles and functions), abilities, confidence and competence around using technology to support learners, teaching, and school community development. Training is essential in keeping skills, knowledge and practice up to date as well as ensuring that institutions continue to evolve.
- As organisations begin to adopt OER strategies, there is a natural process to train staff who are naturally interested and motivated, as well as the most competent and confident in using OERs.
- What we know (UK perspective): an aging workforce; an aging tutor base; a student base that is older than the average student base for FE or HE. All of these factors contribute to the importance of sharing knowledge (intergenerational learning), but also present challenges in terms of how training is rolled out, how we get buy-in, and how we develop a workforce that sees this as an integral part of course development.
- There is a need for training because there is a need for culture change.
- Training ensures that staff continue to grow in confidence and capability so that they can continue to use, or start to use technology effectively.
- Training will help organisations to realise the potential of using OERs for their learners and staff.
- There is a strong consensus in the AE sector to use and produce OERs however this is hindered by the lack of training available.
- There is a need for training that explains how open licensing works and how to use it, as well as how to use OERs and successfully integrate them into current practices.
- Recommendation: How to use open licensing (Creative Commons).
- Recommendation: How to develop OERs, how to use OERs.
- Recommendation: How to embed OER practices.
- Recommendation: How to find OERs; how to search for OERs; how to evaluate OERs
- Recommendation: Making OERs accessible.
- Recommendation: Developing OER policies and strategies.
- Recommendation: How to quality check OERs – formatting, spelling, accessibility.

4.2. Format of the training and ways of organizing learning

- Blended and online learning approaches – many AE institutions have staff dispersed over a large geographical area.
- Utilisation of teleconferences and webinars that encourage participation, communication and collaboration.
- Online training combined with face-to-face support through peer mentoring.
- As a CPD approach.
- A blended approach that involves face-to-face and online. It may also involve group activities (between practitioners and learners).
- Important for staff to reflect on their (current) practice as a precursor to training.
- Training that supports staff development through self-directed learning and also local activity.
- Format should not be 100% online; this is because staff cohorts are likely to have an incredibly broad remit with regards to skills and confidence. A mix of electronic communications, face-to-face activities and events works well.
- Adopt a mentoring model or buddy system to encourage individuals to go online and participate in training.
- Training that is interactive, not just self-directed and individual learning.
- Collaborative group work and the use of collaborative tools.
- Link the training with current project work so that the training is project-based.
- Yammer¹⁴ is a useful tool for developing discussions.
- Padlet¹⁵ is a useful tool for ‘brainstorming’ activities.
- Use learning tools that are intuitive.
- Adopting a ‘communities of practice’ approach to encourage collaborative learning.
- Use a benchmarking tool/ survey in advance of any training to gauge individual learning needs.
- Organise learning in collaboration with people who have been involved in the production and use of OERs to help develop a whole range of skills, not just skills relating to OER.
- Organise learning that can be done practically.
- Organise learning through cross-sector participation.

¹⁴ <https://www.yammer.com/>

¹⁵ <https://padlet.com/>

5. Conclusions and further recommendations

UNESCO has recognised the value of OERs arguing that they ‘provide a strategic opportunity to improve the quality of education as well as facilitate policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building.’ This need analysis report adds further weight to that argument – there is no doubt as to the benefits (and positive impact) of the OER movement to the AE sector, as well as the enthusiasm and willingness of organisations and individuals to do more to support the development, production, use, and dissemination of OERs. What seems to be lacking is an incentive – a motivation to drive the movement forward.

This is in part due to a lack of knowledge across the sector and more needs to be done to promote OERs through information, advice and guidance (IAGs); a top-down approach is vital to ensure that the framework, policies and strategies are put in place to support OERs in the long-term (sustainability) at a national (government policy) and regional level (institutional policy); appropriate training needs to be developed that is inclusive of both staff and learners to ensure that people have the confidence and competencies to develop, use and embed OERs in their teaching and learning practices; collaboration and partnership working is vital to ensuring that good practice is shared and OERs are not duplicated; and above all OERs need to be accessible, not just in terms of format, style and presentation but also in terms of how they are stored and sourced.

There are now hundreds of OER repositories worldwide and the UK is no exception – as has already been highlighted in this report we are very good at producing OERs, but more needs to be done in terms of how we use OERs in a way that is proactive, collaborative, accessible and sustainable.

For further information on OERup! please check out our website: www.oerup.eu, and join our google+ community to exchange experience as well as information on relevant initiatives, studies, or platforms:

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/109090515452084003343#communities/109090515452084003343>.

Bibliography

- UKOER (2009-2012), *The Higher Education Academy/JISC Open Educational Resources Programme*. <http://bit.ly/1FRMOPv>
- *Open Educational Resources at UCL*. <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/oer>
- Project CoPILOT (2010), *Community of Practice for Information Literacy Online Teaching*. <http://bit.ly/19py8hg>
- Clark, A. *Community Learning – are we ready for Open Educational Practices to get best deal for adult learners?* NIACE, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1IDWdgJ>
- Rolfe, V. *OER: A languishing teenager?* University of the West of England, 2015. <http://bit.ly/1xkj3c9>
- Caledonian Academy (2012-2013), *Open Educational Resources in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: Research with the EC Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS)*. <http://bit.ly/1D6wmzo>
- JISC, *A guide to using open educational resources*. <http://bit.ly/1HX6RhV>
- Fleming, C. Massey, M. *Jorum Open Educational Resources (OER) Report*. Jorum, 2007. <http://bit.ly/19pz1Xd>
- Gruszczynska, A. *OER-related accessibility issues and their relevance to practices of repurposing/reuse*. SCORE Fellowship Final Report, 2012. <http://bit.ly/1FZwSy1>
- Armellini, A. et al. *Open, Transferable and Technology-enabled Educational Resources Project Final Report*. University of Leicester, 2010. <http://bit.ly/1HSbahI>
- Mossley, D. *Open Educational Resources and Open Education*. Higher Education Academy, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1D6z0Fx>

Legal Notice



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This work has been funded with support from the European Commission. It reflects the views only of the author, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Annex I

A selection of relevant platforms and initiatives

Jorum

Link: <http://www.jorum.ac.uk/>

Description: Jorum is the UK's largest repository for discovering and sharing Open Educational Resources for higher and further education and the Skills sector. With over 16,000 resources, it is often the first port of call for those who teach or have been inspired in the FE and HE and professional skills community to discover and share resources. Jorum forms part of the Learning, Teaching and Professional Skills team in [Mimas](#), part of the Digital Resources division of [Jisc](#). The word Jorum is of biblical origin and means a collecting (or drinking) bowl.

All the resources held within the Jorum repository have their own Creative Commons license as determined by the creator of the resource.

The Jorum website and its content (except for the resources shared by Jorum depositors) available at www.jorum.ac.uk are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

Jisc Open Educational Resources infoKit

Link: <https://openeducationalresources.pbworks.com/w/page/24836480/Home>

Description: This infokit includes information about the three year UK [Open Educational Resources Programme](#) (UKOER) (2009 – 2012) and offers links to a wide range of resources which describe the outcomes (lessons learned) and outputs (reports, guidance materials and toolkits) that emerged.

OER Impact Study

Link: <http://www.tall.ox.ac.uk/research/past/OERImpact.php>

Description: The OER Impact Study was a [JISC](#)-funded research project examining the impact of Open Educational Resources on teaching and learning in UK higher education. It was part of Phase 2 of the JISC/HE Academy Open Educational Resources Programme. The study was undertaken jointly by TALL and the [Learning Technologies Group](#) of Oxford University Computing Services. The principal aim of the study was to inform the academic community of the current impact of OER on teaching and learning from institutional, lecturer and student perspectives, by examining issues such as:

- The patterns of behaviour in the use and reuse of OER by lecturers and students
- The factors conducive to uptake and sustained practice in the use of OER, as well as some of the barriers
- The impact on the teaching and reputation of teaching staff and the effect on the student experience
- Programme and institutional level approaches to OER for teaching and learning

The Higher Education Academy: Open Educational Resources and Open Education Toolkit

Link: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/OER%20Toolkit_0.pdf

Description: This toolkit explores open educational resources (OER) and some aspects of open educational practice. This toolkit resource is designed for those new to teaching and those new to open approaches to resources who may be more generally experienced.

See also:

- [Learner attitudes to Open Educational Resources \(OERs\)](#)
- [Students' views on learning methods and Open Educational Resources in higher education](#)

Mimas

Link: <http://mimas.ac.uk/>

Description: Part of the Digital Resources Division at Jisc, Mimas is made up of experts in the organisation and dissemination of data. Mimas' purpose is to develop technology which makes information available to those who need it for education and research, whatever their field, in the way that works best for them.

- Mimas is made up of: systems architects, application and Web developers, data specialists, information professionals and archivists, academics, user-experience designers, researchers, geographers, social scientists, creative designers, marketing professionals and project managers.
- Mimas' central focus is the creation, development and maintenance of innovative technology to enable users to access and manipulate data as easily and flexibly as possible.
- Mimas' experts are consistently at the forefront of the innovation and development of new applications and technologies such as Augmented Reality and mobile learning, the opening up and the linking of data, and semantic and meaning-based search.

Open Educational Resources at The Open University

Link: <http://www.open.ac.uk/about/open-educational-resources/>

Description: The Open University (OU) is a world leader in the development of Open Educational Resources (OER). The OU now ensures it provides around 5% of its course materials as free open educational content every year. Over 4m learners every year start a learning journey with the OU's open accessible materials via [OpenLearn](#), the home of free learning from the OU.

See also:

- [Planning the OER landscape](#) (2011) – a paper that looks at options to “map” OER as they travel from institutional ideas to community use to next generation learning.

See also: [Creating open educational resources](#); a learning unit that introduces learners to the concepts of:

- open educational resources (OERs)
- issues involved in the creation, use and re-use, and pedagogy of OERs
- a range of tools and media to support learners in developing their own teaching and learning practices.

OER Research Hub

Link: <http://oerresearchhub.org/>

Description: OER Research Hub gathers research on the impact of open educational resources (OER) on learning and teaching practices. Evidence gathered is shared through mixed methods research including interviews, surveys, focus groups, critical incidence analysis, activity theory and analysis of learning design. Findings are likely to be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders in the education sector. In addition to producing a range of traditional research outputs, the OER Research Hub is in the process of releasing its data and research openly (CC-BY). The OER Research Hub is supported by the [William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#). The project is based at [The Open University's](#) (OU) [Institute of Educational Technology](#) and is the OU's flagship project for research into open education and OER.

OER Wales Cymru

Link: <http://www.oerwales.ac.uk/>

Description: This portal has been developed as part of the OER Wales Cymru Project to showcase the best Open Education Resources (OER) in Wales and promote Open Educational Practice (OEP) across the Welsh Higher Education Sector in Wales. Back in

September 2013, Wales confirmed its pioneering status in the world of OER by becoming one of the first nations to fully embed the concept of 'Open Education' within a national strategy. The [main aims and objectives of the project](#) are to:

- Establish an Open Education Resources Portal
- Establish a network of Open Education Practice Champions and Promote & Embed Open Educational Practice across the HE Sector
- Launch an all Wales sMOOC (Short Massive Open Online Course) aimed at helping students to survive their first few weeks in University.
- Manage and Co-ordinate the hosting of the international OER15 Conference in Wales in April 2015

United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO

Link: http://www.unesco.org.uk/open_educational_resources_%28oer%29

Description: The UK National Commission for UNESCO is using the UK's important position in this area to focus debate and research on issues of access, the sustainability of OER, the impact of OER on local content production, and the quality of OER content. The UK has an important role to play in the OER debate:

- the UK has some of the largest OER projects in the world, including Open University's '[Open Learn](#)'
- the UK also has an extensive commercial educational publishing sector
- along with the US and Canada, the UK is a large exporter of e-learning services

University of Leicester OER Repository

Link: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/projects/oer>

Description: This repository holds the University of Leicester's contribution to the wealth of Open Educational Resources (OERs) already available via the Internet. All OERs in this repository are created under an Attribution / Non-Commercial / Share Alike (BY-NC-SA) [Creative Commons licence](#).

University College London (UCL)

Link: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/teaching_tools/oer

Description: UCL is already committed to making all its research available online on [UCL Discovery](#) and has released some excellent learning resources through [OER projects](#). With new supporting technologies on the horizon and national funding for UKOER, the potential is huge. See also:

- [UCL on iTunes U](#)
- [UCLTV on YouTube](#)

HumBox

Link: <http://humbox.ac.uk/>

Description: The HumBox website was created by the HumBox project. This project was part of a wider Open Educational Resources initiative funded by the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) and the HEA, to showcase UK Higher Education by encouraging teachers within HE institutions to publish excellent teaching and learning resources openly on the web. The HumBox project focused on the Humanities and was a collaboration between four Humanities HEA Subject Centres (LLAS, English, History and Philosophical and Religious Studies), and at least twelve different institutions across the country. It ran from April 2009 to April 2010.

Language Box

Link: <http://languagebox.ac.uk/>

Description: The LanguageBox is a place where students and teachers of languages can publish and share their learning materials, resources and links on the web. You can use the resources directly, or create new activities to put your own twist on things. The LanguageBox was initially funded by JISC and designed, built and run by the Faroes project team at the University of Southampton and the University of Portsmouth. It is currently managed by the LLAS Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, at the University of Southampton. This public website is for anyone who teaches languages and who wants somewhere to host and manage their materials, it's also for language students that want to record and share good stuff that they've found. It is free for everybody to use.

Xpert

Link: <http://xpert.nottingham.ac.uk/>

Description: XPERT (Xerte Public E-learning ReposiTory) project is a JISC funded rapid innovation project (summer 2009) to explore the potential of delivering and supporting a distributed repository of e-learning resources created and seamlessly published through the open source e-learning development tool called Xerte Online Toolkits. The aim of XPERT is to progress the vision of a distributed architecture of e-learning resources for sharing and re-use. Learners and educators can use XPERT to search a growing database of open learning resources suitable for students at all levels of study in a wide range of different subjects. Creators of learning resources can also contribute to XPERT via RSS feeds created

seamlessly through local installations of Xerte Online Toolkits. Xpert has been fully integrated into Xerte Online Toolkits, an open source content authoring tool from The University of Nottingham.

Annex 2

Table 1: Interview contacts

Name	Role	Organisation	Date
Dr Maren Deepwell	Chief Executive	ALT (Association for Learning Technology)	09/02/15
Bob Harrison	Education Adviser at Toshiba Information Systems (UK); Chair of the Teaching Schools New Technology Advisory Board; member of Educational Technology Action Group (ETAG); NIACE Board Member; member of UFI charitable trust	N/A	09/02/15
Nigel Ecclesfield	Head of change implementation support programmes – further education and skills	Jisc	10/02/15
Jan Ball	Regional Education Manager	WEA	11/02/15
Josie Fraser	ICT Strategy Lead (Children's Capital)	Leicester City Council	11/02/15
Andria Birch	East Midlands Projects Development Manager and ACLS and WLL Organiser	WEA	18/02/15
Greg Coyne	Education Director (Quality) and lead Director for the North East and North West	WEA	20/02/15

Annex 3

Table 2: Roundtable participants

Name	Role	Organisation
Alistair Lockhart-Smith	Project Officer	NIACE
Susan Easton	Head of Digital Learning	NIACE
Kevin Campbell-Wright	Project Officer	NIACE
Josie Fraser	ICT Strategy Lead (Children's Capital)	Leicester City Council
Andria Birch	East Midlands Projects Development Manager and ACLS and WLL Organiser	WEA
Terry Loane	Secretary	ALT
Rachel Challen	eLearning Manager	Loughborough College
Dr Maren Deepwell	Chief Executive	ALT
Dr Vivien Rolfe	Associate Head of Department, Biological, Biomedical and Analytical Sciences; expert in OER	University of the West of England

For further information on OERup! please check out our website: www.oerup.eu, and join our google+ community to exchange experience as well as information on relevant initiatives, studies, or platforms:

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/109090515452084003343#communities/109090515452084003343>