Models for
Sustainable Open Educational Resources

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OERs…

- Intended to be open, shared

- Leverage value of research

- Expose it to widest audience

- Maximize impact of investment

Resources…

- Includes courses, content, courseware, learning objects

- Not just learning materials, but aids, supports, etc.

- Not just digital, include people, various media, programs, collaborations, partnerships…

Sustainable…

- Costs exist and may be significant

- Is measured from *provider* perspective… but providers vary

- More than just cost – we need to consider usability, durability, accessibility, effectiveness

- Alternate objectives: free as in freedom

Open…

- vs. commercial resources? No…

- Implies no cost to consumers

- Includes not only access, but reuse, even modification

- Still: does not necessarily mean without constraints

Funding Models (1)

Note how 'sustainable' varies

- Endowment (eg., Stanford E of P)

- Membershio (eg. Sakai)

- Donations (eg. Wikipedia, Apache)

- Conversion (eg. MySQL, SuSe)

Funding Models (2)

- **Contributor Pay (eg. PLoS)**

- **Sponsorship (eg., Stanford iTunes)**

- **Institutional (eg., OCW)**

- **Government (eg., SchoolNet)**

- **Partnerships (eg., MUN and Brazilian university)**

Technical

- Driven by financial, other considerations, eg. Learning objects

- 'Free Use' vs 'Adapt and Localize'

- Access and usability – eg., browse, search, data-mining

- Impact on 'open' – eg., federations

Content Models

- 'Sustainable' often means 'localizable' and tantemount to 'reusable'

- Hence, requires integration – which in turn requires semantic similarity

- Questions of licensing, etc.

Provider / Consumer

- Content may reflect values of the provider – cultural imperialism

- Shift in emphasis toward collaborative development

- Sharing in all directions, north and south

- Hence, need to think of OERs with respect to the community that uses them

Staffing

- Traditional: hiring of professional staff to design and produce OERs

- Question of cost, use of volunteers

- This raises the question of motives (and again changes 'sustainable')

- Non-financial incentives

Volunteer Organization

- Community model – emphasis on individual members (eg. OSS)

- Emergent model – emphasis on process (eg., Slashdot, eBay)

- Producer-consumer model vs co-producer moder – Web 2.0

Workflow

- **Traditional – design, use, evaluation**

- **Quality: peer review? MERLOT**

- **Rethink the idea of 'producing'**

- **Decentralize, disaggregate**

- **The 'use' of a resource constitutes the 'production' of a new resource**

Sustainable OERs…

- Content only the beginning

- Consideration of the community essential

- Entails not just a mechanism but a *model* of production, use, distribution

- Existing structures (centralized, financially oriented, hierarchical) are often *barriers* to OERs

- We feel this in our communities

Barriers…

- Who gets funded (indiv. vs inst.)
- Scale of funding (large vs. small)
- Type of project (producer, centralized)
- Overhead (eg., licensing)
- Justification, quality (= overhead)
- Narrow view of 'sustainable' (= money, = commercial?)
- Access / control

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