

OER in *sustainable* Perspective




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What is an Open Educational Resource?

at a minimum,
no cost to the
consumer or
user of the
resource

- 
- fees
 - subscriptions
 - tuitions
 - registrations
 - obligations
 - etc.

OER

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graph TD; OER[OER] --> Freedoms[Freedom to...]; OER --> Conditions[Conditions?]; Conditions --> Scarcity[Matter more in conditions of scarcity, not abundance];
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Freedom to

- access
- copy
- modify
- redistribute

Foote 2005, Doyle 2005

Conditions?

Attribution

Share-Alike

Non-commercial

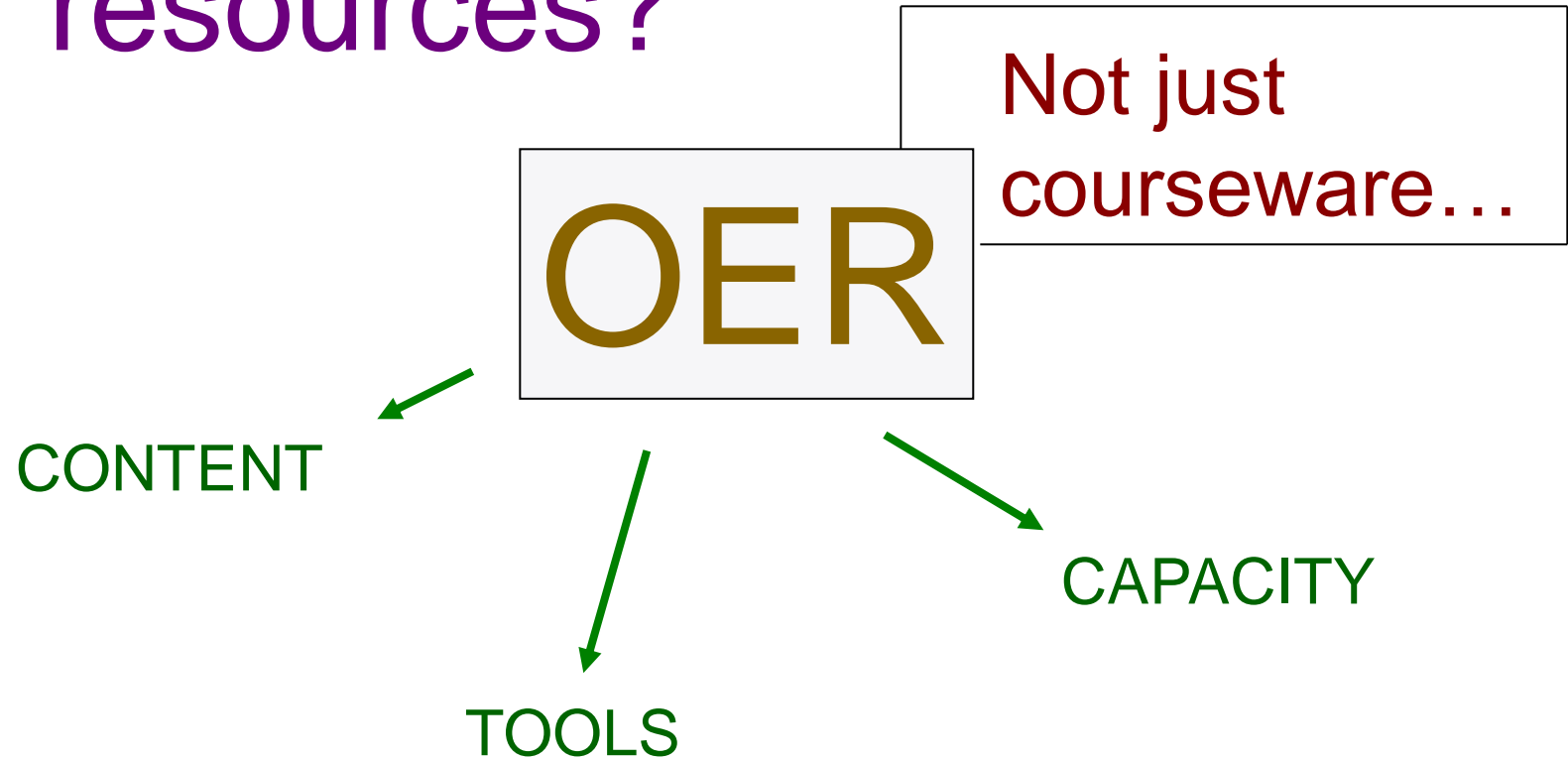
No-modify

Educational

Other?

Matter more in conditions
of scarcity, not abundance

What resources?



What is Sustainability?

Sustainable...

- Costs exist and may be significant
- Sustainability is measured from *provider* perspective... but providers vary
 - are there models for *cheaper* providers?

More than just cost...

we need to consider:

- **usability**
 - **durability**
 - **accessibility**
 - **effectiveness**
- Alternate objective: free as in freedom**

Funding Models

Numerous funding models...

these vary mostly by *source*

but models have other implications

who authors (whose point of view)?

who controls (funds, resources)

who distributes?

Endowment Model

- Single large grant
- Managed by fund-holder
- Funding via interest

Eg. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

\$US 3 to 4 million fund
\$190,000 budget

Membership Model

- Organizations join consortium
- Members pay fees
- Projects managed collectively

Eg. Sakai

Eg. MERLOT

Eg. OCW Consortium

Donations Model

- Donations solicited from public
- May involve project membership
(by individuals)
- Project managed by a board

Eg. Wikipedia foundation
Apache foundation

Conversion Model

"In the Conversion model, you give something away for free and then convert the consumer of the freebie to a paying customer."

Sterne and Herring (2005)

Contributor Pay

- Creators of resources pay for 'publication'
- Resources are managed by the publisher

charges for this process will be met by funding bodies, such as the Wellcome Trust - 1% of their annual spend.

Eg. Public Library of Science

But also

Think about YouTube, Blogger, Flickr (pro)

Sponsorship Model

- The 'public television' model
- Resources are 'sponsored' by donors
- Usually in return for sponsorship spot



Advertising....?

Examples

MIT iCampus Outreach Initiative
(Microsoft) (CORE, 2005)

Stanford on iTunes project (Apple)

Institutional Model

Examples: OpenCourseWare
Open Knowledge Initiative
OPLC

All from MIT

- Sponsoring organization pays costs
- Considered part of its 'mandate'

It usually manages it, too... and there may be side-benefits

Government Funding Model

- Government funds
- Usually managed by arms-length board (but not always)
- Intended to serve government objectives...

Examples

OLPC (again)

Canada SchoolNet

Universities, colleges, schools

Content Models

The type of content produced is heavily influenced by the funder

- universities produce courses
- governments produce institutions
- publishers produce books, journals

What would the recipients produce?

Content Models

**‘Sustainable’ often means
‘localizable’ and tantemount to
‘reusable’**

so people can meet their own needs

What you produce might not mean the same thing to the people reading it....

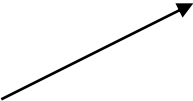
Not merely an issue of culture - also one of semantics

Rethinking the Provider / Consumer relationship

- Content may reflect values of the provider
- cultural imperialism

We need to think of OERs from
the perspective of the user...
and the user's community

Not just a needs assessment



Because you
always find
what you're
looking for

Staffing

Traditional Model

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 model – Web 2.0

-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***

**We need not just a mechanism but
a *model* of production, use, distribution**

Existing structures

- centralized management, funding**
- hierarchical, 'outcomes'**

**are often *barriers* to OERs - we feel this in
our communities**

Barriers

Most of the barriers to the sustainability of OERs have nothing to do with money

There are *billions* of free resources out there

billions

The problem is control...

... and ownership

Who gets funded

- individual vs institution**
- first vs third world**

Type of project

producer focused ?

(eg. Requires Windows, English)

Centralized

eg. 'we decide, you follow'

Can 'grassroots' initiatives get funded?

Overhead

What is the cost of 'free' content?

- licenses that expire
- technology that needs service
- power costs

Justification, quality

- are recipients required to 'report'?
- must projects demonstrate 'outcomes'?

These are not simply overhead
but they speak directly to
the issue of control

Whose project is it?

The New Model

- Adobe: “we want to be the toolmaker”
- Google: GEAR, open source tools

OERs today are about giving
people the means to create

And then stepping out of the way

Flickr Facebook YouTube
Blogger MySpace Yahoo-
Groups Revver Writely
Wikipedia LiveJournal
WordPress Drupal PHP

OECD Report...

‘Giving Knowledge for Free’?

So long as we think of OERs as charity...
as something we create
and that we *give* to the indigent
OERs will never be sustainable

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