H800_1: In situ editing: Repurposing open educational content

Introduction

Nowadays the internet is increasingly populated with educational websites that offer materials for use and re-use. These materials are called open educational resources (OER, also known as ‘open content’) and are resources such as text, graphics, audio or video, made available free of charge. They are usually produced by educational institutions and published online to the general public for immediate use, or for repurposing according to the users’ needs. OER can also be created by individuals, so the production of OER is not exclusive to educational institutions although largely dominated by them.

In this unit you will look at some institutional OER initiatives, such as MIT’s open courseware, Carnegie Mellon’s Open Learning Initiative and the Open University’s OpenLearn. You will gain an insight into how different OER initiatives design and present content for their audiences.

You will also get the opportunity to repurpose a small amount of OER from the OpenLearn website. You will try to identify the appropriate audience for the material, and repurpose it to fit the needs of that audience. In this unit you will also have the chance to apply your learning design knowledge to think of the best ways in which to repurpose OER to meet the needs of specific audiences.

Learning outcomes

Once you have completed H800_1 you will have a better knowledge and understanding of:

- the ‘choices that practitioners make about ways of applying technologies for a variety of learners across the globe in education, training and professional development’ — the OER websites you visited present different learning designs and tools;
- ‘a range of conventional and innovative technologies, drawing on your own experience and the experience of other students and professionals in technology-enhanced learning’ — you will be able to repurpose materials on OpenLearn by using the in situ editing tool and OpenLearn technologies such as FM and Compendium.

1 In situ editing: repurposing open educational resources

1.1 An introduction to OER

Activity 1:

About half an hour
The 'OER Roadmap' publication (Geser, 2007) is an essential information guide about OER for individuals and institutions interested in providing or using open content.

As you read through the material in this section, you may want to take down some notes for yourself.

- Read the introduction to the OLCOS report (pp. 12–13).
- Read sections 3.0–3.2 (pp. 20–24). Think about, and make notes on, the ways in which OER could be useful for different types of users.
- Read the section 'Creative Commons licensing is firmly established and increasingly used' (pp. 58–60). Reflect and make notes on the advantages of using an open licence to provide and share content.

View document

1.2 Exploring OER

The offer of open educational resources is becoming increasingly popular among higher education institutions worldwide. It is a way to widen access to educational material to a variety of audiences with diverse interests.

In this activity we would like you to visit the websites of three OER initiatives. You will notice that the sites vary in format, in what they offer and in how they expect the user to engage with their materials.

Activity 2

About 2 hours

Please visit the following initiatives and reflect on their differences in purpose, content design and the technological tools available for the learner.

You might wish to take a few notes for your personal use. To open the link in a new window, hold down ctrl and click.

1. MIT Open Courseware (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA): MIT was the first institution to offer OER. It presented the first pilot website in 2002 with 50 courses, and now offers about 1800 courses with free lecture notes, tests and videos. The material may not reflect the entire content of the course. It is a publication of the course materials that support the dynamic classroom activities of the MIT courses.

2. Open Learning Initiative (OLI, Carnegie Mellon University, USA): The OLI project aims to widen access to online education. Its courses are based on an instructional design grounded in cognitive theory. The website offers assessment and evaluation opportunities for the learner and encourages the building of a community of use.

3. LabSpace on OpenLearn (The Open University, UK): OpenLearn is a repository of educational materials that can be used and repurposed in different ways, with or without the use of learning design tools. Repurposing OER allows the use of existing educational materials in different contexts. The OpenLearn initiative offers access to more than 6000 study hours of learning content, corresponding to courses in twelve subject areas, including study support material. Any individual who has access to the internet can use the OpenLearn materials in different ways: by studying them, using them with other learners or repurposing them.

Remember that studying with OER on public websites means...
studying in an informal way. Usually no qualification is attached to this mode of study unless otherwise stated, in which case a fee for sitting an exam and getting a qualification may apply.

3. Repurposing content on OpenLearn LabSpace

3.1 Preparation

In this section, you will be given the opportunity to repurpose some course material. You will be able to select your own material for an audience of your choice. To help you with this task you will be directed to the OpenLearn LabSpace website, and shown how to find material, work on it and then upload it to the site.

When repurposing educational materials you are trying to make them accessible to your audience, with relevant and contextualised information that suits their needs. You could delete part of the content and write a new section, for example, or just change a few words and include new audiovisual resources.

Remember, the amount of changes you make in the content is up to you and can range from minor to major changes. The most important thing is to keep the following issues in mind:

- why you are repurposing the content;
- who your audience is;
- why you think this audience would use this material;
- the learning outcomes of the material;
- anticipated repurpose time.

Keeping a focus on these will ensure that you make appropriate learning design choices.

3.2 About OpenLearn's LabSpace

You will soon be downloading and repurposing educational content from OpenLearn's LabSpace.

OpenLearn encourages the sharing and re-using of educational resources. LabSpace is a community-led environment which fosters the concept of sharing and reusing educational resources. It is intended for educational and professional practitioners, and more adventurous learners, and includes all the materials you’ll find in LearningSpace, along with extra materials from courses no longer taught at The Open University.

Content is published under a Creative Commons license, which means that users have permission to download, amend, reuse and share the material with anyone. For instance, you might want to translate content, add a new activity or update some of the older course materials with the latest thinking.

In repurposing material within LabSpace you, as a user, have some responsibilities.

- You need to attribute The Open University as the source of the educational material.
- Any changes you make to the content should be done so under the same Creative Commons licence.
- You must not use the content commercially (although you are able to use it in a course for which you charge an admission fee).

You are also able to publish your own educational content in LabSpace. By doing so, you will be contributing to a growing library of free online materials for higher education.
3.3 Example

To help you to repurpose your content in situ, we have chosen some sample content and we will show you how to change it and re-upload it to the OpenLearn LabSpace site. All your changes can be made with the in situ editing tool available on LabSpace.

- Go to OpenLearn LabSpace (http://labspace.open.ac.uk/).

- Under the ‘Browse’ menu on the right-hand side of the screen, select ‘View all units’.

- Scroll down to ‘All Units in Health and Social Care’.
● Click on 'Alcohol and human health (SDK125_2_8.6)'.

● In the 'Versions' menu on the left-hand side of the screen, select 'Make a copy for revising'. The copy may take a while to load.
The system will ask if you want to create a forum for your unit. By selecting this option you will need to take responsibility for the forum and moderating it. Do not select this option in this case.

You should now see a new version of the unit. Click on the 'Turn editing on' button, which is located at the top right of the page.
You will now be able to edit the content of the unit. By scrolling the mouse over the symbols, you will be able to see what each of them allows you to do. For example, scroll down to the 'Introduction'. There are six icons in a row. If you roll your mouse over the third icon, a small box will appear with the word 'update' in it. This means that, if you select this icon, you can change the title of the unit and the text itself.

Imagine that we have asked you to read through the unit, in particular Section 1.1 'The Biological Effects of Ethanol' and Section 1.2 'Hangovers'. Choose one of these sections to work on. Changing the text as you wish, then scroll down and select either 'Add new minor revision?' or 'Add new major revision?', depending on the extent of the revisions you have made. Also insert a short description of your changes. Then select 'Save and return to course'.
Your new revised text will appear in your unit. Use this system to make all the changes you need in the unit and then select the 'Turn editing off' button. Your new revised unit will be displayed as normal and it will show a version number. You will find this in the breadcrumb trail at the top of the screen and in the 'Versions' menu on the unit home page. This indicates that it is a user revision (e.g. 2.0, 2.1, 2.2). If you want to learn how to change other features of your unit you can go to the 'Quickstart' guide for further information. This is located under the 'Versions' menu on the left-hand side of the screen.

After publishing your new OpenLearn material, you may want to share your experience with other OpenLearn users. You can do this by using the discussion forums provided on the OpenLearn site. You may wish to discuss:

1. your repurposing goals;
2. how you found the experience of repurposing a unit on LabSpace.

3.4 Repurposing in action

Activity 3

About three hours

This activity will guide you though repurposing a small amount of
material using the tools available on LabSpace. Please follow the steps listed below.

**Step A Register**

You are the only person who can make changes in your unit. That is why you need to be a registered user on the OpenLearn website to make use of this feature. It is free to register and you only need to provide your email and a password of your choice. On the LabSpace home page, click on 'Register' and follow the instructions. Then return to the home page. If you are already registered, go straight to Step B.

**Step B Access a unit**

Choose a topic from the topic list in the centre of the screen. Browse through the list, and click on a unit that appeals to your own educational interests.

For example, under the 'Health and Social Care' field you could choose 'Alcohol and Human Health' (SDK125_2_8.6).

**Step C Research your unit**

Read through your chosen unit. Select one section, and think of ways in which to repurpose it for an audience of your choice. Don’t exceed 500 words as this is just an exercise.

As you repurpose the content, think about the learning design of your new educational material. The most important things to bear in mind are:

- why you are repurposing the content;
- who your audience is;
- why you think this audience would use this material;
- the learning outcomes you want them to achieve.

4. Ideas for further reading and exploration

1. Try some of the OpenLearn free social learning tools. They are FM (a videoconference tool) and Compendium (knowledge map software). These tools have been developed by the Open University's Knowledge Media Institute. You can find these tools on OpenLearn, within the right hand navigation columns of both the LearningSpace and the LabSpace areas. OpenLearn also offers learning clubs, learning journals and discussion forums. It is worth looking into these, and trying them for yourself.


3. Blog: Open Content Online (aisantos.wordpress.com)

References


Santos, A. (2008) 'The discourses of OER: how flat is this world?', Journal of Interactive Media in Education (JIME), Special Issue:
Researching Open Content in Education.


**Acknowledgements**

This unit has been produced by Andreia Inamorato dos Santos for the H800 course team.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following sources for permission to reproduce material in this unit.

Material appearing in this unit is from Open Educational Practices and Resources – OLCOS Roadmap 2012 edited by Guntram Geser, Salzburg Research Group, EduMedia Group. This publication was produced by Open e-Learning Content Observatory Services (OLCOS) Project with the financial support of the European Commission and is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 License http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/. Any images used are based on copyright-free photographs from www.imageafter.com.