

OER in *sustainable* Perspective



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# What is an Open Educational Resource?

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

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



# OER



Conditions?

Attribution

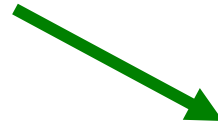
Share-Alike

Non-commercial

No-modify

Educational

Other?



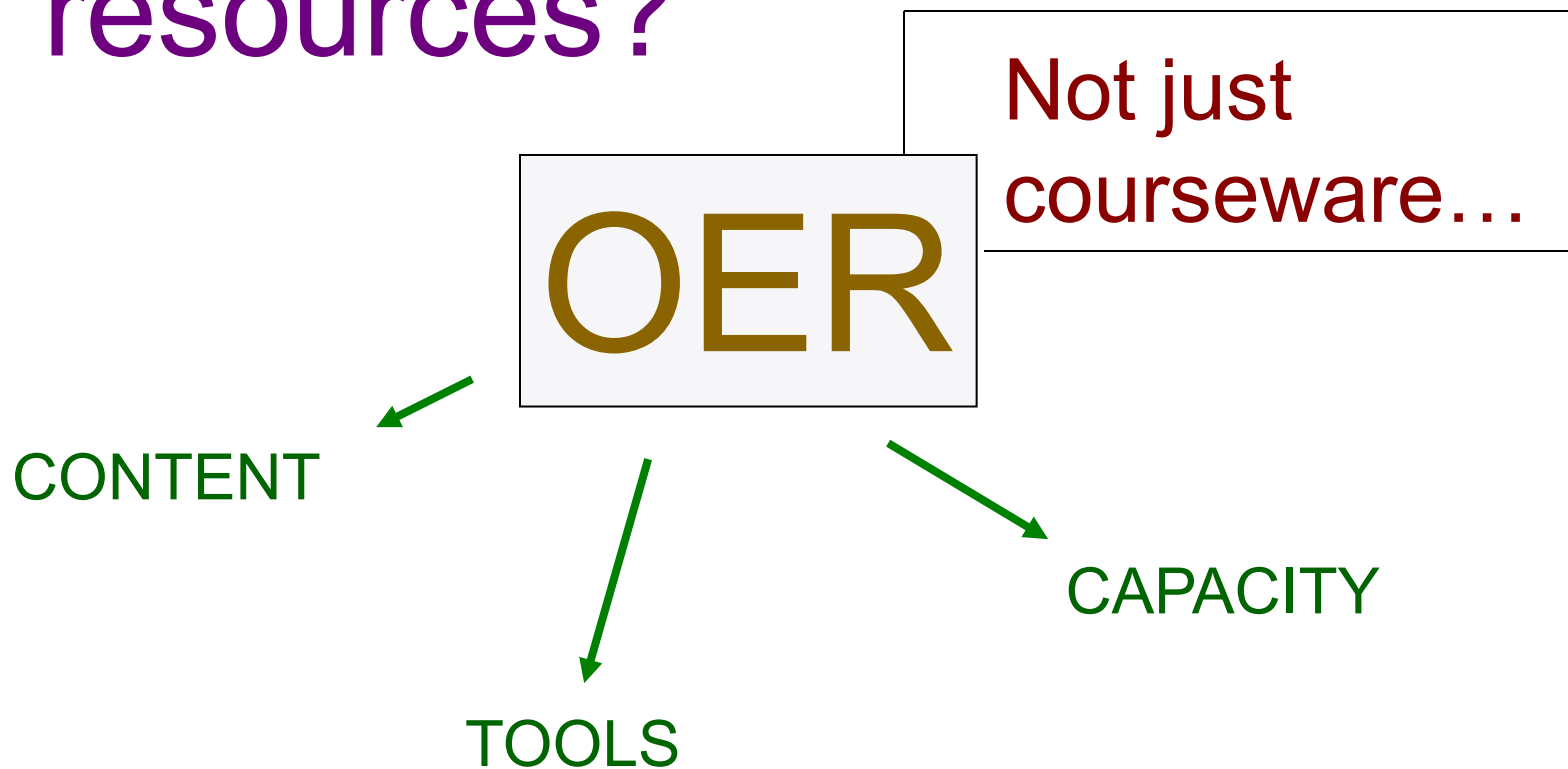
## Freedom to

- access
- copy
- modify
- redistribute

Footnote 2005, Doyle 2005

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....

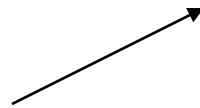
Not merely an issue of culture - also one of semantics

# 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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