

Back to basics – asking difficult questions about Open Education

An investigation into academic library support of Open Educational Resources: a case study of Scottish universities

Introduction

- Poster presents a summary of the findings of an MSc dissertation (MSc in Information and Library Studies) within the context of 'Back to basics – asking difficult questions about open education'

Methodology

- A multiple-case study examined how the University of Glasgow Library (UoG), Glasgow Caledonian Library (GCU) and the University of Edinburgh (UoE) support OER
- Based on an environment scan of Scottish academic library webpages, the aforementioned cases are the only libraries identified as promoting OER services (purposive sample)
- The research aimed to investigate if academic libraries may be a viable support structure for OER within Scottish Higher Education institutions
- Research objectives looked to discover why academic libraries wished to support OER, identify factors affecting libraries' abilities to support OER, and critically discuss how libraries are currently supporting OER
- Methodological approaches incorporated qualitative interviews with library and service staff, and a thematic analysis of each case's OER strategic and operational documentation

References

- JENSEN, K. and WEST, Q., 2015. Open educational resources and the higher education environment. *College and Research Libraries News*, 76(4), pp. 215-218.
- BUENO-DE-LA-FUENTE G., ROBERTSON, R.J. and BOON, S., 2012. The roles of libraries and information professionals in Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives: survey report. *JISC Cetis*

Findings

- Different motivators for service creation and issues impacting on service delivery were identified at each case with differing interests being served and user-groups targeted (see below)
- Cases supported OER for a variety of reasons:
 - To support digital education
 - Showcase educator teaching materials
 - Develop digital and information literacy skills
 - Support student learning through diversified curriculums and cost reductions
 - To develop educator copyright and licensing knowledge to enhance teaching resources and protect institution's copyright integrity
- However, different approaches to service delivery were identified:
 - UoG and GCU primarily provided repository and repository support services
 - UoE looked to develop digital OER literacy skills and encouraged sharing of OER upon online platforms
- Furthermore, interviewees' responses at UoG and GCU questioned if service provision had met user needs, if educators were aware of OER, had educators fully engaged with open practice, and at UoG, if services were truly open

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Conclusions

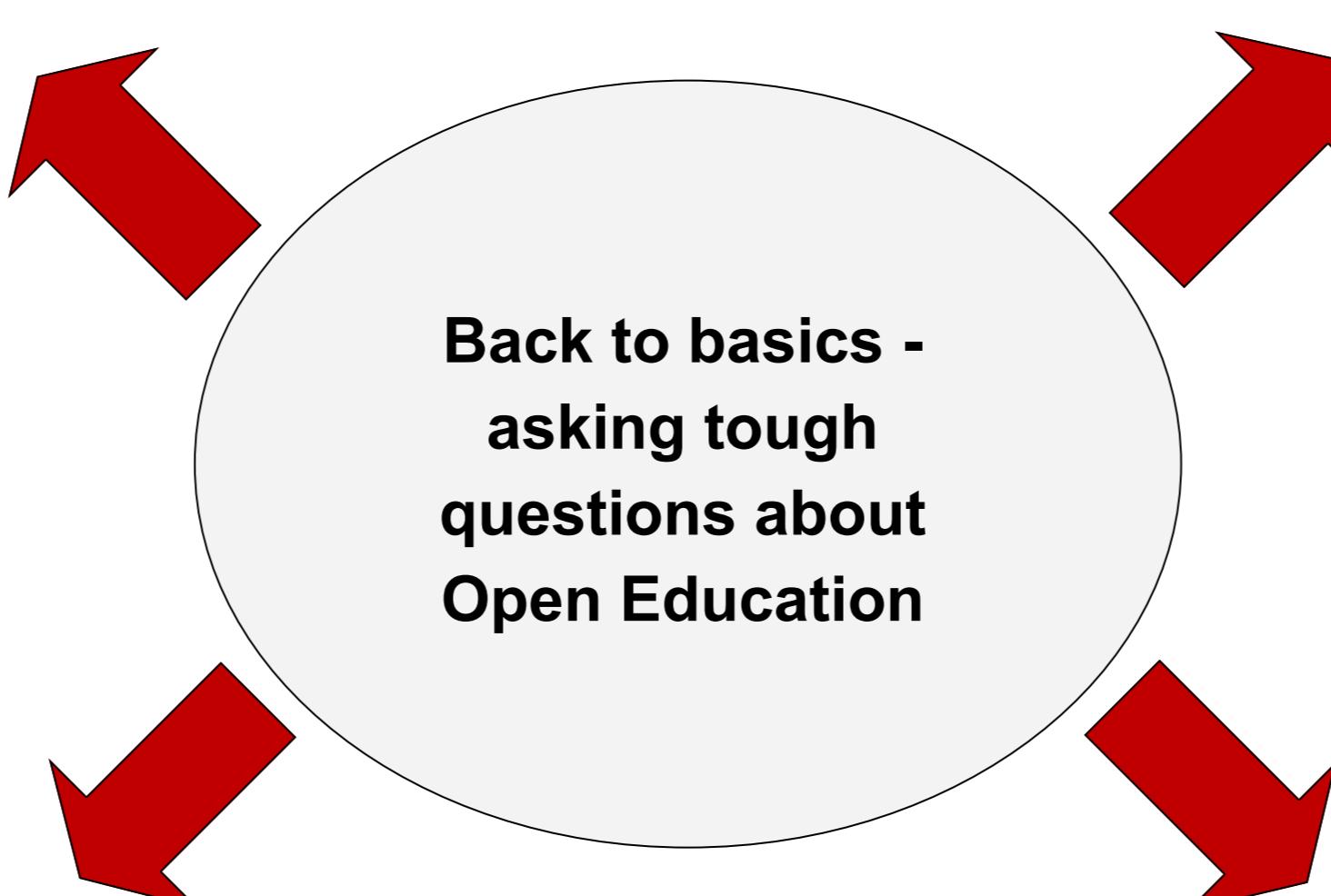
- Though librarians are identified as having the potential to support OER (Jensen and West 2015; Bueno-de-la-Fuente et al. 2012), library participants questioned if services had met user need, if educators had embraced open practice and were services truly open
- If designing an OER support service consideration should be given to major discursive areas: academic libraries and department OER support; institutional approaches to OER; educators and OER; approaches to OER service delivery; and copyright and licensing
- UoG and GCU present differing levels of repository openness, though both have followed a similar service development path
- UoE OER support is centrally funded with support from the student body and institution management. Service provision favours OER skill development over repository based services
- UoG and GCU evidence suggests conflicting priorities emerge both for educators and institutions in relation to OER support
- Further research may be required from institutional perspectives to discover why institutions do or do not support OER
- The model created at UoE may be replicable within academic libraries if strategic support, finance and staff resource is available
- The discovery of a dearth of research comparing library OER services with non-library OER service departments ensured research originality
- In completing the project, the researcher contemplated if institutional financial considerations and perceived conflicting priorities (e.g. research/REF) may conspire to position OER as non-priority within Scottish HEIs
- Methodology dictates that findings are not generalisable, however may be of interest to institutions or departments looking to implement an OER support service

Why open?

We wanted to share our library materials - UoG

It fits with our 'common good' vision and somewhere was needed to store teaching resources - GCU

It is a strategic aim for our institution - UoE



Open for whom?

- Are our educators really aware of OER, copyright and CC? - UoG
Do our educators know about our OER services? - UoG
Have we developed our services from a library perspective? - GCU
How do we reach past our core users, how do we expand and continue OER momentum? - GCU
Open for all, it's our default - UoE

Whose interests are served?

Was the repository project to serve the library or our educators? - UoG

Have we really met the needs of our educators? - GCU

Senior management, staff, students and wider communities - UoE

University of Glasgow (UoG)

OER services

- Institutional learning and teaching resource repository (edShare platform) established 2018
- Currently, no formal repository training (delivered when requested by educators)
- Copyright advice service delivered by Library Learning Technologist
- OER webpages, copyright and licensing webpages, and a MOOCs Statement all available online
- At time of research no structured OER advocacy programme

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU)

OER services

- Institutional learning and teaching resource repository (edShare platform) established 2015
- Repository, OER, copyright, IPR and licensing training (delivered when requested by educators)
- OER, and copyright and licensing webpages
- GCU library led on development and implementation of institutional OER policy

University of Edinburgh (UoE)

OER services

- Skills training for educators and students to develop digital literacy relating to the use, creation, adaptation and sharing of OER
- Copyright and licensing training and advice
- Advocacy and promotion of benefits of OER creation and use
- Development and support of 'three strand' OER policy – enabling any resource created by educators to be licensed as an OER
- Management of OER service (Open.Ed) webpages and blogs
- Provision of information related to the broad range of sharing options available (both institution and wider online platforms)

Case themes

- Repository service grew from an initial library Knowledge Base project (2016)
- Knowledge Base project - creation of a website where library educational resources could be stored and openly shared
- Initially, Knowledge Base project intended to be library focused, however the edShare functionality provided opportunity to extend services to educators
- Repository set to 'open to the university' - is this really open?
- Educators' concerns regarding presenting materials as OER - fear of others 'copying', and a perceived loss of resource value
- Lack of understanding of both copyright and licensing amongst educators
- Copyright and licensing are considered 'a challenge, a problem and a big issue'
- Cautious approach to OER at institution mirrored by library actions
- OER paid 'lip service' institutionally, considered a good idea, however there may be no great depth of feeling

Case themes

- Services developed from previous JISC and National Science Foundation *Digital Libraries in the Classroom* project and an institutional need for additional storage for educational materials
- Repository set to 'open to the world'
- Decision to pursue an open approach to learning and teaching support influenced by Senior Library Management and Senior Digital Learning and Academic Development Management
- OER support considered inline with institution's 'common good' vision
- Training and advocacy service reactionary – no resource to deliver structured timetable of services
- Is repository just seen as a place to store stuff?
- Lack of familiarity with OER identified amongst educators. Educators lacked confidence to share resources as OER
- Copyright and licensing service delivery can be challenging – educators lack understanding
- Though policy in place, there may not be a unified view of OER throughout institution and amongst institution Senior Management

Case themes

- Open.Ed centrally funded and a strategic institution focus
- Level of institutional support for OER uncommon in Scottish HEIs
- Skills and digital literacy training key components of service
- Interviewees described interaction with educators as generally positive, however educators can be reticent to share materials as OER
- Perception that if material is licensed it has to be 'perfect'. 'Three strand' policy addresses this
- Fear of copyright amongst educators – need to alleviate
- Copyright and licensing support critical – guarding against possible infringement and 'copyright debt' ongoing
- 'Copyright debt' discussions facilitating conversations around accessibility, diversity, inclusion, diversifying curriculums and student collaboration
- Collaboration key in all aspects of service and broader OER environments
- Resource and time barriers – need for more time/staff to add further service value