

Mapping the Landscape of OER Institutional Initiatives

Summary of **Week Two** (19-24 November 2012)

Could a world map be built collaboratively?

Organisational approach for collaboration;

Ensuring the quality of the information

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This document provides an overview of key points addressed during week two of the Athabasca University-supported OER-mapping discussion (<https://unescochair.athabascau.ca/oer-mapping-exercise>), building on the interaction of the previous week (<https://unescochair.athabascau.ca/oer-mapping-exercise/summaries/week1>).

Please feel free to share these summaries among colleagues and networks.

1. Why Map the OER Landscape?

Various reasons to map the OER landscape, both geographically and conceptually, were identified in the first week's discussion (see summary). Discussion during the second week further considered the purpose of a geographic map, and for whose benefit this might be undertaken. The following points were raised:

- Different stakeholders would benefit from different approaches to OER mapping (e.g. geographical, conceptual and curricular)
- A distinction must be made between “mapping OER initiatives” and “mapping OER materials” – see below
- Starting with a geographic map could enable information sharing for funders/advocates, as well as educators/content developers seeking to develop local networks; but might not enable resource discovery for teachers/learners, who are more likely to search by subject or language
- A geographic map could serve the needs of a *social network*, connecting people to each other
- A map could provide an introduction to and an overview of OER, and thus serve as a tool for advocacy
- A number of existing digital OER content repositories exist already; a map could complement these and potentially interface with them, if built to open standards

2. Essential Information: The Basics

As noted above, members of the group have begun to discuss mapping both OER initiatives and OER materials. In revisiting this topic from week one, additional comments begin to sketch a classification into “essential” and “desirable” data.

2a. Describing OER Initiatives

This discussion has been convened around the mapping of OER initiatives.

OER INITIATIVES

Essential information:

- Initiative name
- Initiative URL
- Location of headquarters
- Contact individual

Desirable information:

- Language
- Time markers, e.g. start/end date
- Academic level
- Subject area
- Seeking collaborators
- Funder(s)

2b. Describing OER Materials

Although the mapping of OER materials, e.g. in a content repository, is outside the scope of this discussion as envisioned, some useful ideas emerged.

OER MATERIALS

Essential information:

- Title
- URL
- Language
- License type
- Academic level/subject area

Desirable information:

- Producer/Author
- Contact individual
- Date created
- Format of resource
- Technical requirements
- Learner prerequisites
- Related credentials

3. Visual Presentation

There has been limited discussion of visual approaches in addition to geographical mapping. The sample maps were reviewed and the following were noted as desirable:

- Color coding
- Ability to sort data in different ways, using different languages and internationally validated terminologies
- Text-based search tools
- Accessibility, e.g. for screen readers
- Open tools, e.g. FOSS, Open Street Map (OSM) over proprietary ones such as Google Maps
- Scalability, i.e. flexible development which will allow the map to expand/evolve over time

4. Organisational Approach for Collaboration

It may be early in the discussion to foresee an obvious route for organisational collaboration.

Participants who address the topic are quite confident that a collaborative approach is needed, however. A few models have been suggested:

- Individuals might serve as representatives for poorly represented and/or non-English-speaking regions, to help translate ideas and build local mapping networks.
- Individuals might process data collected by other organisations, to see what comes of early “sandbox” efforts.
- Organisations already compiling OER databases might integrate geographical (e.g. OSM) data which could later be used for a visual mapping effort.

- An organising institution might oversee “crowdsourcing,” as described by representatives of the Global Open Access Map (<http://www.openaccessmap.org>).

5. Ensuring the Quality of the Information

The matter of data quality was addressed by only a few contributors, expressing concern that:

- All information must be kept accurate and up-to-date.
- New strings of data may be unreliable; it is preferable to use linked (existing) data as possible.

6. Other Topics

The following topics have received considerable attention in week two:

- The benefits of using free and open standards, tools, formats, software and APIs, and of committing openly to using these tools.
- The importance of metadata as it relates to digital content repositories, with focus on LRMI, IMS, MLR (ISO/IEC 19788) and IEE LOM.
- The fact that OER might benefit from other mapping approaches, e.g. knowledge mapping, concept mapping and curriculum mapping.

7. Week Two Conclusions

In week two there has been less brainstorming than before, as the focus has shifted to several key concerns. There have been over 250 messages to the list, from over 100 contributors worldwide. Discussion largely continued the topics of week one.

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