Hats Off to California! (Part 1) – OER Commons: An Education Ecosystem Using Knowledge Sharing
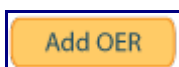
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ISKME's work in OER since 2005 has focused on identifying key opportunities for deepening the impact of OER adoption and use through research and practice that support enhanced teaching and learning. For example, our research has shown that access to high quality, adaptable resources provides the flexibility needed for educators to develop innovative, localized content as well as pedagogical practices that are more collaborative and peer-based. Our OER Commons network is a curated collection of over 30,000 educational resources—including open textbooks—that can be shared, adapted, and remixed to fit individual teaching and learning needs.

The overarching goal of OER Commons has been to create an education ecosystem built around the open sharing of resources and knowledge that can support improvements in teaching and learning. In our ongoing efforts to meet this goal, we continue to create new features and tools on OER Commons. This past spring has seen a flurry of new developments including simple ways to find and add resources and comments to the Commons, as well as new services for 24/7 search and discovery of OER.

The Bookmark Button.

Our new bookmark button, featured on the OER Commons homepage, empowers users to build the education commons by making it simple to add resources to OER Commons from anywhere on the web. Just drag the button into your browser bar and click "Add OER" from any awesome OER url to try it out.

The OER Toolbar.

In response to user feedback that an easier way to submit user reviews was needed, we've created a toolbar that appears when you go to a resource in OER Commons. From this toolbar, you can rate, review, and tag a resource without leaving the page, scroll through search results, and more. To see an example of a resource with the toolbar, click here.

Green OER is a new section of OER Commons dedicated to cataloguing OER materials that focus on teaching environmental studies and sustainability issues. Green OER was developed with our European partner Agro-Know, whose mission is focused on knowledge-intensive technology innovation for agriculture and rural development.

OER Librarian leverages the power of the OER community in finding resources through Twitter. Users can make a request for particular OER using the Twitter hashtag *#oerlib*. Anyone can crowdsource an answer by using @ reply to the asker, using the same hashtag. Examples of questions that users have asked include: "I'm looking for a great open textbook to teach beginning art history, any suggestions?" and "Know of any good lesson plans for teaching beginning calculus that includes embedded links to example problem sets?" Try it out, and see what happens!

OER Search App. The OER Search App allows users to access and search the OER Commons library from the convenience of their iphone or android mobile device. Visit the iphone app store or the android market on your mobile device, and use the term "OER Search" or "ISKME" to locate and install the app directly on your phone.

We know that OER have the potential to serve the changing needs of learners, while supporting teachers, schools, community colleges, and other institutions in improving and transforming practice and policy. Join the OER Commons user community and help us to enrich the site through your valuable contributions and knowledge.

Keep up on the latest OER Commons developments by following us on Twitter @OERCommons and by signing up for our newsletter. Sign up by visiting our homepage or by sending an email to info@oercommons.org