## *Book Review*

Internet Links:
http://www.col.org/PublicationDocuments/pub_PS_OER-IRP_web.pdf,
http://www.col.org/resources/publications/Pages/detail.aspx?PID=446

The open access book, *Open Educational Resources: Innovation, Research and Practice*, is part of the *Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning* monograph series published by the UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Chair in Open Educational Resources. This book explores the open educational resources (OER) movement in detail, presenting the significant benefits, theory and practice, and achievements and challenges of OER for the educational community.

Editors Rory McGreal, Wanjira Kinuthia, and Stewart Marshall, along with other contributors (37 contributors in total), offer a comprehensive review to lead "practitioners, researchers, students and others interested in creating, using or studying OER" (p. xxi). The book is a compilation of peer-reviewed papers, presented by many of the most important international experts in the field of OER from five continents, which show the potential for future research on the topic. The 16 chapters are organized into four sections: (a) OER in Academia, (b) OER in Practice, (c) Diffusion of OER, and (d) Producing, Sharing, and Using OER. Each section is comprised of four chapters.

The first section, OER in Academia, shows the ways "in which OER are widening the international community of scholars with shared resources" (p. xxi). Chapter 1 presents the "trend of innovation, experimentation, and the use of technology to provide learning opportunities for large numbers of learners" (p. 6), detailing the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) core. In Chapter 2, the project at Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico "has identified some key factors for the development of a model of effective knowledge transfer using OER" (p. 20). Chapter 3 explores "ways of institutionalising the management of OER" at the University of Cape Town (p. 44). And the project discussed in Chapter 4 aims to "provide pathways for OER learners to obtain credible certification and qualifications from accredited institutions within national education systems inputs" (p. 54). "The lead taken by universities in opening up education by releasing their content has been the major driving force in promoting OER" (p. xxi).

The second section, OER in Practice, "includes case studies and descriptions of specific working OER initiatives on three continents" (p. xxi). Chapter 5 describes "the role of OER in OpenLearn, an initiative of the Open University UK" (p. 63). Chapter 6 "provides an overview of the licensing conditions under which OER are typically made available" and, moreover, "identifies and discusses a number of practical concerns related to the use, distribution and, particularly, remixing and

redistribution of materials with differing OER licences" (p. 64). In Chapter 7, the authors relate "the development, processes, implementation, challenges and lessons learned during the African Virtual University (AVU) Multinational Project" (p. 64). Chapter 8 offers "an overview of three European initiatives that aim to support and facilitate open access to both educational resources and educational practices in the field of Science Education" (p. 64).

The third section, Diffusion of OER, explore "thoughts on how different groups approach releasing their content to the world" (p. xxi): "mixing, mashing, re-using and/or repurposing of available educational content" (p. 125). Chapter 9 is a personal reflection "on the beginnings of the OER movement in supporting the development of the OER community, from the first meeting sponsored by UNESCO, which considers access to education to be a fundamental human right" (p. 125). In Chapter 10, the author found "that learners in formal and informal learning contexts do not care about the license as long as the content is available and accessible online" (p. 126). Chapter 11 explores "the technical issues around OER content diffusion" and comment on "the need for developing, adapting and using formal technical specifications to support the diffusion of content over networks" (p. 126). And in Chapter 12, the author stresses "that the 'ownership' of the OER movement by the teachers is the critical factor in its success" (p. 126).

The last section, Producing, Sharing, and Using OER, explores the pedagogical, organizational, personal and technical issues that producing organizations and institutions need to address in designing, sharing and using OER. In Chapter 13, the authors "identify the key determinants of teachers' sharing behavior using social exchange theory" (p. 175). In Chapter 14, contributors "argue that the low level of OER use in many developing countries can be partly attributed to the tendency to regard them as forms of technology that are neutral and value-free" (p. 176). In Chapter 15 the author presents "OER from two perspectives: the person who owns or produces the resource, and the person who requires access to the resource" (p. 176). In Chapter 16, the authors look at "the development of the African Health OER Network and explore how sustainable inter-institutional collaboration can facilitate OER production and sharing" (p. 176).

The contributions in this book describe trends, case studies, and analyses that will help communities to introduce the essential foundations of OER. "Curriculum developers, educational technologists, instructional designers, teachers, researchers, students [and] others involved in creating, studying or using OER: all will find this timely resource useful, informative and inspiring."

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