

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

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Open Educational Resources

- Open Educational Resources (OER) are open, free, digital educational resources.
- OER are licensed and have terms for sharing, adaptation and reuse.
- The goal of OER is to transform the culture of teaching across educational systems by increasing the quality and accessibility of education for a greater number of students.
- OER are varied and can include full courses, worksheets, videos, images, music and a range of other educational materials.

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Underpinnings of OER

- The OER movement is founded on the belief that information is a basic human right.
- The values of collaboration and sharing underpin the OER philosophy as resources are enhanced by ongoing contributions and re-shaping by others.
- OER are based on the concept of resource-based learning (RBL) where the fundamental belief is the better the quality of learning resources the better the quality of learning.

Finding and Using OER

- OER are not all high quality.
- To find the best OER, digital literacy is required to make informed choices.
- Choose OER that are current and authored by credible sources.
- Effective guidance is required to maximize the educational value of OER.

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Where do you find OER?

The scope and availability of OER is ever expanding. There is no single comprehensive listing of all OER. **To find appropriate OER...**

...use a specialized OER search engine

There are some specialized search engines that search specifically for OER. Since listings are selective based on different search criteria it is helpful to try more than one. Here are some popular OER search engines:

- Global Learning Objects Brokered Exchange (GLOBE) Alliance:
www.globeinfo.org.
- Folksemantic: www.folksemantic.com.
- DiscoverEd: <http://discovered.labs.creativecommons.org/search/en>.
- Creative Commons Search: <http://search.creativecommons.org>.
- Open Courseware Consortium: www.ocwconsortium.org/courses/search.
- Athabasca University Open Access Resources:
<http://library.athabascau.ca/OpenAccessResources.html>.

...locate a suitable OER repository

Searchers can access major OER repositories. Repositories tend to be institutionally based. Some repositories have a specific subject focus. For example, MedEd PORTAL features medical photos and related multimedia. Here are some OER repositories:

- OpenLearn: <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk>.
- MedEd PORTAL: <http://services.aamc.org/30/mededportal> (medical focus).
- MIT OCW: <http://ocw.mit.edu>.
- China Open Resources for Education (CORE): www.core.org.cn/en.

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...use OER directory sites

There are many sites that provide results that point to places on the Internet where resources match search criteria. The OER directory site does not act as a repository, but identifies quality resources and stores them in a database of web links. The databases usually have a particular focus. Here are some directory sites:

- OER Commons: www.oercommons.org.
- Commonwealth of Learning: www.col.org/OER.
- OER Africa: www.oerafrica.org.

References

The following sources were used in the development of this document and also provide additional reading for those interested in more substantive content. We acknowledge the role of Creative Commons in the availability of these resources.

Butcher, N. (2011). A basic guide to open educational resources (OER). Commonwealth of Learning and UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://www.col.org/resources/publications/Pages/detail.aspx?PID=357>

McGreal, R. (2013). Creating, using and sharing open educational resources. Commonwealth of Learning. Retrieved from <http://www.col.org/resources/publications/Pages/detail.aspx?PID=463>

It is becoming evident that educational institutions that succeed are likely to do so predominantly by understanding that their real potential educational value lies not in content itself but in their ability to guide students effectively through educational resources via well-designed teaching and learning pathways, offer effective support to students and provide intelligent assessment and critical feedback to students on their performance (Butcher, 2011).

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