

Choices and Consequences in Transitioning from Closed to Open Resources and Courses

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Presentation Outline

- Definitions
- Six Stages of Openness
- Considerations and Challenges in Increasing Openness
- Getting to ‘Open Enough’

Definitions

Open Educational Resources

“digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research”

~ OECD in *Giving Knowledge for Free* (2007)



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Definitions

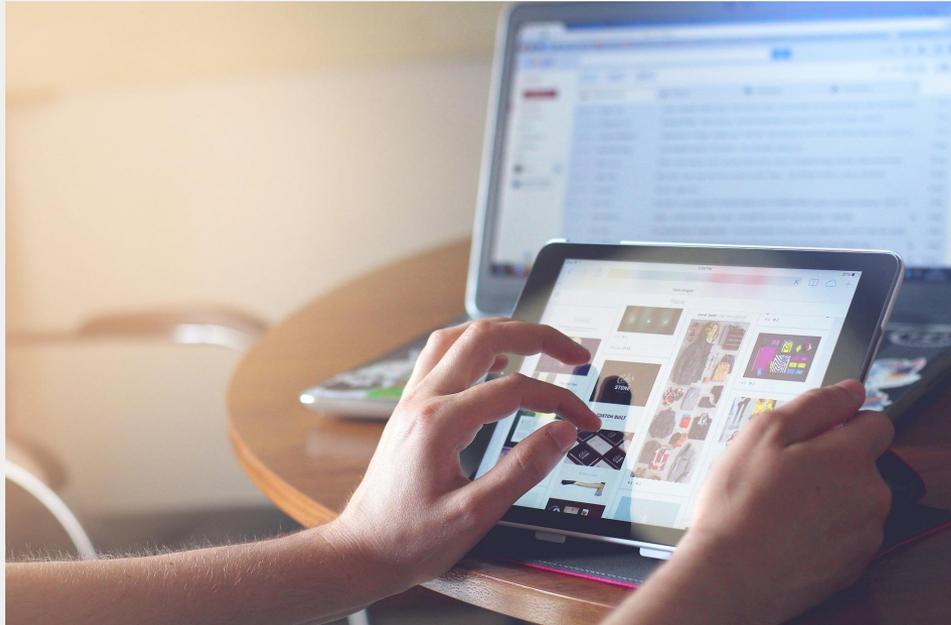
Conceptualizing Openness

Giving Knowledge for Free touches on several conceptual issues about openness (p. 32-36). Openness:

- Deals with technical, legal, social and price barriers
- At higher levels includes the right to modify and repurpose
- Is a buzz word to some degree

Six Stages of Openness

As we move from closed to completely open courses, there is both an increased workload on the creator and a tendency for greater pedagogical sacrifices



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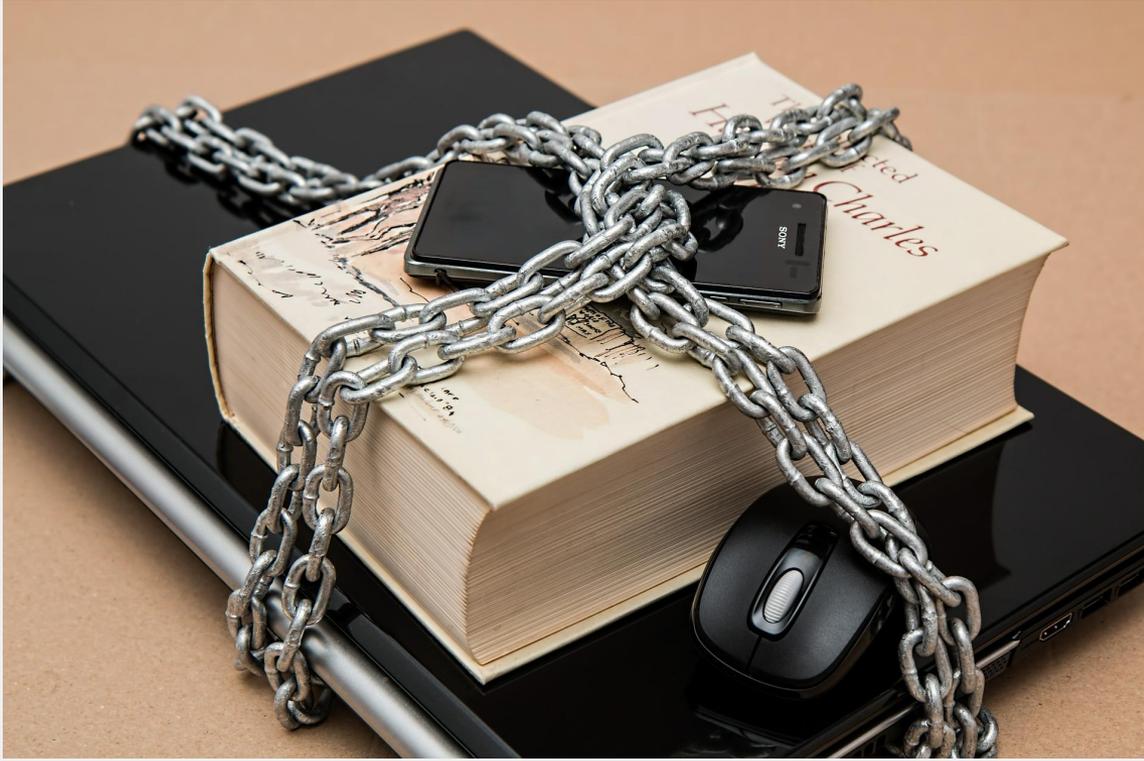
Six Stages of Openness

Spectrum of openness



Completely
closed course

Completely
open course



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1. Traditional closed courses

Barriers in Traditional Courses

- **Cost**
 - Registration/tuition
 - Materials (course pack/textbook)
- **Access**
 - Physical and digital resources
 - Fixed location of course

However, traditional courses have one key enabler
- requisite knowledge

Three types of traditional closed courses

Type I - Paid resources



- Textbook, course packs, digital assessments

Type II - Costless Resources



- Digital materials from campus library, course reserves

Type III - Open readings



- Open readings (Open Access articles and/or subscription free web materials)



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2. Partially open courses

Partially
open course

Type IV - Open Readings and Lectures



- Presentation lectures made available online
- Open readings
- Course materials (syllabi, assessment mechanisms (assignments)) may or may not be open



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3. Fully open courses

Fully open courses

Type V - All elements are open 

- Presentation lectures and course materials available
- Open readings
- All openly licensed

Type VI - Self-assessment 

- In addition to all elements from Type V, learners have the ability to complete course without any expert guidance

Barriers to openness

“Adopting existing OER is the fastest route to redesigning a course with OER. However, adopting existing OER entails, at the very least, understanding open licensing, finding open content, ensuring open content is aligned with course learning outcomes, and evaluating open content for quality”
(Pierce, 2016, [*Looking at OER with a Critical Eye*](#))

“The most significant barrier to wider adoption of OER remains a faculty perception of the time and effort required to find and evaluate it”
(Allen and Seaman, 2014, [*Opening the Curriculum*](#))

Instructor's workload comparison

Closed course	Fully open course
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Content expert (has read foundational materials)● Course content (syllabi, notes, assignments, PowerPoint)● Design and deliver content for one audience● Competence using the library and its resources and services	<p>All elements from closed courses, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Course readings need to be open access● Design for variety of audiences<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Language○ Cultural considerations● Knowledge of open licensing options<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Permissive licensing (CC-BY or CCO)● Dissemination methods<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ OER / institutional repositories● Pedagogical changes<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Self-assessment○ Sophistication / reading level● Usability / accessibility<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Multiple file formats○ Editable files with instructions○ Open source editing tools provided (or recommended)

Pedagogical considerations

- Readings and textbooks are typically chosen to reflect course/program learning objectives
 - Replacing a textbook or articles with equivalent OA resources might require instructors to reexamine the objectives
 - Instructors might not be able to include critical foundational readings
- Digital objects often provide a better learning experience
 - Faculty not always best equipped to create learning objects
 - Considerable instructional design expertise might be required to produce a comparable learning experience

(Pierce, 2016)

Legal considerations

- For some lecture/presentation materials it may be necessary to include material protected by copyright
 - Copyright exceptions are not universal, and vary by country
 - Canada's current regime is among the most permissive
- Incorporating licensed content requires meeting the terms of the license
 - "Share-Alike" and "No Derivatives" license conditions can limit repurposing
 - "Non-commercial" license conditions necessarily excludes commercial use
 - Creative Commons does offer a [License Compatibility resource](#)

Technological considerations

- Open source editing tools can require considerable skill to install and operate (Ex. [OER Pub](#))
 - Non-existent support
 - Loss of quality and design elements during format conversion
- Ideally OERs include design elements for alternatively abled users (OECD, 2007)
 - Descriptors for graphics and text
 - Audio and video captioning
 - Appropriate font/colours for readability
- Opportunity cost when designing for compatibility
 - Ensuring a consistent experience requires that content be created using only open formats (Ex. HTML, Plain Text)
 - Aesthetic degradation
 - Ignores importance of visual engagement as a factor in learning, aka “wow factor”

Social considerations

- Language
 - English may be the global language, but it is not universal
 - Facilitating translation by others requires avoiding slang, jargon, localized expressions, acronyms, etc..
- Culture
 - Inevitably cultural biases get baked into OERs
 - E.g. the phrase “baked in/baked into” makes use of a non-denotative definition of “bake”
 - OERs can be a form of neo-colonialism (Weiland, 2015; Crissinger, 2015; Ameil, 2012)

Meaningful assessment

Open assessments allow learners to not only do *but also* assess their work

Assessment mechanisms where self assessment is possible must be objective, and include:

- True/false questions
- Multiple choice
- Matching exercises

Ineffective meaningful self assessment mechanisms include:

- Long and short answer question
- Artistic/creative outputs
- Many aspects of presentations/virtual seminars

However, moving from subjective to objective assessment may result in pedagogical limitations

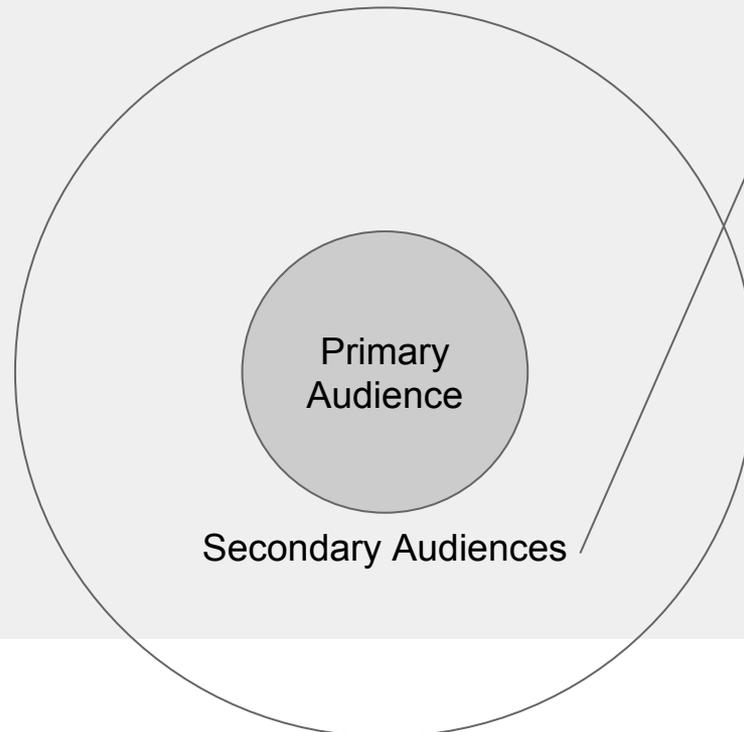
- Objective assessment is better suited towards natural sciences

4. When is it “open enough”?

Open Enough?

First consideration - who is the primary audience (Smith and Ragan, 2005)

- Unless specifically directed by our employer to consider a broader audience, primary audience is usually tuition paying students for the course



- Other students in the same program
- Other instructors in the same program
- Other students at the institution
- Similar students at other institutions
- Similar instructors at other institutions
- Other instructors (generally)
- Lifelong learners
- Everyone (?)

Open Enough?

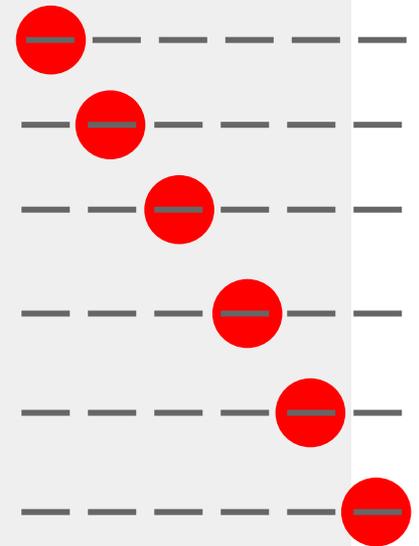
Second Consideration - who will you never reach:

- Learners using other languages
 - While it may be possible to account for more than one language, accounting for all is impossible
- Those lacking key infrastructure (access to the internet and electricity)
 - One can account for low bandwidth, but not no bandwidth/electricity
- Those lacking prior knowledge
 - E.g. if you were designing OERs for a graduate mathematics course, would it be reasonable to include introductory material on counting?

Finding the Right amount of Openness

Third Consideration - time and effort available to invest

- Each step towards openness requires a cumulatively greater amount of time and effort
- Remember steps towards openness can be iterative
 - E.g. teach a course one year with Open Access readings, and next year make course materials or lectures open
- While openness has intrinsic value, don't lose sight of primary audience and responsibilities



Recommendations

Pedagogy

- Need more well written literature on OER implementation and development
 - Abundance of case studies and one-off examples
- There are a number of toolkits which instructors can consult
 - [Alberta OER Starter Kit](#)
 - [Jisc OER Guide](#)
- Give your primary audience priority
 - If designing for a secondary audience, choose one that closely overlaps
- In the OER introduction outline prior knowledge learners must possess
 - Also allow for comments/feedback for students and other instructors

Licensing

- Use permissive licenses (CC-BY, CCO) when creating materials

Technology

- Aim to make your OER available in at least two “common” formats that do not significantly alter the visual presentation
- Link to software the user can download to view / edit your OER

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thanks!

Any questions?

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