

Web 2.0 and open education

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John Seely Brown and Richard P. Adler, [Minds on Fire: Open Education, the Long Tail, and Learning 2.0](#), Educause Review, February 2008. Excerpt:

...Arguably, the most visible impact of the Internet on education to date has been the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement, which has provided free access to a wide range of courses and other educational materials to anyone who wants to use them. The movement began in 2001 when the William and Flora Hewlett and the Andrew W. Mellon foundations jointly funded MIT's OpenCourseWare (OCW) initiative, which today provides open access to undergraduate- and graduate-level materials and modules from more than 1,700 courses (covering virtually all of MIT's curriculum). MIT's initiative has inspired hundreds of other colleges and universities in the United States and abroad to join the movement and contribute their own open educational resources.⁴ The Internet has also been used to provide students with direct access to high-quality (and therefore scarce and expensive) tools like telescopes, scanning electron microscopes, and supercomputer simulation models, allowing students to engage personally in research.

The latest evolution of the Internet, the so-called Web 2.0, has blurred the line between producers and consumers of content and has shifted attention from access to information toward access to other people. New kinds of online resources—such as social networking sites, blogs, wikis, and virtual communities—have allowed people with common interests to meet, share ideas, and collaborate in innovative ways. Indeed, the Web 2.0 is creating a new kind of participatory medium that is ideal for supporting multiple modes of learning....