

Overview of the open education movement

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The [OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation](#) has released a 153 page overview of the open education movement, [Giving Knowledge for Free, The Emergence of Open Educational Resources](#), May 24, 2007. Excerpt:

The development of the information society and the widespread diffusion of information technology give rise to new opportunities for learning. At the same time, they challenge established views and practices regarding how teaching and learning should be organised and carried out. Higher educational institutions have been using the Internet and other digital technologies to develop and distribute education for several years. Yet, until recently, much of the learning materials were locked up behind passwords within proprietary systems, unreachable for outsiders. The open educational resource (OER) movement aims to break down such barriers and to encourage and enable freely sharing content...

[T]his report...addresses four main questions:

- How can sustainable cost/benefit models for OER initiatives be developed?*
- What are the intellectual property rights issues linked to OER initiatives?*
- What are the incentives and barriers for universities and faculty staff to deliver their materials to OER initiatives?*
- How can access and usefulness for the users of OER initiatives be improved? ...*

The trend towards sharing software programmes (open source software) and research outcomes (open access publishing) is already so strong that it is generally thought of as a movement. It is now complemented by the trend towards sharing learning resources – the open educational resources movement...

The first and most fundamental question anyone arguing for free and open sharing of software or content has to answer is: Why? Why should anyone give anything away?...Advocates of the open source software, open access and OER movements of course have arguments in favour of their specific cause. But general arguments also apply to all three. These can be divided into pull arguments, which list the gains to be achieved by open sharing of software, scientific articles and educational materials, and push arguments, which register the threats or negative effects that might appear if software developers, scientists and educationalists do not share their work openly.

On the push side, it is sometimes argued that, if universities do not support the open sharing of research results and educational materials, traditional academic values will be increasingly marginalised by market forces...

On the pull side, a number of possible positive effects from open sharing are put forward, such as: free sharing means broader and faster dissemination, with the result that more people are involved in problem solving, which in turn means rapid quality improvement and faster technical and scientific development; decentralised development increases quality, stability and security; and free sharing of software, scientific results and educational resources reinforces societal development and diminishes social inequality. From a more

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individual standpoint, open sharing is claimed to increase publicity, reputation and the pleasure of sharing with peers....