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# Sharing information literacy resources as open educational resources: lessons from DELILA



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## INTRODUCTION

In all higher education institutions, librarians create a wealth of teaching resources that they use in their information literacy sessions. But is everyone reinventing the wheel, looking for the best way to teach search strategies, citing and referencing or keeping up to date for researchers? In practice librarians are usually more than happy to share their resources through numerous information literacy conferences and networks. Many of us share materials with colleagues across our own institution; some share more widely across institutions, for example, by using the UK's learning resources repository Jorum (<http://www.jorum.ac.uk>), either by putting material on open websites or even by emailing copies of our materials to colleagues. There have been several initiatives or projects to encourage librarians to share their teaching materials. One set of pages of the Information Literacy website (<http://www.informationliteracy.org.uk>) collects examples of good practice in teaching. In the USA and Canada the ANTS project (<http://ants.wetpaint.com/>) is

a wiki where librarians can share library tutorials. However, it is only fairly recently that librarians have been encouraged to share their materials specifically as *open educational* resources (OERs), which means the materials have an open licence (such as Creative Commons).

JISC define OERs as 'teaching and learning materials that are freely available online for everyone to use, whether you are an instructor, student or self-learner. Examples of OER include: full courses, course modules, syllabi, lectures, homework assignments, quizzes, lab and classroom activities, pedagogical materials, games, simulations, and many more resources contained in digital media collections from around the world' (JISC OER Infokit:

<https://openeducationalresources.pbworks.com/w/page/24836480/Home>).

UNESCO have meanwhile recognised the importance of OERs, arguing that they 'provide a strategic opportunity to improve the quality of education as well as facilitate policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building' (UNESCO, 2012). Sharing information literacy materials as OERs has several advantages over sharing resources generally both because the licence terms are clear and also because some thought has been put into making the resource adaptable and accessible to encourage re-use. OER collections such as Jorum are also often more visible than institutional websites.

This article will highlight the benefits of sharing information literacy resources as OERs as well as some of the challenges presented. It reflects on the work of a recent JISC/Higher Education Academy funded project led by LSE, with the University of Birmingham and the CILIP Information Literacy Group as partners. The DELILA (Developing Educators Learning and Information Literacies for Accreditation) project (<http://delilaopen.wordpress.com>) explored releasing information and digital literacy materials as open educational resources. For those of us who had been used to sharing our materials, the use of open licensing seemed to be a natural step. However, in the course of DELILA, the team found a number of challenges when releasing information literacy materials as OER, including how to handle third-party content in materials and whether in fact our institution was happy for content to be shared in an open format. DELILA led to the establishment of a new repository at LSE: LSE Learning Resources Online (<http://learningresources.lse.ac.uk>). The library intends to maintain and

develop this service, including identifying new content as well as keeping existing content up to date. The article considers how the library plans to manage this new repository and the challenges and opportunities that it presents.

#### **BACKGROUND TO THE DELILA PROJECT**

DELILA was a JISC and HEA (Higher Education Academy) funded project running from August 2010 to August 2011. LSE led the project and focused on making a set of digital literacy teaching materials available; these were mainly resources from a series of workshops run by the Library and Centre for Learning Technology. Meanwhile the University of Birmingham released a set of information literacy learning objects. One of the aims of the project was to show how digital and information literacy activities can be embedded into institutional teacher-training courses that are accredited by the HEA, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (commonly called the PG Cert). For a long time these types of literacies have been either ignored by those developing PG Cert courses, or seen as optional. In recognising the fundamental role that teachers have in supporting digital and information literacies, LSE had already embedded aspects of digital literacy into their current PG Cert. The University of Birmingham Library previously had two optional modules on the PG Cert course, but these did not generate high levels of attendance. Birmingham therefore used DELILA as an opportunity to open up discussions between the library and PG Cert coordinators. In both cases the institutions aimed to embed elements of information and digital literacy throughout the PG Cert modules rather than to develop stand-alone modules. In both cases the resources have been shared as OERs for others to re-use and adapt.

#### **THE AUDIT**

The first stage in the project was an audit of information and digital literacy content at both institutions; this identified a wealth of materials in various formats. At the University of Birmingham the librarians worked with the PG Cert coordinator to look at all the modules of this course, to identify which learning objects could suitably be embedded into each module in order to enhance and complement the current course material. It was noted that participants of the PG Cert were often confident about finding information for their own academic subject areas, but were unsure about how to find journal articles and books that related

to teaching and education. In the module that focused on understanding educational enquiry, it was decided to embed some of the teaching material that the subject librarian for education uses with her taught students. This would also demonstrate the importance of having librarians who can teach information literacy skills. LSE also detailed how their digital and information literacy materials are embedded in modules within their PG Cert course, and some of these teaching materials were released as OERs as part of the project. Both institutions found the audit a highly valuable exercise as it produced a spreadsheet identifying all the information literacy resources that existed. It included details of the topics covered, the file formats, the location of the material on internal shared drives as well as the specific aspects of information and digital literacy that were covered. It revealed a wealth of resources at both institutions and subsequently proved a valuable exercise for internal purposes.

### **CONVERTING CONTENT TO OER**

Following the audit the DELILA team set about mapping all the resources to three specific frameworks, to help select the most appropriate resources to convert to OERs. The frameworks used were: the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy (SCONUL 2011); the FutureLab Digital Literacy framework (FutureLab 2010); and the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) (HEA 2010) which all teaching courses accredited by the HEA must meet. Only the most relevant resources were then selected for conversion to OER, and because of the focus of DELILA on releasing materials for accredited teaching courses, the information literacy resources had to support the UKPSF. A smaller subset of materials was subsequently identified.

To convert the material to OER format, the team used the CORRE framework (<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/beyond-distance-research-alliance/projects/otter/about-otter/documentation>), which had been developed by an earlier JISC OER project, OSTRICH, to devise a process for converting content into open content. This four-stage process includes gathering content, preparing it for openness (including dealing with rights issues), usability and accessibility, considering re-use and re-purposing and tracking the OERs.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the objects that were identified as being suitable for inclusion within the PG Cert courses contained third-party information such as screen shots of databases. This proved to be problematic

when releasing content under an open licence. An OECD (2007) study highlighted the fact that one of the main barriers to people making their materials openly available concerned legal matters such as the 'time required and cost of obtaining permission for using... material for which a third party owns the copyright prior to making them available'. To overcome this barrier the DELILA project team decided to remove third-party content from their learning objects and replace this content with placeholders; these give some indication of what has been removed, so the content can be easily replaced by anybody else wishing to re-purpose the OER. This approach means that anyone wanting to re-use the materials can simply replace the placeholder with a suitable image from their own institution. However, the time required to check through materials, remove third-party content and create placeholders was significant and needed to be factored into the workflow.

The DELILA project also looked at how to improve the findability of information literacy resources, as there was a sense that it could be difficult to know which terms to search for when looking for these resources, and whether one was searching in Jorum or more widely on the web. It was therefore decided to tag content according to the three established frameworks. Information literacy content was categorised according to SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy. Meanwhile, digital literacy content was tagged according to the FutureLab model of digital literacy, which identified eight facets of digital literacy. Finally, to enable resources to be discovered by educational developers, the resources were categorised according to the UK Professional Standards Framework for higher education. The DELILA project also did some mapping to show how these frameworks relate to each other and developed functionality to allow the repositories, which were subsequently developed, to be searched using these frameworks.

### **DEVELOPING LSE LEARNING RESOURCES ONLINE**

We took the decision to create a separate institutional repository to host the converted OERs in order to forge a distinct service and complement existing LSE repositories, LSE Research Online and LSE Theses Online. LSE Learning Resources Online will also be promoted as a new service offered by the library, serving to develop the suite of platforms hosted by the library in order to collect, preserve and share unique LSE content.

In terms of technical implementation, LSE use EPrints open source repository software; we made use of internal technical expertise to set up a new installation for LSE Learning Resources Online. The University of Birmingham also use EPrints, which enabled us to share code for repository modifications. A key modification made to LSE Learning Resources Online was the addition of extra subject headings. These were UKPSF Codes, SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy and the JACS (Joint Academic Coding System) classification scheme for higher education resources. We could then add relevant subject headings to each learning resource to increase discoverability and encourage browsing of content.

A member of library staff experienced in creating EPrints records added the first batch of resources, which had already been converted to OER by Library and Centre for Learning Technology staff. In the future, we plan to integrate this process into our existing repository workflows, with cataloguers taking responsibility for metadata creation and repository staff converting to OER and copyright checking. Encouraging re-use and sharing LSE Learning Resources Online content is fundamental to the service, and a completed work package of DELILA was that all content is deposited in JORUM. These are now available.

As part of DELILA, the University of Birmingham modified the EPrints display of the *Teaching Resource* item type, added extra fields and shared the code with LSE. This improved the look and feel of item records by enlarging the preview of attached files and displaying key fields in the item record, providing a better visual display of content. We also commissioned the design of a banner for the repository to complement the styles of the existing LSE repositories. We took inspiration from iTunesU and Moodle, using an image of students wearing mortarboards. This design will be used for all of our promotional materials.

## CONCLUSION

The DELILA project was completed in August 2011 and released a wide range of information literacy resources as OERs in Jorum, but also in LSE and Birmingham's local repositories. The project uncovered a number of challenges associated with releasing material in open format. The team gave some consideration to the motivations of teachers who might release their teaching materials as OERs. Questions we considered at the end of the project included: whether it was feasible to copyright-clear screenshots included in training

materials – we decided it was not, so they should ideally be removed; whether another institution would want to use institutionally specific content; and, more fundamentally, whether information literacy resources were actually less suitable resources to share as OERs. At LSE we concluded that there was a value in releasing our materials; however, in the coming years, as our learning resources repository is populated, we hope to understand better what re-use actually means in practice.

In a workshop held in July 2011, many librarians suggested that being able to see someone's teaching materials, their lesson plan and the activities they undertook in a session was the most useful part of releasing resources as OERs. Few of us were looking for PowerPoints or materials we could use 'as is', but we were looking for inspiration and for examples of good learning design to inform our own teaching. And on the question of third-party images, JISC Legal were clear that we should remove or copyright-clear this content as part of the conversion to OER format. It may be that third-party content (which clearly cannot be licensed under a Creative Commons Licence) is included, but the repository has a clear take-down policy in the event of any copyright concerns. Certainly in practice, many people will include screenshots in PowerPoints they share on sites such as SlideShare or Prezi, so there is still a discussion to be had about responsibility for clearing copyright or removing content.

Although DELILA focused on sharing information literacy materials, we intend to extend the scope of LSE Learning Resources Online in the coming few months by adding a range of content from teaching and learning activities throughout the school. We will be promoting the repository throughout 2012 in order to broaden the understanding at LSE of the concept of OERs and to encourage staff to deposit content.

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#### **Note**

- 1 The CORRE framework has subsequently been updated to CORRE 2; further information is available at: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/beyond-distance-research-alliance/projects/ostrich/corre-2.0>