Evaluation of Workshop 5 – 'Keeping the Door Open'
Sustainability and future collaboration in OER

12 May 2011

Keble College, University of Oxford, 23 Banbury Road, Oxford

This was the fifth and final workshop in the programme of support offered by the Ripple project. The topic was sustainability and future collaboration in OER. In addition to this, and in response to previous requests from project partners, there was a session called 'Stories from Oxford' which included talks from two Oxford University academics who had been involved in OER release as part of the OpenSpires project. The OUCS Ripple project team also shared information on other OER projects. All slides and recordings from the day are made available on the project website http://openspires.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ripple.

Both partners were well represented at the workshop; five staff from Oxford Brookes and four staff from Harper Adams attended. Six staff members form OUCS were involved in the day and several invited guests attended the morning session (including visitors from Apple and other senior managers from OUCS).

The outline agenda for the day was as follows:

10.30 am	**Stories from Oxford, Introduced by Peter Robinson** Contributors from the University of Oxford share their stories of making material open **Dr Emma Smith** **Dr Peter McDonald** **Lisa Mansell & Patrick Lockley (Triton Project)**
11.30 am	Tea/Coffee break
11.45 am	**Sustainable practice at Oxford** **Melissa Highton**, Head of Learning Technologies Group, OUCS
12.15 pm	**Sustaining an open culture and looking into the future** Discussion/activity session
12.45 pm	Lunch
1.45 pm	**Collaboration – workshop session to develop Ripple OERs**
2.45 pm	Tea/coffee break
3.00 pm	**Collaboration – action planning**
4.00 pm	Close

The Stories from Oxford session was opened by Peter Robinson who spoke about the Oxford OER projects; OpenSpires, Ripple, Triton, OER Impact and also introduced the Oxford academic speakers Dr Emma Smith, Dr Peter McDonald and briefly Dr Marianne Talbot. Each of these speakers shared their stories having been involved in podcasting and, more specifically, open content release. They

spoke of the benefits, rewards, and of the impact on their academic lives. Some key points from these presentations included:

- Our job is to disseminate our knowledge and enthusiasm for our subject as widely as possible – this is why I support Creative Commons
- My lectures have been used in schools and by lifelong learners
- Receiving email feedback is great – you don't get much feedback from within the University so to receive it from listeners around the globe is great
- Recording my lectures has become a routine part of my life – I have slighted adapted my style now that recordings are released because I used to refer to handouts a lot but then I got inundated with email requests for the handouts from listeners.
- It's a huge personal boost to receive feedback: as a teacher it is just what you want to hear
- I'm now linking podcasts to a new online course and they can be used as marketing materials to attract people to the course
- Releasing podcasts suited my subject (Censorship) I was keen to disseminate my material as widely as possible, particularly as my work involves releasing previously secret documents.
- I will be using podcast interviews as source material for my next book.

The final presentation in this session was about the Triton project, making OER more discoverable to a subject community.

The session following the coffee break focussed on sustainability. Melissa Highton presented on Sustainable Practice at Oxford, and discussed social, economic and environmental factors. OER helps to meet OUCS objectives of community outreach, supporting research and admissions. Referring to Fair Trade week, she spoke of fair trade in education tackling technical, legal and price barriers. Sustainability in a place that is all about people is as much about behaviour – people have to *want* to do it. This is how the Learning Technologies Group does business; aligning the uses of technology and the benefits of technology to things you wanted to do anyway. This is how something becomes part of sustained practice.
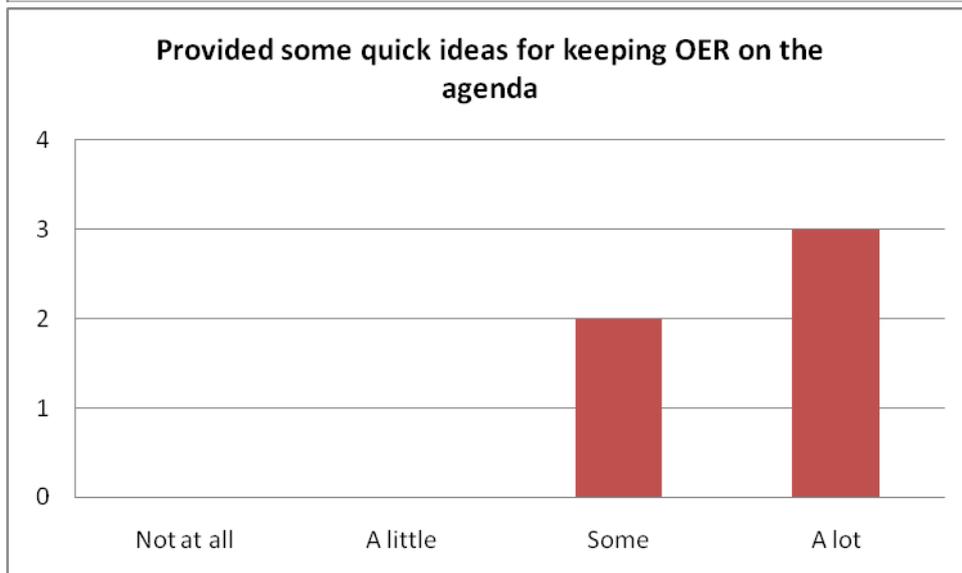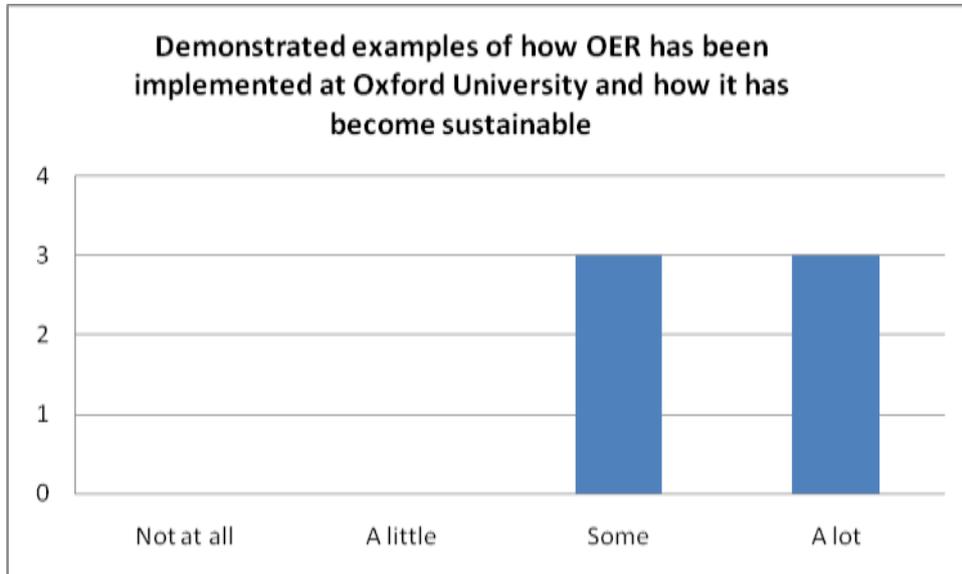
Following this there was an activity session run by Patrick Lockley during which attendees were asked to come up with simple ideas to keep people talking about OER, some of these included:

- Poster designs which could be used on office doors or department notice boards
- Publicising new OERs/recent successes using RSS feeds and blogs on University websites/intranets
- Discuss possibilities for a specific OER person within the University
- Invite Ripple team to local conferences to 'showcase' OER
- Engage PVC and get support for OER as an academic development initiative
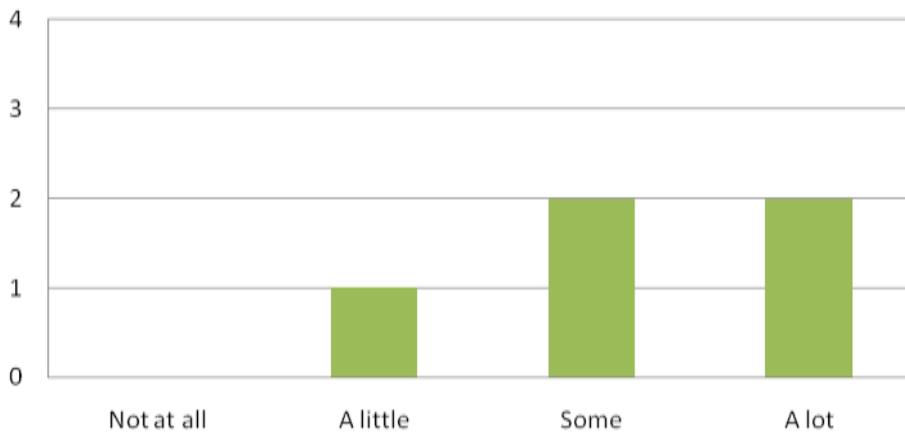- Collect academic testimonials and share these.

The afternoon session involved discussions of future collaborations between the partners. Ripple has nurtured good working relationships between the partners and there is a shared enthusiasm to collaborate further (possibly when future funding as part of OER3 is clarified). The first small-scale collaboration which is likely to be an output from Ripple, will be some resources developed collaboratively and released.

Lisa Mansell, Ripple Project, Oxford University Computing Services
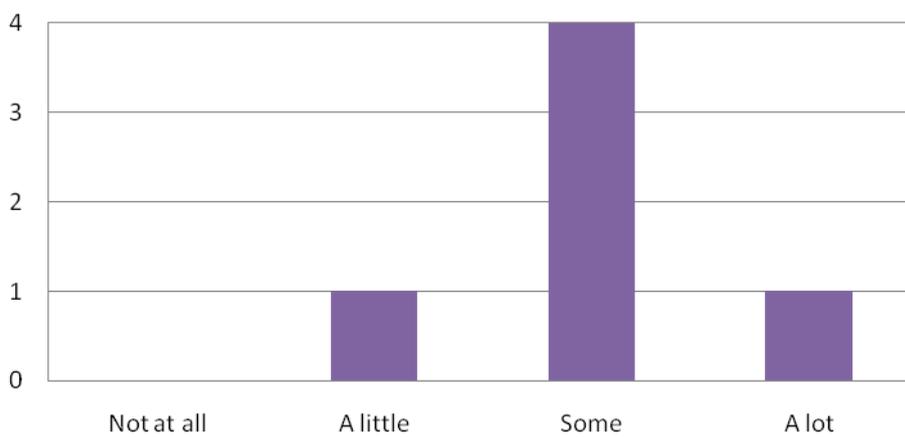
Evaluation responses

Each attendee from the partner institutions was given an evaluation form to complete at the end of the day and we received a 66% response rate (some attendees had to leave before the end of the workshop). Responses to the evaluation questions are shown in the charts below (not all responders answered all questions).

Demonstrated examples of how OER has been implemented at Oxford University and how it has become sustainable

	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot
Value	0	0	3	3

Provided some quick ideas for keeping OER on the agenda

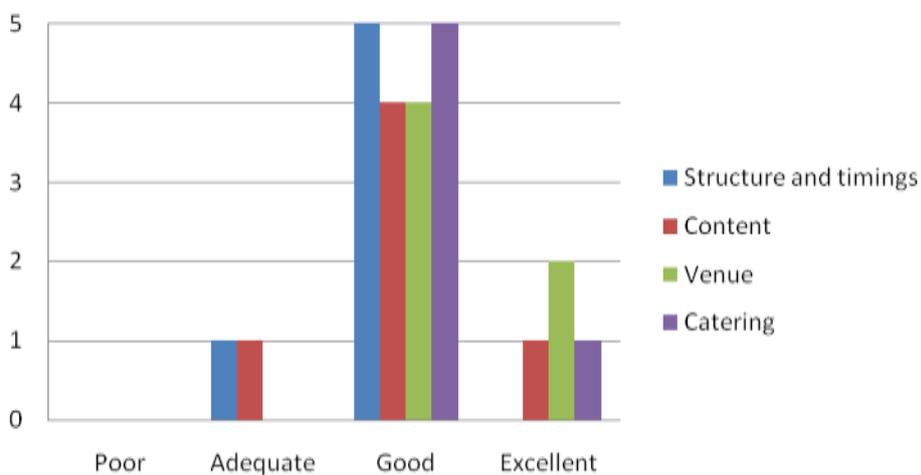|	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot
Value	0	0	2	3

Explored a solution for bringing partners' OER materials together as evidence of our collaboration on Ripple

	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot
Value	0	1	2	2

Set out an action plan for delivering these collaborative materials

	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot
Value	0	1	4	1

Other feedback

	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
Structure and timings	0	1	5	0
Content	0	1	4	1
Venue	0	0	4	2
Catering	0	0	5	1

Lisa Mansell, Ripple Project, Oxford University Computing Services

The feedback was positive, with delegates finding the Oxford Stories and the quick ideas for keeping OER on the agenda particularly beneficial.

Comments from attendees

There were many positive comments on the day, particularly about the morning session with the Oxford academics telling their stories. The ideas generated in the final session of the morning to keep OER on the agenda demonstrated the progress made by both partners. Ideas such as 'push for an OER person' show that they are now ready for more widespread OER release. The afternoon session generated lots of discussion and ideas for collaboration – not just in relation to Ripple, but future collaborations which may be possible with future funding. This did mean, however, that the small-scale collaboration which is planned through Ripple did not progress in great detail. A further telephone conference will be held to discuss this more specifically.

Attendees were also invited to comment on the evaluation forms on specific highlights or improvements that could be made. The comments received were:

Specific highlights:

"Oxford stories"

"lots of ideas; academic case studies"

"Good brainstorming, focussed approach"

"Inspired by some of the quick ideas to keep OER on the agenda – WordPress, blogs, promoting, marketing etc."

"The three talks, presentations"

"The afternoon discussions about collaboration"

Suggested improvement:

"Would have been nice to discuss actual content/future collaborative OERs in some more specific detail – but hopefully these discussions will continue after today"

"I think this workshop was (intentionally) less well-formed in the morning (but that doesn't mean it was less successful"

Observations from the project team

The morning session was well received, not only by the partners but also other guests who were able to attend to hear more about Oxford OER projects. It reinforced the point that you can learn best from people who have done it before – and hearing about the impact directly from academics is probably the best marketing tool we have!

It is challenging to fulfil the role of workshop organiser (ensuring the venue is set up correctly, meeting and greeting, ensuring sessions run to time, meeting delegates needs etc.) and to present sessions and it is probably better to have someone in the 'organiser' role on the day.

As with previous workshops, partners commented on the benefits of the Ripple project and how it is influencing change within their institutions, despite other challenges.

Lisa Mansell, Ripple Project, Oxford University Computing Services