



Appendix 3: Oxford Brookes University Case Study

1. Institutional context

When we joined the Ripple project, Oxford Brookes University was about to enter a period of significant organisational change, the extent of which only subsequently became apparent. The resulting changes to the landscape, and their wider social and political backdrop, have thrown into relief the need to have a clear institutional approach towards open educational resources (OER). The University had no policy mandate for OER on a large scale at the time, nor was OER a priority in our student experience strategy (SESE). However, there was a growing understanding that OER release could give greater visibility to the high quality resources that contribute to the distinctiveness of the learning experience at Oxford Brookes. There is a strong link between teaching and research / knowledge transfer here and we had already made a strategic investment in an institutional repository for unified management of our teaching resources and research outputs together in one place (RADAR). We had received JISC funding for this in its development stages (CIRCLE; <http://ie-repository.jisc.ac.uk/314/>). We had also begun an options review for an upgrade to our learning management system (LMS), in which emphasis was placed on a more open architecture and greater transparency of information and resources. It was intended that RADAR should underpin the new virtual learning environment (VLE) and would offer potential efficiency gains through better resource management and sharing. Mid way through Ripple, it was decided that the University should move to the Moodle VLE platform; the rollout of a Moodle/RADAR LMS is scheduled for September 2012.

At the same time, under the aegis of the PVC (Student Experience), implementation has begun on a series of academic development initiatives aimed at effecting consistent, cross-faculty enhancements of the student experience. A task force of senior academics (Associate Deans and Programme Leads) was set up to oversee these initiatives and to ensure that they are embedded in all undergraduate programmes. Implementation of these initiatives is done through supported engagement with programme development teams (Course Design Intensive (CDI) workshops) and has become a hallmark of our approach to curriculum development. CDIs provide an excellent vehicle with which to explore potential for institution-wide OER release in alignment with our priorities for the enhancement of the learning experience.

At the grass roots level, there has been growing interest in OER among pedagogic innovators and opinion leaders based on a growing appreciation of its value for (i) the marketing of courses to new audiences, particularly for online distance learning, (ii) improving access to resources for outreach programmes, (iii) open scholarship through adoption of Creative Commons licensing of teaching materials and (iv) the development of graduate attributes for employability when students are themselves engaged in the creation of open educational content.

2. Objectives

Consolidation of infrastructure and policies

A year before Ripple, our institutional repository, RADAR, had been launched, as a 'blended' repository containing both research outputs and learning objects. Four main collections were established, the research archive, an area for library special collections, a teaching collection accessible to all students and staff of the University and a public area for OER. Our primary focus for

the Ripple project was to prepare the way for University-wide growth of OER release through the RADAR repository with associated workflows, copyright guidelines, licensing frameworks and processes for resource approval, curation and usage tracking.

Enhancing the student experience: quality, access and consistency

Although when the Ripple project began, no priority had been given to OER as a strategic objective for the University, it aligned well with our learning and teaching strategy, SESE. With RADAR in place, potential benefits for the student experience were seen in bringing together key course information and teaching resources in a single online location, rather than allowing multiple versions to exist in module 'silos' with the concomitant risks of inconsistency of access, quality and currency.

Opening up: institutionally supported staff development and programme design interventions

The staff teaching a programme may not be fully aware of the resources they collectively use and must audit what they have in order to identify those resources which should be available at programme level or that have cross-disciplinary relevance. The process of opening up that this entails can be challenging, so is supported by teams of educational developers, learning technologists and subject librarians.

Since not all staff are ready to release their materials as OER, the teaching materials deposited in RADAR may initially be shared across departments within the University rather than on the public Internet. Significantly, however, it has been our experience that, where a culture of collegiality already exists, PDTs move swiftly to the second stage of public OER release.

Paving the way for the culture change of an open-source Moodle VLE

Although the decision to move to Moodle had not been taken when Ripple began, the requirement of a more open architecture for the VLE had already been agreed and informed our options analysis. Discussions about how resources could be shared more widely (and the associated questioning of the rationale for doing so), combined with the need for programme teams to work together on the implementation of the academic development initiatives described above, created a climate of innovation and change which made the prospect of engaging with OER less strange.

Production of exemplar and taster OER materials

A further objective of Ripple was to bring to the surface some existing materials which had already been earmarked for open educational release as models for wider adoption. Three academic Schools were keen to contribute resources.

3. Outcomes and impact

Our measure of success for Ripple was not the quantity of OERs we were able to produce but our confidence and readiness subsequently to develop OERs on a larger scale. That said we have produced, or are developing, eight sets of OERs, five of which were not included in the original project plan.

- 1) *Taster materials for online MSc Nursing Studies by distance learning.* A small set of taster materials (3 objects), have been released as a resource for the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences to market their programmes. The resources are composed of extracts from authentic teaching materials used on the programme and have been deposited in RADAR. The small number of resources belies their significance as a model for other courses and departments: a clear purpose was identified, workflows agreed and implemented and the available infrastructure (RADAR) used to the full. Development work was carried out to ensure resources in RADAR could be syndicated for dissemination to the department web page, where they could be presented in

context, alongside other locally held materials. Other departments have already expressed interest in adopting a similar approach. Being part of Ripple greatly facilitated and accelerated this initiative. The prior experience of the Oxford team helped us to perceive the value of OER for recruitment and marketing, gave us the confidence and knowledge to prepare materials for public release with appropriate licensing, alerted us to the need to tailor resources for the intended audience, gave us models of communication and workflow that would ensure successful completion and dissemination of the project and spurred the contributing team on to present a case study of the project at conferences both within and outside Brookes. Without Ripple they would not have come as far in as short a time.

- 2) *The Power of Experience*. One of the most distinctive sets of openly available resources that have been produced is a set of mobile lectures for an undergraduate module in urban design. They were presented by their creator, a lecturer in the Department of Planning, at the Brookes-led workshop in the Ripple series. The lectures were recorded in situ in a number of urban locations on video-enabled mobile devices and then made available for download on a public web site by the lecturer. Students were equipped with similar devices, thanks to a small teaching innovation grant. They were instructed to view the lectures in the locations in which they were filmed and to respond to contextual prompts from the lecturer. The lecturer became interested in the Ripple project because of our internal dissemination and benefited just as much as those engaged in Ripple from the start. The distinctive dimension of the resources she and her students have produced is the way in which her students have engaged with them, discussing them on a student-driven wiki site and generating their own videos as OER, which they posted to YouTube. Community-led OER generation is a characteristic feature of the approach we are taking to OER.
- 3) *Resources on theology & religion*. The reason to develop these OERs was because the department was anxious to reach a wider audience and to produce materials that would be relevant to other subject areas. This is a non-homogenous set of 40-50 resources, in different formats. There have been issues over copyright as some were created by a third party as a result of a study trip to India enabled by a Brookes Teaching Fellowship awarded to the contributors. The focus is on how these resources are re-purposed for use in other disciplines, e.g. philosophy, history & sociology and on their re-use by students for their own coursework.
- 4) *A guide to interpreting originality reports in Turnitin* – by a lecturer in the Business School. This is intended for first year undergraduates who are required to submit coursework to Turnitin but are unsure of the meaning of the reports Turnitin generates. Although just a single resource, it has been very useful as an exemplar of high-quality, in-house video production and of collaboration among teaching staff, educational developers, learning technologists and IT developers. It was put in RADAR and, thanks to discussions at a Ripple workshop about viral dissemination and re-use of OERs, also placed on YouTube, which might not have happened otherwise (3500 hits within 2 months). It is an example of how Ripple also helped us to focus on the kinds of OER that we may want to prioritise at this institution, in this case different from those produced by Oxford.
- 5) *A collection of photographs of primates and their habitats*: the number successfully uploaded to RADAR is low but rising. This collection was chosen for OER release because the lead academic was very keen to make the images publicly available and because there were few concerns about copyright, since most had been produced by Oxford Brookes staff and were not complex to catalogue in RADAR. There is potential for several hundred but the staff member responsible for cataloguing has been on extended sick leave. The only issue has been tracing the ex-students who have copyright in some of the images.

- 6) *A collection of photographs, taken by the Media Workshop photographic team, of people and events at Brookes since the 1980s.* Called The Album, it currently contains over 100 images with the potential to reach 400. This project has consolidated our experience of image collections and of using temporary contract labour for repetitive scanning and cataloguing tasks. All images have been released under a CC-NC-ND licence.
- 7) In parallel with Ripple, we were involved in another JISC-funded OER project - *2012 Legacies for Learning*. The aim of this was to build a collection of open resources for educational use on the organisation of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and their legacy. The project was led by the HLST Subject Centre, which was based at Oxford Brookes. RADAR is the host for the OER outputs of the project, of which there will be over 100 when it finishes in July 2011. Resources include case studies and discussion starters, official documents related to the planning of the 2012 Games and other resources to promote research into the Olympics and Paralympics, including a range of Routledge publications. Running the two projects together afforded useful synergy, particularly with regard to copyright clearance issues.
- 8) *Brookes Virtual staff and student support resources:* a set of 485 guides and tutorials on how to use the Brookes Virtual online learning tools. By locating these in RADAR we have achieved much greater discoverability and better integration with the tools they are intended to support. Making them openly available removes any unnecessary barriers of access control.

Since there was no mandate for OER, we have focused on strategic alignment with SESE as our primary, institutional rationale and on persuading, supporting and rewarding staff. Individual champions of OER have begun cascading their experiences to other staff and departments in the University. The release of OER is positively valued in awarding University Teaching Fellowships.

The choice of the RADAR repository as the primary location of our OER collection is being vindicated. Its strengths are that it is a single, centrally supported, online location for OER resources, which is fully searchable and externally harvestable, with frameworks and policies (in development) for contribution, licensing, take-down and curation. Furthermore, it has simplified the syndication of feeds to external services and increased discoverability of resources.

4. Implications for the future

Further opening up of resources.

As part of the move to the Moodle LMS, programme teams are being asked to identify key resources that must be available across programmes and for these to be deposited in RADAR. The central learning technology support team will advocate OER release wherever appropriate and feasible.

OER will be emphasised during programme-level implementation of the SESE academic development initiatives. We recommend that staff participation in Course Design Intensive workshops and other supported staff development activities carried out for this purpose should be recognised as CPD, particularly for the development of staff digital literacies.

We will develop plans for consolidation of University-wide digital media services following the restructuring of our IT services directorate. We will push for a specific post-holder with responsibilities for public release of materials (as we have successfully done for the open RADAR research archive).

A moderated open collection of undergraduate research outputs will be set up in RADAR. This has already been agreed by the RADAR steering group. The embedding of research activities in the undergraduate curriculum is a strategic academic initiative for the University. The opportunity exists

to start building a student OER collection in the form of funding to hold a student-led, University-wide undergraduate research conference, targeted for the end of the academic year 2011-12.

As a direct consequence of Ripple, the Joint Centre for Urban Design in the Department of Planning has collectively agreed to create a public, wiki-driven, community-led website containing its members teaching and research outputs, including those of its postgraduate students. Research outputs by the academic staff of the Centre will be fed in from RADAR. Social media, such as Twitter and YouTube will be used extensively for viral dissemination and the resources integrated into the curriculum of the courses run by the Centre. Two planning meetings have already been held, one attended by the Ripple Principal Investigator, Peter Robinson, and the Oxford Brookes Project Lead, Richard Francis. A third is planned, to which the Ripple Legal Officer, Rowan Wilson, will be invited.

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