WHAT CAN OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING DO FOR YOU?

Produced by Vincent Andrisani, for the Digital Pedagogy Project @ Carleton University

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[transcript]

1. [Martha] I am Martha Attridge Bufton, the Interdisciplinary Studies Librarian at the Carleton University Library.
[Irena] And I am Irena Knezevic, with the Communication and Media Studies program, also at Carleton University.
2. In this video, we'll provide some basic information about open educational resources, or OERs, and describe three different instances where we worked on OERs. We'll showcase an introductory textbook in food studies, a reading guide for a first-year seminar, and gamer and game master handbooks for the immersive role-playing game entitled: "Do we take shelter? Evaluating 'high stakes' information".
3. [Irena] So, let's start with some OER basics.
4. [Irena] The commonly used UNESCO definition describes OERs as "… learning, teaching and research materials in <u>any format and medium</u> that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under <u>an open license</u>, that permit <u>no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution</u> by others."
5. [Irena] The key feature of OERs is that they are free to access, which enables autonomy for authors in how they develop and share those resources. The no-cost access can boost uptake in the classroom, and also make OERs accessible to the wider public, at a time when scholars and institutions are increasingly expected to engage with and be relevant to the wider community.
[Martha] In Canada, a number of provinces have developed programs to support the creation and sharing of open educational resources. In Ontario, eCampus Ontario plays a significant role in providing access to tools and resources to produce OERS. According to the website, "eCampusOntario is a nonprofit organization that aims to strengthen Ontario's post secondary education system by increasing access to online learning".
6. [Irena] Despite these benefits, scholars have lingering concerns about OERs. Because OERs share features with self-publishing, many question their scholarly rigour. Because platforms like PressBooks provide software but not editorial support, creating OERs can be labour-intensive and requires a varied skillset, including editing, fact-checking, and design. As the product is made to be free, there is no cost recovery for the investment of time and resources to produce an

OER. And without traditional editorial oversight, there is a potential for errors, such as typos and outdated weblinks, though this is ever more the case with traditional publishers as well, as many try to cut costs and outsource editorial services.

7. [Martha] Still, institutions are increasingly encouraging and even supporting production of OERs. Free platforms, such as PressBooks and Open Journal Systems, allow for open publishing of books and multimedia OERs, and periodicals, respectively. In our province, the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities supports development and dissemination of OERs through the e-Campus Ontario initiative that connects educators with platforms, services, and sometimes even funding. Most post-secondary institutions are also supporting development of OERs through a variety of services. At our university, both the MacOdrum Library and the Teaching and Learning Services offer various supports for open publishing.

8. [Irena] Let's look at some examples of OERs now. The first is an introductory textbook to food studies, that colleagues and I developed using the PressBooks platform.

9. [Irena] We had over 70 contributors to this edited collection, and we wanted to address those lingering concerns about scholarly rigour in open publishing. We relied heavily on this excellent guide to publishing open textbooks, developed by the Rebus Community, part of a Montreal-based, global non-profit, Rebus Foundation that works on increasing access to knowledge for all.

10. [Irena] The Rebus guide provides step-by-step instructions and tools to conduct peer review before publishing. In addition to the conventional peer review by subject experts, we also had the entire textbook reviewed by an educational expert, for its pedagogical usability, as well as by an artist-designer for the book's aesthetics and navigational ease. To ensure that the book was readable for and relevant to the intended audience, a team of undergraduate students reviewed the contents and flagged any components that seemed dense or less accessible. And all of this, of course, was also subject to traditional editorial review for spelling, grammar, and flow. This was a demanding process, but it ensured that the final product met all the criteria of rigorous scholarly publishing. I'll now invite Martha to share her experiences with two other OERs.

11. [Martha] Since 2023, I have taught a fourteen-week a first-year seminar at Carleton University entitled *Imagine | Question | Search | Synthesize: Critical foundations for undergraduate research*. First-year seminars are designed to facilitate the transition into university learning for new undergraduates in the arts and social sciences. I co-developed this course with colleagues from Carleton and Saint Paul University and funding was provided for this curricular development by eCampus Ontario.

12. [Martha] One of the course learning outcomes is that, at the end of the course, students will be able to critically read academic articles for use in the research process. To facilitate this outcome, I have co-written a reading textbook or guide.

Students are expected to use the guide when preparing for weekly group discussions in which they evaluate the assigned readings and consolidate their understanding of core concepts.

This guide is published on the Pressbooks platform. Access to this platform is available through eCampus Ontario. According to the website, "Pressbooks is an open source content management system designed for creating books. It is based on WordPress, and can export content in many formats for ebooks, webbooks or print."

Created by the developers of WordPress, the platform is relatively user-friendly and allows authors to embed multimedia and interactive contents, such as H5Ps.

13. [Martha] The use of text as well as interactive activities is designed to support deep learning, i.e., to encourage reading skills that can be used throughout a student's undergraduate career as they are required to read a variety of texts in multiple courses.

14. [Martha] Based on my experience writing and revising the first-year seminar open access textbook, I again use Pressbooks to write a publish two new books: the gamer and game master guides for *Do we take shelter? Evaluating "high stakes" information*. Do we take shelter? is an immersive role-playing game that I have written to play in my first-year seminar. I belong to the Reacting to the Past Consortium. Members of this consortium are typically American and Canadian history instructors and "Reacting to the Past is an active learning pedagogy of role-playing games designed for higher education. In Reacting games, students are assigned character roles with specific goals and must communicate, collaborate, and compete effectively to advance their objectives."

15. [Martha] The purpose of my game is to teach students how to evaluate a variety of primary sources by considering the authority or influence of the author(s) and the embedded bias. The game handbook contents the gameplay rules and instructions for students. Instructors use the game master handbook to lead students in game play. Currently, this game is an open access resource which allows other instructors to integrate it into their curricula via a website and these two open-source textbooks.

In both cases (the first-year seminar and the game). I have found Pressbooks to be a user-friendly tool that allows me to publish materials relatively quickly. In addition, both OERs have gone through a form of peer review. The first-year seminar reading guide underwent a blind peer review that was facilitated by eCampus Ontario. In fact, eCampus Ontario required us to use the peer feedback to make revisions to the original course that we designed. Members of the Reacting to the Past

Consortium have read and playtested *Do we take shelter?,* including the handbooks.

16. [Martha] Learn more about using Pressbooks in Part II of this video series.
    [Irena] To summarize:
    - OERs offer opportunities to efficiently produce peer-reviewed, multimedia, interactive content.
    - Content in this form can promote deep learning for students.
    - Platforms such as Pressbooks are available to teachers and researchers and can be used to publish OERs. Sometimes there are institutional supports for using these tools.
    - Funding bodies may (or may not) expect the use of some open access resources.
    - OERs can give researchers and teachers greater control over the publishing process.

17. Thank you for viewing this production of the Digital Pedagogy Project at Carleton University. Please see the show notes below the video for more information, resources, and contact information.