As we enter the second year of the current Three Year Plan (TYP) 2012-15, I have taken some time to reflect and review the past one year to understand how we implemented various activities to reach the planned outcomes. On looking back, I feel satisfied to report our esteemed readers that we achieved almost all the activities that we started to implement. Most of these were possible because of the support we received directly and indirectly from many of you. We developed collaborative partnerships with many institutions in the region, notably the British Council in India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Wawasan Open University, and National Institute of Open Schooling. We worked in close cooperation of over 30 institutions in six countries of the Commonwealth Asia. Over 700 people participated in various activities, of which 35% were women. Some of the significant developments are Virtual Open Schooling, OER-based eLearning, ICT Leadership, Institutional Policy for Open Educational Resources (OER), Community of Practice for Teacher Educators, Certificate Course in Community Radio Technology, Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit, and promotion of Web Radio. While we also completed three workshops on behalf of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt of India for creating awareness on Community Radio, CEMCA established leadership role in OER and Open Access in the region.

In this issue of EduComm Asia, we bring to you the regular features with a focus on OER. The Guest Column by Tan Sri Dato’ Prof. Gajaraj Dhanarajan focusses on the need of quality OER, which is also a theme of a book published by CEMCA. In Case Study section, we present to you the story of student support services at the Korean National Open University (KNOU). The spotlight section presents a landmark initiative by the Government of India – the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT), which has resulted in many successful developments, including the A-VIEW reviewed in the Software Review section. In the SMART Tips section, Dr. Kiron Bansal describes how the Community Radio stations can collect data and develop listeners’ profile to support content development that are based on the needs of the listeners. In the Technology Tracking section, we present to you a new way of displaying knowledge and skills using Open Badges. We have tried to put together useful information in the sections such as Worth While Web, Book Review and Forthcoming Events.

The year ahead is full of challenges as we continue our work to implement the TYP and use our experiences of the past one year to strengthen our strategies. We will also look into some of the activities more critically to gather evaluation data to learn from the perspective of a process-oriented evaluation. Your support and continuous engagement is critical to keep us focussed on implementation of the TYP. We have been able to bring the newsletter due to your support and regular feedback, and I would encourage you to continue doing the same to keep the relevance of the Newsletter. Do write to us about what you want to see more in the Newsletter, and how you can be part of the team of contributors.

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra
Guest Column...

Open Educational Resources: A Perspective on Quality
By Tan Sri Dato’ Prof. Gajaraj Dhanarajan
Wawasan Open University, Penang

This Guest Column is an edited version of the Keynote presentation by Tan Sri Dato’ Prof. Gajaraj Dhanarajan at the Regional Consultation Workshop on Developing Quality Guidelines for Open Educational Resources organized by CEMCA. We present the same for the benefit of our readers. - Editor

Though OER is not an education provision but an educational resource provision that is open to all, the principles of quality in the production, distribution and utilization of the resource cannot be totally different from that of good practice in Distance Education (DE), which also is engaged in the production, distribution, utilization, and support of learning content. I will therefore draw on that experience to discuss four areas:

- The practice of Quality Assurance in Higher education
- A perspective on Quality
- The meaning of Quality Assurance in the context of Open Educational Resources
- A rethink on Openness

The practice of quality assurance in higher education

In the Asia-Pacific region generally there has been an increase in activity relating to the measurement of Quality in Higher Education. The proliferation of national quality assurance agencies [under a variety of names] is a reflection of this growth. Of the 102 members of the Asia Pacific Qualification Network [APQN] about 22 are National Qualification or Accreditation Agencies. Most of them are also members of the International Networks of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education [INQAAHE 2007] and they collectively had developed a Guideline of Good Practice to ensure quality in institutions of higher learning. This guideline is beginning to influence national protocols for the measurement of quality amongst all 102-member states. The systems following the guidelines are mostly set up to measure the quality of conventional systems and not necessarily Non-Conventional Systems. With the growth of non-conventional forms of provisions in Higher Education, both APQN and INQAAHE are proposing to develop separate guidelines to measure QA of non-conventional systems, in the near future. Until such time the practice of measuring quality of open, online, virtual and e learning, when measured, will continue to be benchmarked like any other conventional system [C. Latcham & Jung, I.S 2009]1 Such benchmarks will include teaching, learning, research student support, administration, resource provisions such as finance, libraries, staffing, learning resources, staff student ratios, etc. While some of these have a lot of commonness between both the conventional and distance education systems, many others clearly will have different parameters [e.g. staff: student ratios]. Governments or their agencies vested with the responsibility of monitoring quality and standards in their institutions of higher whether they are conventional or non-conventional in Asia may need to address issues of this nature in a more thoughtful way where quality is not compromised and innovations not inhibited. Open Educational Resources will fall under this category of innovations.

This would mean looking at quality issues around a set of parameters on management, teaching, resources, research, governance and learning outcomes, altogether some eleven areas [see Box 1]. This approach has the advantage of ensuring parity between both systems in terms of processes, finance, governance and infrastructural requirement such as space, IT and quality of outputs [through conversations with different stakeholders]. The disadvantages are the obvious sidelining of serious differences in the vision, mission, entry behavior of students, the rigour and team effort in designing curriculum and transforming it into learning materials, the flexible requirements for completion of programmes, effort in pedagogical innovations and a whole range of value adding elements not found in

Box No 1: List of issues subscribed by QA agencies in the region

- The Vision and Mission of the Institution
- The design and transformation of curriculum into self learning materials
- Assessment of learners
- Learner support systems
- Academic Staff - quality, recruitment and professional development
- Educational resources - IT services, libraries
- Program monitoring and evaluation,
- Governance and Leadership
- Continuous quality improvement
- Financing

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conventional systems. This has been a cause for concern, generally.

**A perspective on quality**

The measurement of quality as it is currently applied to higher education generally and distance education particularly is contentious. There are those who argue that we are still not very explicit in establishing unambiguous parameters for the measurement of quality, in higher education, when it comes to learning experience or learning outcomes. Some of the uncertainties relate to criteria and standards applied to measurements, the purpose of these measurements and sometimes even the legitimacy of these measurements. [Kis, 2005]. A further question on measurements of quality relate to the kinds of paradigms applied. Australian researcher D. Kelly [2003] argues that there are two paradigms to consider. The first is the ‘Instruction Paradigm’, and the second the ‘learning Paradigm’. These are not mutually exclusive to each other but they require a separation for a fair measurement.

In the ‘Instruction Paradigm’, the learning is held constant and the time varies, recognizing that students learn at different rates. Open Distance Learning Universities, which respond to adults and others, who have been marginalized from mainstream higher education will have to be looked at in the context of the ‘Learning Paradigm’ rather than the ‘Instruction Paradigm’. This by our defined purpose of OER should also include it. Table 1 below illustrates some new basis of practice and measurement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Paradigm (Instruction)</th>
<th>New Paradigm (Learning)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher/Institution Centered</td>
<td>Learner Centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hegemonic</td>
<td>Differential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Size Fits All</td>
<td>Tailored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us vs Them</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescriptive</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time as Constant/ Learning as Variable</td>
<td>Learning as Contact/Time as Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Credentials</td>
<td>Teacher Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated Experience</td>
<td>Aggregated Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional/National</td>
<td>International/Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Delivery Model</td>
<td>Distributed Delivery Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quality in the context of Open Educational Resources**

In a world populated by more than 1.5 Billion Internet users seeking to establish the quality of openly available educational resources, accessible and useable by any or all, raises more questions than the availability of answers. Cyberworld is freedom unlimited. Framing quality in such a world will be at the least, challenging. That in fact is the challenge for those taking part in this workshop. Quality in the context of OER can be about many things. It could be about accuracy of content, effectiveness or ease of use, branding, peer review, ratings by users, validation, self-evaluation, shareability, timeliness, usability, accessibility, currentness of content, licensing arrangements and others. The task becomes a little less challenging if it is contextualized in one of three aspects. These are the:

i. **Quality in the production of OER:**

The COL published a set of guidelines relating to OER in 2011. Included in the guidelines was a simple set of rules for the production of OER [see box]. These are useful.

Similarly in a report published by JISC and periodically revised attention was drawn to the importance of trust in

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establishing the quality of an OER. The trust of the community in the creator’s expertise determined the value placed on the content made available. This is further buttressed by the reputation of the, institution, the standards of technical production, accessibility as well as the fitness for purpose. The two views are not contradictory but what is clear is that the value of an OER to a potential user is multi-dimensional and, in higher education at least, the reputation of the creator of the OER adds enormous weight to the OER. Wayne Mackintosh\(^4\) considers that in education quality is a more a process than a product that in the case of OER the product that finds itself on the web has been put there by the creator who in placing the content on the web with its OER label is permitting further iteration. The process is a continuous cycle of iterations and with each an improvement of the quality of content and therefore it begets recognition.

ii. Quality from the perspective of users:

In another context before the era of the OER, Dhanarajan and Timmers in 1997\(^7\) examined the issues which at that time were considered most critical for the successful importing and adopting of courses from second and third party sources. They identified ten issues of which the following has a resonance to those wanting to use OER either in an institutional or individual basis. These are: curriculum/content, instructional design, academic standards, technical considerations, licensing arrangements and assessment/examination strategies. These are critical elements on the appropriateness of OER use and very much relate to the quality of usage. While at the individual level the stringency of requirement may not be absolute at the institutional level the quality of using OER to deliver courses requires absolute stringency. In 2000 the Institute of Higher Education Policy published a set of guidelines for online teaching\(^8\). The institute made seven recommendations, which it considered essential for quality internet-based education of which five have a value in the context of this workshop. They are:

- **Institutional support benchmarks:** such as reliable and accessible technology platforms
- **Course structure benchmarks:** such as minimum standards for course design, development and delivery
- **Course development benchmarks:** including links to supplementary materials, course information on course objectives, concepts, ideas and learning outcomes.
- **Student support benchmarks:** including information about programmes, admission criteria, examination requirements, technical assistance to the technologies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2: The COL-UNESCO guideline for producers of OER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Include labeling to indicate what learning needs the resource addresses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Allow the creation of variations and enhancements through open licenses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support flexible styling (e.g., enlarging the font, enhancing the colour contrast and adjusting the layout for students with vision impairments or mobile devices);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support keyboard control of functions and navigation (for students who cannot use or do not have access to a mouse or pointing device);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide audio or text descriptions of non-text information presented in videos, graphics or images (for students who have visual constraints or who have limited displays);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide text captions of information presented in audio format (for students who have hearing constraints or lack audio interfaces);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cleanly separate text that can be read in the interface from underlying code or scripting (to enable translation);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Use open formats wherever possible to make it easier for alternative access systems and devices to display and control the resource; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Adhere to international standards of interoperability so that OER can be used on a wide variety of devices and applications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^5\) JISC [accessed on 06 March, 2013] from: https://openeducationalresources.pbworks.com/w/page/24838164/Quality%20considerations

\(^6\) Mackintosh, W. in Wikieducator extracted from http://wikieducator.org/WikiEducator:Quality_Assurance_Framework/Contribution_Levels


\(^8\) The Institute for Higher Education Policy [2000]: Quality on the Line. Washington, USA.
academic provisions invariably will apply a different lens from those of advocates, producers or consumers of OER. Their views will be shaped by both their traditions of what higher education is and what it should be, to serve its expected roles and responsibilities as a social service to citizens. Both will not only consider the academic content and its fit to the overall curriculum of a programme or course but also consider how well it is situated within a course in terms of accuracy, assessment, value add, context and of cost, pedagogy and learning outcomes. There is yet no explicit evidence available on views of accrediting agencies or institutional administration on the subject of OER. This may reflect one or both of two things, in Asia. The first is that OER in the educational milieu has not made its presence felt despite the efforts of UNESCO, COL and the hundreds of scholars. The second is that independent, self-directed learning amongst Asia’s 2 billion people is not at the level that governments and their policy makers are forced to take notice of OER. Perhaps this will change just as the Internet and mobile phones have forced them to reconsider policies relating to access to information, cost of communication, freedoms and liberties of individuals.

Rethinking Openness

The main and attractive feature about OER is the notion that the openness ‘removes all restrictions placed in accessing learning resources from copyright regulations to financial constraints’. In the context of our workshop and the practice of education as we know it in Asia, the literature does not adequately address the consequence of open access in terms of educational practice. True openness should mean not only the removal of restrictions on the resources but also more importantly on the liberalizing practices and policies regulating education. Even with almost fifty years of exemplar development of Open Distance Education, as I remarked earlier, expectations of and conditions imposed on providers of education by governments, accrediting agencies and institutional administrators, has not brought about the total liberalization that advocates of OER imply.

Jeremy Knox [2013]9, a Ph.D. student at the School of Education, University of Edinburgh, in one of his blogs highlighted five observations of the open educational resources movement. I would like to leave you with those five statements as you ponder quality of OER:

i. “Much of the OER literature focuses on the removal of perceived barriers to access, and thus neglects adequately to consider how self-directed learning might actually take place in the absence of the educational organization.

ii. OER literature often promotes a paradoxical claim of institutional circumvention alongside an explicit endorsement of the accreditationsystems and prestige of established university structures.

iii. This endorsement of the institution is problematically combined with a neglect to address the role of pedagogy within the university and an exaggerated and untheorised promotion of learner-centred education.

iv. The OER movement tends to make presumptions about the ability of human beings to self-direct in the processes of learning, often appearing to assume the innate qualities of autonomy and instrumental rationality.

v. The use of OER can be perceived, not as a more rational improvement to education, or a more humane and naturalized form of learning, but as a further refinement in the exercise of power.”

OER is an innovation for good, its value to education, however for now, has to be tampered with the reality of educational practice and culture in our part of the world and not just by sheer exuberance of the newly converted.

Spotlight On...

National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology

By Deepali Tyagi

With a view to seamlessly provide quality educational content and to pool the collective wisdom for the benefit of all the eligible and willing learners in India by reducing the digital divide, Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD) launched its ambitious project - National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT). NMEICT has a vision of catering to the learning needs of the working population in India by providing a one stop solution to all the requirements of the learning community. It has envisaged content and connectivity as the twin pedals for initiating and accelerating ICT-enabled Higher Education. The ‘One Stop Education Portal’- “SAKSHAT” was launched on October 30, 2006 to facilitate learning for students, teachers and those in employments or in pursuit of knowledge free of cost to them.

Availability of large number of human resource of high intellectual caliber; the advent of very low power consumption devices and connectivity options; lack of timely and easy availability of knowledge resources to all – are some of the factors that have created the need for such a Mission. Under this Mission, a proper balance between content generation, research in critical areas relating to imparting of education and connectivity for integrating our knowledge with the advancement in other countries are also being attempted. Although disjointed and sporadic efforts have been going on in this area by various institutions and isolated success stories are also available, a holistic approach is the need of the hour. This Mission seeks to support such initiatives and build upon the synergies between various efforts.

The cardinal philosophy of the Mission is that

- no talent of the country should be allowed to go waste,
- all the services available through the content delivery portal should be free, and
- freely available material on the web should be used so as to avoid reinventing the wheel.

Continuing with the philosophy adopted for the construction of SAKSHAT, the Mission encourages support and welcome every intellectual and agency, whether Non-governmental or Governmental, to contribute for the growth and development of the portal by way of development of e-content and the uploading of it on to the portal or by contributing to the existing features or by adding new features to the portal.

The effort of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is geared towards creating an open house for knowledge. The approach would be to scrupulously avoid reinventing the wheel. The approach is to get whatever has already been developed – by entering into MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) with the concerned IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) holders, and then to further build the system, to add value for achieving the desired goals.

E-books and e-journals are also linked through “SAKSHAT”. The Mission also includes the digitization of video content so as to make them web enabled. Benchmarking learning content which ensures quality is central to the philosophy of the Mission. In order to accomplish its major objective of utilizing latest technologies to make higher education easily accessible, the Mission provides financial assistance for the procurement of hardware or replacement of the obsolete hardware. Mission also encourages individuals as well as institutions to undertake research projects for the development of new technologies and innovations. The Mission also looks into the
standardization and quality assurance of contents & certification. Developing suitable pedagogical methods for various classes and intellectual caliber and research in e-learning is also kept in mind while framing the objectives of the NMEICT. Presently, the content being developed for Sakshat under this Mission is in English. So the research project to develop language converter tool kits so as to convert the content developed in English into Dravidian languages is undergoing in the Amrita VishwaVidyapeetham. Mission also encourages the development and realization of Virtual Laboratories and supporting facilities for e-learning. In line with this objective, IIT Delhi set up the Virtual Lab.

Even the best e-content cannot have any significant impact unless it reaches the vast majority of learners with ease, as and when they demand it. Therefore, experimentation and development of ultra-low cost low power access devices/laptops for a wider coverage of learners & their field trials is also functioning in this line. Establishing a strong communication network between institutions of Higher Learning is imperative for the spread of the best practices and the best knowledge modules by encouraging shared learning from the experts in the country. It is with this consideration in mind, institutions of higher learning will be connected to each other through Integrated National Knowledge Network (iNKN). Some of the projects undertaken by NMEICT that are showing promise and/or results are:

- National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL): A project for video-based and web-based courses for Engineering and technology areas, initiated by seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT Bombay, Delhi, Guwahati, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Madras and Roorkee) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc). See http://nptel.iitm.ac.in/index.php
- Spoken Tutorial: The Spoken Tutorial project is about teaching and learning a particular FOSS (Free and Open Source Software) like Linux, Scilab, LaTeX, PHP & MySQL, Java, C/C++, LibreOffice etc. via an easy Video tool - Spoken Tutorials. See http://spoken-tutorial.org/
- A-View: A versatile eLearning tool for distance education, developed by AMRITA University, it is a simple, user friendly video conferencing software, which provides a teacher to teach in a live interactive mode to various geographical locations. See http://aview.amrita.ac.in/
- Web-hosting Management System: is a website hosting service that allows universities, colleges and institutions to create their own website accessible via the World Wide Web.
- OSCAR: Open Source Courseware Animations Repository (OSCAR) is to make available a large repository of web-based animations with interactive features for teaching various concepts and topics. In addition to being a useful aid for classroom teaching, these animations can also enable distance education and independent learning.

Written by Ms. Deepali Tyagi using different sources.

Internship Available

CEMCA offers internship to graduate and postgraduate students to gain work experience in the area of CEMCA’s field of competence and enhance their academic knowledge through practical work assignments. Internships are available for 2-6 months, and should be part of the learning and development plan of the candidate. For details visit Knowledge Management page at CEMCA Website.
Worth While Web

Major OER Platforms:

1. **OER Commons**: Project created by ISKME. [http://www.oercommons.org/](http://www.oercommons.org/)
2. **Connexions**: Educational content repository and a content management system developed and maintained by Rice University. [http://cnx.org/](http://cnx.org/)
5. **NPTEL**: E-learning through online Web and Video courses in Engineering, Science and humanities streams funded by MHRD, Government of India. [http://nptel.iitm.ac.in/index.php](http://nptel.iitm.ac.in/index.php)
6. **MERLOT**: A free and open online community of resources for higher education, online learning materials. [http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm](http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm)
8. **WikiEducator**: Focuses on building capacity in the use of Mediawiki and related free software technologies for mass-collaboration in the authoring of free content. [http://wikieducator.org/Main_Page](http://wikieducator.org/Main_Page)
10. **Peer 2 Peer University (P2PU)**: Helps in course design, content sleuthing, course marketing, and, in some cases, help with technical development. [https://p2pu.org/en/](https://p2pu.org/en/)
11. **CK-12**: Read online, print a copy, or use it on any device. Our content can be used with the Kindle, iPad, NOOK, and more. [http://www ck12.org/student/](http://www ck12.org/student/)
12. **OpenLearn**: Open University programme where one can browse the topic to discover articles, videos, games, join the debates & enroll in free courses. [http://www.open.edu/openlearn/](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/)
13. **IGNOU Flexilearn**: Learning resources integrated with learning management system to access courses of the Indira Gandhi National Open University. [http://www.ignouflexilearn.ac.in/flexilearn/](http://www.ignouflexilearn.ac.in/flexilearn/)

OER Projects:

14. **OLnet**: Supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, OLnet is a partnership project between The Open University, UK and Carnegie Mellon University, USA. [http://www.olnet.org/](http://www.olnet.org/)
15. **CC OER Projects**: A PER tracking project of Creative Commons, growing with the support of the OER Community worldwide. [http://wiki.creativecommons.org/OER_Project](http://wiki.creativecommons.org/OER_Project)
16. **Responsive Open Learning Environments (ROLE)**: Collaborative project with 16 internationally renowned research groups from 6 EU countries and China. [http://www.role-project.eu/](http://www.role-project.eu/)

OER Search:

17. **OCW Finder**: A high quality educational materials of higher education institutions based in USA. [http://opencontent.org/ocwfinder/](http://opencontent.org/ocwfinder/)
18. **Jorum**: Run by Mimas, based at the University of Manchester to collect and share learning and teaching materials, allowing their reuse and repurposing. [http://www.jorum.ac.uk/](http://www.jorum.ac.uk/)

About OER:

19. **Commonwealth of Learning**: Find lots of resources on OER at our COL website. [http://www.col.org/resources/publications/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.col.org/resources/publications/Pages/default.aspx)
20. **SCORE**: Support individuals, projects, institutions and programmes across the higher education sector in England with creating, sharing and using OER. [http://www.open.ac.uk/score/](http://www.open.ac.uk/score/)
21. **OER Knowledge Cloud**: The OER Knowledge Cloud tracks research on OER and annotate these for enhancing research opportunities in OER. [https://oerknowledgecloud.org/](https://oerknowledgecloud.org/)
Vocational Education through Open Schooling

The rain and beautiful serene environment of Vypin Island at Kochi provided the right atmosphere for the participants of the national consultative workshop on developing strategies for implementing National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) for Open Schooling in India from 20-21 June 2013. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt of India notified NVEQF in September 2012 that envisaged all vocational education training providers to adopt appropriate systems for increasing the number and quality of skilled human resources in India. CEMCA in collaboration with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), India organized the event attended by representatives of the industries, National Skill Development Corporation, Sector Skills Councils, officials of state Governments form Haryana, West Bengal and Kerala, and MHRD, and academia from universities. With a right balance of the stakeholders, the group discussed specific ways of organizing vocational education through open and distance learning, and how it can be aligned with the provisions of NVEQF to provide quality skill training. The discussion paper for the workshop was prepared by Prof. Mohan Menon, who facilitated the workshop, and Prof. Ram Takwale, Former Vice Chancellor of IGNOU inaugurated the workshop by delivering the Keynote address.

ICT workshops for Teacher Educators of Karnataka

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in collaboration with IT for Change, and the Department of State Education Research and Training, Karnataka organized two workshops on ICT integrated Teacher Education focusing on ‘Communities of Practice for Teacher Educators’. Both the five-day workshops covered various web tools, free educational software tools and components of basic computer literacy. The participants were introduced to the CoP platform for teacher educators and its features including access to resources, mailing groups, etc. Educational tools such as Geogebra, Audacity, PhET and Record My Desktop were demonstrated. Some of the advanced learners also practised using these tools for learning and for resource creation. The participants incorporated various digital resources as video links, images and mind maps (Free Mind) in their lessons. Resources created by faculty were reviewed through peer discussions and through the email group. Participants were introduced to Wiki and the ideas of collaborative resource creation and they also accessed the Karnataka Open Educational Resources (KOER). The workshop 1 was organised at the Bangalore Urban DIET (District Institute of Education and Training), Bangalore from 3-7 June, 2013 for CTE (College of Teacher Education) and DIET faculty from the Bangalore and Mysore divisions. In his inaugural address, Sri H.S. Ramarao, Director, DSERT spoke about the revisions of curriculum, syllabus and textbooks and how the new curricula puts higher demands on teachers in terms of a constructivist approach to educational transaction and assessment. The second workshop was organised at the DIET, Dharwad, Karnataka from 11-15 June, 2013 for CTE (College of Teacher Education) and DIET faculty from the Belgaum divisions. In all 42 teacher educators attended the workshops and are actively working on the CoP to share their work.
Second Institutional Capacity Building Workshop for OER-based eLearning

The second institutional capacity building workshop for OER-based eLearning was held at Wawasan Open University, Penang, Malaysia from 10-14 June, 2013. Based on the agreement reached at the first workshop held in January 2013, participants worked in groups to develop five modules on integrating OER in teaching and learning in between the first and the second workshop. In the second workshop, the participants presented the modules, and through peer review and discussion, revised the modules to take the project to the next level. The five modules developed are: (i) Concepts and Practices in Open Education, (ii) Principles of eLearning Experience Design, (iii) Evaluating and Selecting OER; (iv) Open Content Licensing, and (v) Integrating OER in eLearning. Besides these five modules, four case studies on integrating OER in teaching-learning have also been prepared by the participants. Though the number of participants in the workshop dropped from the first one, those 15 participants who attend the second workshop demonstrated high level of understanding of integrating OER in developing new learning resources, as they developed scenario-based learning materials on the subject itself. This workshop was attended by two representatives from twelve out of the fourteen CRS. The workshop discussed the challenges faced by the CRS in Bangladesh, and using the framework developed by CEMCA, CEMCA worked in groups to categorise the challenges into technical, social, institutional and financial aspects. The participants developed a template to prepare action plan in short, mid and long term and identified the specific issues and actions required to make the CRS sustainable.

Operational Sustainability for Community Radio Stations

As the fourteen functional community radio stations (CRS) in Bangladesh enter their third year, challenges of making CRS a sustainable operation have begun to emerge. CEMCA with its continuing engagement on this issue facilitated a three day exploratory workshop for functional CRS in collaboration with Bangladesh NGO Network for Radio Communication (BNNRC). Hosted by Radio Mahananda at Chapal Nawabgunj, the workshop was attended by two representatives from twelve out of the fourteen CRS. The workshop discussed the challenges faced by the CRS in Bangladesh, and using the framework developed by CEMCA, CEMCA worked in groups to categorise the challenges into technical, social, institutional and financial aspects. The participants developed a
Workshops on Open Educational Resources

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) supported three Workshops on Open Educational Resources (OER) during April – June, 2013. All the three workshops used the WikiEducator platform to facilitate the use of wiki skills development for creation of OER. The workshops covered the history and development of OER, its significance, basic wiki editing skills, and open licensing issues to help the teacher participants in the three universities develop a better understanding of OER.

The first workshop was held at the Apeejay Stya University (ASU) Campus located at Sohna- Palwal Road from 26-28th April, 2013. Attended by 25 teachers of the University, the workshop was facilitated by Dr. Savithri Singh and Dr. Sarita Kumar from Acharya Narendra Dev College, New Delhi. The second workshop was held at the Campus of Open Learning of the University of Delhi from 8-10 May 2013, which was attended by 30 teachers of the oldest distance teaching institution in India. The third workshop on OER was organized at the Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University (VMOU), Kota from 17-19 May 2013. Both the second and third workshops were facilitated by Dr. Pankaj Khare and Dr. Ramesh Sharma of IGNOU. The workshop at Kota was attended by 20 teachers, including nine from other universities of the Rajasthan state.

The objectives of these workshops were to create awareness and basic skills of wiki-based OER development in tertiary level institutions. While the VMOU has adopted the institutional OER policy template developed by CEMCA, the other two institutions are actively considering sharing educational resources and using OER in development of learning materials.

Workshops to Promote Understanding of Community Radio Licensing in India

The CEMCA Community Radio Facilitation Centre (CCFC) organised two three day workshops on Community Radio (CR) licence procedure at Radio Luit, Gauhati University, from 28-30 May, 2013 and Radio FTII, Pune from 5-7 June, 2013. In both the workshops participants developed understanding of CR policy guidelines, principles and licencing procedures. Besides learning about how to guide new applicants, participants learned the empanelment procedures required to receive government sponsorships and advertisements. Both the workshops were part of the Ford Foundation supported project entitled “Enabling Media Access for Community’s Self Expression”, which comes to an end at CEMCA in August 2013. As part of the project these two workshops shared the understanding developed at CCFC on license facilitation with two groups of participants to help them assist other prospective license seekers to address the complex process and tread the path in a systematic manner.

Expanding Reach through Radio on the Web

CEMCA in collaboration with Gram Vaani Community Media has come-out with a do-it-yourself manual for setting up Web Radio using free and open source software. The draft version of the manual was tested in a workshop over three days at Hotel Star Rocks, New Delhi from 1-3 May 2013 with participants from ten institutions including Community Radio stations — Alfas-e-Mewat; Radio JUCR; Radio Luit (Gauhati University); Radio Gyan Tarnaga (K.K.Handique State Open University); Kisan Vani (INDIAN Society of Agribusiness Professionals); Delhi University Community Radio (DUCR) and ODL institutions like Karnataka State Open University; B.R. Ambedkar Open University; Vardhman Mahaveer Open University and Uttarakhand Open University. Two participants from each of the institutions learned the step-by-step
process of setting-up Web Radio right from installing open source operating systems to streaming using the draft manual. Participants provided valuable feedback based on which the manual has been revised and the version 1.0 published. The Manual is available in print, digital PDF and ePub versions. The JUCR based on the experiences in the workshop has already launched a test version of streaming, indicating the high level of enthusiasm and motivation among participants. Web radio provides a viable alternative especially in urban areas where good bandwidth is available and there is scarcity of frequency for allocation to CR. Besides expanding scope for existing CRS, setting up a web radio will also help current applicants to begin the process of content development and community engagement while waiting for their licences.

Second Community Women Broadcaster’s Master Training

The second Master Trainers’ workshop for community women broadcasters was held at Bengaluru, Karnataka from 1-4 April, 2013 for participants from eight community radio stations (CRS) from three southern Indian states. From the State of Karnataka four CRS namely - Radio Siddhartha, Tumkur; Nammadhani, Budikote; Krishi CRS, Dharwad, and Radio Active, Bengaluru participated in the training. Two CRS from Andhra Pradesh namely Radio Deccan, Hyderabad and Vishnu CRS, Bhimavaram participated, while from Tamil Nadu participants came from Kalanjiam Samuga Vanoli, Nagapatnam and Holy Cross CRS, Trichy. The four day residential training was held in the picturesque Jain University campus at Kanakpura on the outskirts of Bengaluru.

From each CRS three persons — two women from the community with prior engagement with the CRS and a station representative participated in the workshop.

The main thrust of the workshop was to build upon the participant’s communication skills leading to:

- Using Community Radio for learning which would involve sharing ideas on the behavior change and using radio for learning for better health and livelihoods.
- Development of facilitation skills which included sessions on community engagement and communication skills
- Developing CR management skills by participating in the programme and content committees
- Planning and conducting trainings conduct outreach activities to get the community to participate more actively in the radio

Post this TOT workshop, CEMCA provided modest financial support to all the eight CRS to conduct a local workshop to train about 10 community women. Overall, the cascading model of training of community women to become effective broadcaster has helped in providing training for over 140 women to engage meaningfully with their CRS.
Ensuring Quality through Continuous Improvement of Community Radio Stations

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) within its mandate of learning for development uses Community Radio (CR) as a means of reaching and engaging with the local communities to empower them, and provide access to learning opportunities. CEMCA has been promoting the establishment and use of CR for the last six years and within its current Three Year Plan (2012-13) is developing a continuous improvement framework for the CR stations. The UNESCO Chair on Community Media at University of Hyderabad is the leading partner in developing the toolkit for CR practitioners to evolve indicators for continuous improvement of the performance of CR covering all aspects of their operations focussing on improvement of quality. The broad goal of this exercise is to develop quality indicators through a participatory process, adopting the ‘Continuous Improvement’ framework. The first consultative workshop was held at University of Hyderabad on 29-30 March 2013, where participants from ten CR stations discussed the framework developed by a team of experts at the University of Hyderabad. Over two days, participants debated over several parameters of good practices that were derived on the basis of a detailed literature review undertaken by the UNESCO Chair on Community Media team. Working in groups, the participants developed performance indicators for parameters on station policies, inclusiveness, and community participation in station management, among others.

An expert peer-group workshop to validate parameters of the continuous improvement toolkit for CR was held on April 25-26 at University of Hyderabad. The main task of the validation workshop was to review, discuss in detail and refine the basic parameters and performance indicators identified in the March 2013 workshop. The deliberations led to a broad consensus about the non-negotiable principles such as participation, community ownership and management, gender equity, and representation of the marginalized groups, and also identified actionable indicators to ensure and place these on an improvement continuum. The UNESCO Chair on Community Media team lead by Professor Vinod Parvarala has prepared the toolkit that is currently under finalization. In the next phase, select CR stations in India and Bangladesh will adopt the CR-CIT to provide scope for further refinement of the toolkit.

New Publications

The following new publications have been released recently by CEMCA under CC-BY-SA license:

**EdTech Notes**

- Learning Analytics for Open and Distance Education  
  by Rebecca Ferguson
- Understanding Massive Open Online Courses  
  by Allison Littlejohn

**Books**

  by Zahir Koradia (Also available in ePub)
- Quality Assurance Guidelines for Open Educational Resources: TIPS Framework  
  by Paul Kawachi
- Ethical Practice Guidelines for Community Radio Stations  
  by Jayalakshmi C. Parameswaran
Case Study

Support Services for Distance Learners at the Korea National Open University

By Anirban Ghosh

Introduction

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system has shown a tremendous growth during the last few decades due to its unique feature of being a user-friendly system. In this system, the students are free to learn at their own pace and convenience while being away from the institution. At present, the ODL has become an integral part of higher education globally. It is an effective tool for making the provision of heterogeneous group of students as an alternative method to impart education all over world. The important objective of ODL is to promote self-study among the learners in the absence of regular face-to-face teaching. To achieve this objective, every ODL institute provides support to its learners, which comprises a cluster of facilities and activities that are intended to make the teaching-learning process easier and more interesting for the learners. Students in ODL come from diverse age group, gender and socio-economic profile. Therefore, distance learners desperately need support before, during and even after the study from the ODL institutions. The support service is one of the most important components of any successful ODL system. According to Dirr (1999), learner services are a variety of non-academic interactions that a learner expects i.e. pre-enrolment services, admissions and registration, logistics services, personal and career counselling, social support etc. But support services in ODL system not only include these non-academic services but also the academic services such as tutoring and practical facilities.

Established in 1972, the Korean National Open University (KNOU) is a mega-university with over 162,000 learners in undergraduate and graduate courses. The mission of the KNOU is to cultivate the talents needed by the country and society through higher education and create an open society of study to contribute to the development of lifelong education. The KNOU was established to i) expand the opportunities for higher education, ii) improve the quality of education and iii) provide education to senior citizens and physically disabled persons. Currently the KNOU has 22 departments with over 750 subjects.

Student Support Services

The Student Support Services (SSSs) play an important role in imparting quality education to distance learners. KNOU has well-structured student support services to support its learners. The University delivers its courses through different types of lectures using TV, VCD, Internet, Radio and face-to-face lectures. The University also provides online supplementary materials for effective learning. The University conducts Summer/Winter classes for weak students who score grade F or below C. These classes are conducted through media only, no classroom teaching is provided to these students. Some supplementary lectures through video conference are also organized at headquarters and students attend these classes at their respective regional centres. The full-time faculty members travel around the regional centres in each semester to offer special lecture, provide individual support and to interact with the students. The University provides free learning materials to the disabled students and electronic textbooks to the students with visual impairment. Translation software automatically executes and translates the written content into audio content (http://library.knou.ac.kr) for the students with such disabilities.

Technology for Student Support

The asynchronous technologies like computer conferencing, the World Wide Web, and CD-ROM etc. help flexible access to learning package. The KNOU is on right path in utilizing the ICT for higher education to reach the mass. KNOU launched its own TV Channel (OUN- Open University Network) in 1996 which transmits educational programme for 19.30 hours daily. In 2007, KNOU merged e-Learning Centre and Educational Media Development Centre into Digital Media Centre (DMC). The DMC has enough space for studio (9 nos.), editing room (23 nos.) and Video conference room. The DMC is entrusted with the production of course materials on Video, Web and Multimedia. Apart from the text book (course materials) KNOU uses four types of electronic media like TV, Cable/Satellite TV, IPTV, Internet LOD (Learning on Demand), Mobile), Multimedia (Internet LOD, Mobile), Web Based Instruction (WBI) and Audio. The TV productions are prepared on the basis of studio lecture, outdoor
reporting and are delivered through cable TV, Satellite TV, IPTV, Video & MP3 download, and M-learning. Multimedia productions are based on studio lecture, PPT slide, authoring tool like animation, picture and HTML page. Multimedia productions are delivered through the LOD, MP3 and M-learning. The web production for WBI are of four types viz. tutorial, discussion, project and experimental, and is delivered through learning management system (LMS), MP3 and PDF download. The audio type productions are based on language courses and are in the nature of lecture/narration. These productions are delivered through LOD, MP3 download and M-learning. All the materials in electronic form are either uploaded on the website or are broadcast through OUN (Open University Network). The students can access their lesson at any time they wish. 70% of the course is delivered through TV, Internet and mobile and remaining 30% is delivered through face to face teaching either by on-campus teaching or by video conferencing.

Though in the early years the audio medium was popular, but over the period, this medium has lost its popularity from 57% to 10%. Now-a-days the multimedia is more attractive than any other forms of media. The Centre for Lifelong Education is also taking the benefit of Internet for its delivery of courses. All the multimedia contents are available on LOD. One of the advantages of multimedia is that it is interactive and students can check their progress by giving feedback, as it contains self-check question banks.

The web lectures (Video+PPT) are found to be the most helpful and the students often solve their own problems. The KNOU graduate school is 100% online. Though lectures are delivered online, workshops and seminars are conducted offline at different regional centres of KNOU to facilitate the learning process.

**Tutoring System**

The University has a unique system of tutoring. The objective of tutoring system is to i) establish a learner oriented teaching & learning system and enhance quality of education, ii) to prevent the students from dropping out and motivate for continuous study and learning, and iii) to complement the shortcomings of non-interactive distance education. There are three types of tutors in KNOU viz. i) Department Tutors (engaged in academic guidance for major subjects and counselling for campus life, on and offline through tutorial website, regional campuses or study centres), ii) Regional Campus Tutors (engaged in face to face counselling through regional centres and study centres) and iii) Cyber Tutors (engaged in academic guidance and management of Internet lectures through Internet lecture site). The University has amending system for students. A senior experienced student acts as a mentor for helping new students in distance education.

**Student Welfare**

To establish a student friendly school environment through autonomous activities and self management the university maintains Nationwide Student Union, Regional Student Union and Nationwide Student Club Association. It is observed that those who are involved in club activities show higher academic achievement and are less likely to give up their study. It is also analyzed that most problems regarding the difficulties of self study are solved in sharing with fellow and senior students. The university’s regional centres also maintain Nursing Room for mothers to keep their children during their study and examination. The University provides scholarship to students from its own fund as well as from outside agencies.

**Conclusions**

The KNOU is playing a significant role in national higher education in Korea and giving the opportunities to the people who could not continue their study because of varied socio-economic reasons. KNOU utilizes a combination of media like satellite broadcasting, cable TV, Internet, mobile, IPTV etc. Textbooks and media lectures are provided to the under graduate students while graduate students have to depend only on media lectures or web based LMS.

Though the University is adopting multi-channel support services, most of the learners have to depend on ICT services. The University is promoting education in such a way that the students sitting at distance do not feel that they are isolated from their peers and feel comfortable with the support services.

*Note:* The case study is based on the project carried out under the AAOU Staff Exchange Fellowship programme in 2010.

**Reference:**


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Regional Round Up

**Education for all: Role of Open Schooling**

A 3-day International Conference on “Education for all: Role of Open Schooling” was organized by National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) which was held on March 13-15, 2013 at IDSA, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi, India. The conference was supported by Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Vancouver, Canada, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) India, and Intel. Spread over three days the conference involved six keynote addresses, delivered by world renowned educationists of India and abroad, three Panel Discussions and seventy papers presented in eleven sessions. The conference was attended by more than 200 delegates and guests from nearly twenty countries from all over the world.

Dr. M.M. Pallam Raju, Hon’ble Minister, Human Resource Development, Govt. of India inaugurated the event. Sh. R. Bhattacharya, Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India was the Guest of Honour.

Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS welcomed the delegates and emphasized the need to work relentlessly to ensure Right to Education (RTE) in letter and spirit. Ms. Frances Ferreira conveyed that COL is proud to partner with NIOS and MHRD. She stated that the conference allows ODL stakeholders to share, consult and collaborate, and she congratulated NIOS for organising the conference. Dr. Pallam Raju released the Framework of Recognition of Prior Learning during the event. While speaking on the occasion he outlined the success of Sarv Shikha Abhiyan (Education for All) and how it means that secondary education must also become universal. He felt that open schooling has significant role to play in achieving the target of Education for All.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Ms. Frances Ferreira, Dr. Sugata Mitra, Dr. Vinod Raina, Prof. Shyam Menon, Prof. Santosh Panda, and Prof. (Dr.) Mukti Mishra. A panel discussion on “Issues of Access and Equity” was chaired by Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal, Founder Chairman, NIOS, and moderated by Ms. Lystra Sampson Ovid, Trinidad & Tobago. The panellists were Prof. Usha Nayar, Professor (Retd.), NCERT and Prof. Janaki Rajan, of Jamia Millia Islamia. Another panel discussion was on “Vocational Education and Skill Development”, chaired by Ms. Fancy Amey, Director, Learner Support, Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL), Botswana. The moderator for the session was Mr. Joshua Mallet, Director, CENDLOS, Ghana. The panellists were Dr. Joginder S. Sodhi, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations, Human Resources, Economic & Social Development, New Delhi; Ms. Ankita Mishra Bundela, Dy. Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India, New Delhi; and Dr. K.P. Wasnik, Director (Vocational Education), NIOS, NOIDA. The third panel discussion was on “Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies”, which was chaired by Prof. M.M. Pant, Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU. The speakers were Prof. M.N. Deshmukh, Former Director, SSA, IGNOU; Dr. R.C. Sharma, IGNOU, New Delhi; Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Director (Academic), NIOS, Delhi; and Sh. S.K. Prasad, SAP, NIOS.

Ms. Fredricka Meijer, UNFPA Representative India and Country Director Bhutan was the Chief Guest for the Valedictory Programme. Sh. U.N. Khaware, Secretary, NIOS delivered the vote of thanks.
IDEA 2013

Indian Distance Education Association (IDEA) organised the IDEA-2013 International Conference at the Maulana Azad National Open University (MANUU) on April 5 - 7, 2013. About 200 delegates, including representatives from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh participated in the conference. The Conference took off to a stimulating start on 5th of April 2013 with the inauguration of the event by Shri Jitin Prasada, Hon’ble Minister for State for HRD, Govt of India. He highlighted the role of open and distance learning in the 21st Century. Shri Prasada laid stress on the need for the education sector to meet the increasing demands from all stakeholders and also emphasised the need to educate for employment and empowerment, providing access and equity to serve as a support mechanism for the disadvantaged groups.

The main objectives of the conference were to share ideas, information and experiences on different issues, methods and technologies for quality assurance, standardization and delivery of education beyond boarders. Under the theme “Disseminating Learning, Diminishing Borders - ODL in 21st Century” the conference discussed quality concerns and best practices in open and distance learning, social networking and collaborative learning, learners’ support and learning communities, user friendly technologies, research and development, capacity building, language barriers, women in ODL, etc. Prof. V. S. Prasad, presented Prof. G Ram Reddy Memorial Lecture, on “The Disconnect between Dharma and Karma in Indian ODL”.

(Report by Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed I. Patel)

Book Review

Open Educational Resources: An Asian Perspective


By Dr. S. K. Pulist

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is leading the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement across the globe. While its main thrust is on ‘learning for development’, it uses OER to increase access to quality learning resources. The book, under review, jointly published by COL and OER Asia, with support from Wawasan Open University (WOU), Malaysia and International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada provides a comprehensive overview of country reports from China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines and Vietnam and ten different case studies undertaken on OER movements in higher education institutions in the Asian region.

The development of OER activities in the Asian region is presented in this volume from different perspectives. The book is divided into three main parts - ‘Overview’, ‘Country Perspectives’ and ‘Case Studies’, further sub-divided into 20 Chapters in all. Each Chapter shares an exclusive experience with the readers. The ‘Overview’ by Dhanarajan and Abeywardena presents the current scenario on OER in the Asian region. The authors see the OER movement as a ‘way of addressing the dual challenge of quality and equity’. However, they are concerned about the knowledge, effective use and policy provisions with regard to OER. While Chapter 1 presents the current status of OER initiatives and development in the mainland China, Chapter 2 presents result of a survey conducted in Hong Kong on the development and use of OER. In Chapter
3 the authors highlight the steps taken by the Indian Government in popularization of OER as a movement while discussing the overview of higher education in the country. Chapter 4 discusses the prospects and challenges in promotion of OER in Indonesia, and Chapter 5 presents a report on the OER in Japan. Chapter 6 focuses on the OER initiatives in Korea and discusses different barriers in use of OER and necessary measures which would help the country in promoting the development and sharing of OER with the rest of the world.

The OER awareness in Malaysia is spreading now and the higher education institutions feel the need of intensifying this movement. Chapter 7 highlights that for want of a concrete policy on OER at national level, the institutions are yet to make full use of OER as a ‘mainstream’ practice in Malaysia. Chapter 8 discusses the development and use of OER at the Virtual University of Pakistan, and identifies enablers and barriers in its promotion. In Chapter 9, authors present the findings of a study on OER in Philippines Higher Education system. Chapter 10 presents that institutions in Vietnam have participated in the OER movement. However, ‘traditional teaching habits, indifferent attitude and absence of ‘sharing culture’ among others have proved to be obstacles in open and liberal use of OER in the country. Chapter 11 discusses the development process, licensing issues, institutional policy issues and advantages connected to the development of OER application entitled “TCC242/05 Web Database Application” in Wawasan Open University, which has adopted the approach of developing self-contained course material. In Chapter 12, the authors analyse the OER efforts made at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) through the Virtual Academy for the Semi-Arid Tropics (VASAT).

Chapter 13 presents the status of different OER projects launched in Philippines in different times such as ‘WikiPilipinas’, ‘Filipiniana.net’, ‘Philippine online Chronicles’ and ‘E-turo’. These projects are launched under the aegis of “The Vibal Foundation” funded by Vibal Publishing House, Inc. Chapter 14 and 15 present two cases from India. While the former is the narration of the process of conceptualization, development, use, evaluation and re-use of the OER repository in University of Madras, the latter presents the findings of a case study done on the ‘digital repository’ developed at Indira Gandhi National Open University, India under the ‘e-Gyankosh’ initiative. Chapter 16 discusses the process of creation of Korean Open Courseware (KOCW) which aims at increasing the public access to college lectures.

Chapter 17 presents the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) that focusses on improving the quality of undergraduate and postgraduate curricula of Engineering and Technology programmes in India through OER route. Chapter 18 peeps into the activities organised by the ‘Teachers’ Online Forum’ at the Universitas Terbuka Indonesia. Chapter 19 shares the policies and practices adopted and followed taking advantage of ‘emerging technologies’ at different phases of development of OER at the Open University of Hong Kong. Chapter 20 discusses the genesis of OER at the Beijing Open University, China and its collaboration with ‘iTunes U’ to conceptualize, develop and share the OER content with the rest of the world.

The OER movement is slowly gaining momentum across the world. Different institutions are at different stages of conceptualization and development of OER. While some have welcomed the move appreciating its capabilities to internationalise education and provide quality ‘education for all’ at affordable cost, others support the move but are hesitant to be open to the world with their resources. In many cases, the institutions have started digitizing their content which is the first step in the direction of creating an OER repository. The book is a rich resource of stories showcasing the status of the OER in different institutions and countries in Asian region. It truly presents the Asian perspective on OER movement. The ideas, status reports and survey results presented by the authors indicate that the OER movement in Asia is still in the nascent stage and requires policy development and capacity building. The Book is a rich source of information on OER for planners, policy makers, teachers and researchers.

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**Dear readers,**

**EduComm Asia** is your newsletter of useful ideas, views and information. From one issue to the next, we aim to strengthen the newsletter. The best way to do so is by keeping content diverse. You can help us to do so by becoming a contributor. Write to us about educational media news and other events that you would like to see in the newsletter. All contributions shall be duly acknowledged and appreciated.

- EduComm Asia
Community Radio (CR) is people’s radio which reflects the hopes, needs and aspirations of communities in a geographical area and provides a forum to share their views, problems and concerns. Research input is required for various purposes such as identifying the location of a Community Radio Station (CRS), preparing listeners’ profile, undertaking needs assessment, content planning and programming, and eliciting audience feedback to facilitate continuous improvement in the programme delivery.

For any CRS, it is extremely important to have a good understanding of the listeners. Listeners’ profile aims to represent their socio-demographic profile, media habits and utilization patterns to produce programmes that are need-based, relevant and interesting. Since CR Stations follow participatory approaches and their dynamics are different from other media forms, the medium requires specific approaches to data collection. In this SMART Tips section, we shall focus on preparation of listeners’ profile using survey method for which the steps involved are planning, sample selection, designing interview schedule, administering the schedule and data analysis and reporting.

Planning

At the planning stage you need to consider what information are to be collected, which group of population to be studied and which method will be appropriate for data collection. Plan to collect data to understand who the community members are, what is their demographic profile in terms of distribution of age groups, gender, family type and size, educational levels, languages spoken, type of housing, occupation and income levels, etc?

... surveying all the households in the villages covered in the range is difficult. Therefore, you may like to do a stratified random sampling based on caste and gender of the people in all the villages within the range of the CRS

The profile needs to cover issues relating to media access and habits, for example access to newspapers, radio, television; the ownership patterns – are these available at home or community centres or any other place? What are the utilization patterns – how often do they listen to radio/watch television, use mobile phone, etc. It is also useful to ascertain the type of folk media available and their usage in the community.

The researcher may also collect information relating to the historical background, geographical factors, climate, landholding and crops produced to provide a holistic picture. Some information about the local customs, festivals and leisure time activities of the listeners may also be elicited. An understanding of the general health scenario in the village such as common health problems, medical facilities available, maternal and child health care, mortality rates, and population growth patterns reveal ground realities and aid in programming.

Sample Selection

At this stage, you need to decide whether the entire village has to be covered or a representative sample from the population would suffice. The normal reach of a CRS is within the radius of 10-15 KMs. Considering this surveying all the households in the villages covered in the range is difficult. Therefore, you may like to do a stratified random sampling based on caste and gender of the people in all the villages within the range of the CRS.

Survey is the most commonly used quantitative method which aims to gather data from many respondents and generalize results from a smaller sample to larger population. Questionnaires/ Interview Schedules comprise tools of data collection for survey method. In contrast with Questionnaires which are posted (through regular mail/email) and need to be filled-in by the respondents, interview schedule has been found more useful in collecting data from rural, illiterate/semi-literate respondents as it allows the researcher to build rapport with respondents and explain the questions, if needed. The schedule can be filled-in quickly and the data obtained is comparable, hence easier to analyze. The response rate of schedules is higher as compared to questionnaires. However, the researcher needs to visit each household which can be time consuming, at times people may not be available and those available may be reluctant to answer the questions.
Designing Interview Schedule

Interview schedule needs to be designed with care and requires time and efforts. A well-designed schedule is easy to understand, has a flow comprising both close-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions allow the respondents to select an answer from the list of options, are simpler to answer, offer uniformity in responses and can be easily quantified, hence easier to process as compared to open-ended questions. However, while designing them the researcher has to list all possible range of responses. Different types of closed-ended questions such as limited choice, multiple choice, rating scales and ranking scales may be used in the schedule.

In addition, some open-ended questions may be included to elicit qualitative data and the simplest form of open-ended question relate to the inclusion of ‘why’ and ‘how’ to offer scope for detailed responses. Such questions are useful to elicit data on beliefs and opinions and also when researcher is not sure of the entire range of possible responses. However, at the analysis stage detailed responses are relatively difficult to process and interpret. Here are some do’s and don’ts of designing a schedule:

Do’s

• Use simple, easy to understand language
• Keep sentences short and to the point
• Keep in view the level of education and knowledge of the respondents
• Proceed in a logical order - from general to specific, simple to complex
• Ask one information in a question
• Define certain terms to remove ambiguity.
• Ask only those questions which are relevant to the study objectives.

Don’ts

• Include ‘leading’ or ‘loaded’ questions
• Include ambiguous questions as they will yield ambiguous data
• Include questions which require unreasonable effort to answer

If an interview schedule is to be administered in Hindi/regional language, then either it should be developed in the same language or translated as while administering the schedule, the researcher is likely to add/omit information leading to disparity in responses. The Schedule then has to be pre-tested to identify gaps and ensure clarity and based on the feedback, the schedule is finalized.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Once all the filled in schedules are collected, the data is processed and interpreted to draw findings. The numerical data is expressed in frequency and percentages and the findings are presented in a report in textual and tabular forms, interspersed with graphs and charts. The main purpose of the report is to help the CRS understand its listeners, hence it is written in simple, easy to read manner devoid of technical jargon. The report serves as a baseline data for various purposes to make the CRS more responsive to the audience needs. Experience has revealed that it is useful to involve those engaged in production from the beginning for greater acceptance and utilization of the report.

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Assessment of learner performance is one of the most important aspects of the education system to certify knowledge and skills for the employment market. The current system of student evaluation is the most rigid and inflexible one in the contemporary education system. Despite the advancement in technology, it is a difficult task to authenticate a certificate issued by an educational institution. Today, due to high speed of change in the employment market and need for diversified skills, employees need to update and upgrade themselves while in service. Online education and training has therefore become common. If as an educational provider, you are thinking of providing training and certification online that can be checked for authentication by prospective employers, and the learners themselves can use the certificate to be displayed in their online CVs, then Mozilla Open Badges is the perfect solution for you.

A digital badge is an online certificate on the skills acquired by an individual. Mozilla Open Badge Infrastructure (MOBI) gives a framework to earn, issue and display skills earned in an online environment. With MOBI you can earn badges for skills you learn online and offline, give recognition for things you teach in an organization, and show your badges in your online and offline CV.

Open Badges allows you to verify skills, interests and achievements through a credible process in an organization. The MOBI is based on open standard that allows combining multiple badges from different issuers. This is a free software that can be used by any organization to issue badges. More than 600 organizations ranging from schools to universities and non-profits to companies are already using Open Badges for their training programmes.

Lots of learning happens outside the four walls of a classroom, and in an open badge framework, an institution can even organize these into badges. What it enables is to organize evidence based assessment, and certify skills by providing a visual insignia that can be used in websites as well as printed CVs to demonstrate that an individual has a particular skill set.

The software uses an identity management system, information on the badge, and the data about the skills acquired. An issuing organization or individual makes a badge or series of badges available on a website and prompts prospective users to earn them. The earner sends the badge to their Backpack. The badge becomes portable through the Issuer API which provides script to present the earner with a dialog that requests their consent to add the issuer’s badge(s) to their Backpack. Issuer can also push badges to the Mozilla Baking Service. This is only necessary if the issuer wants the earner to have the ability to store badges outside of the OBI. Otherwise badge baking is handled through the Issuer API. Earners can share their badges through their Backpack and grant permission for a particular site to display that collection of badges. Displayers authenticate badges with the Issuer using the verification check.

While anyone can earn badges and require access to Internet and email, issuing organizations need to have the following:

- Issuers must have web server capable of serving requests to the general Internet.
- Issuers must have hosting ability.
- Issuers must have ability to make a POST request from their server backend and read a JSON response.
- Issuers must have email addresses for earners and must be able to email earners.
- Issuers must have badges (or be able to convert their badges) into the format (metadata spec) that the Assertion expects.

Implications of Open Badges

What you as reader of EduComm Asia can do? You can take the advantage, and earn several badges available on educational technology and related areas. This means, Open Badges can reflect

through Open Badges to be earned. Multiple badges earned by individuals can be displayed at one place to develop a portfolio that can be seen by prospective employers. Learning becomes continuous, and certification can be modular, and need-based. Open Badges are already implemented in major Learning Management Systems like Canvas and Moodle. The Moodle 2.5 has MOBI in-built to help design courses offering learners to earn badges. Badges create a scenario that facilitates openness in assessment of student learning. Now with Open Badges, assessment is open, modular, visible, authenticated and searchable.

See http://www.openbadges.org/

This presentation is prepared from various sources by Sanjaya Mishra, PhD

Software Review

A-VIEW (Amrita Virtual Interactive E-Learning World)

Reviewed by Ramesh C. Sharma

Introduction

E-Learning in India received a boost from the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission, which identified five key areas - access to knowledge, knowledge concepts, knowledge creation, knowledge application and knowledge services, transforming India into a knowledge society. Various eLearning solutions, services and platforms are available to students, teachers and institutions. A-VIEW is one of such interactive multimedia e-learning platforms which has been developed as a part of “Talk to a Teacher” programme under the Indian Government’s National Mission for Education using Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) by Amrita E-Learning Research Lab, Kerala, India in association with IIT Bombay.

Technical aspects

A-VIEW, a versatile e-learning tool for distance education is available for free to use basis. It can run successfully on multiple platforms like Windows, Macintosh, Linux, iPADs, Mobile devices like Android phones and tablets. The recent update version 3.5 allows up to 8 attendees to have video interaction with the presenter along with audio with many. Users can have a private chat with presenter or moderator, in addition to asking questions in general chat tab. One of the main features of A-VIEW is to record the session. The viewers can then see it from the library archives. PowerPoint animations are supported in this version. The functionality of whiteboard allows for managing text and drawings. The presenter can do video sharing, desktop sharing and document sharing. The videos can be uploaded in mp4/flv formats, in addition to sharing a YouTube link. The video editing feature allows the presenter/moderator to edit the unwanted video scenes from a recording. Another improvement in this software is support for multi-bitrate streaming for ‘High Definition’ and ‘Low Latency’. Thus the attendees can select low, medium or high bitrate stream of the presenter based on the bandwidth available to them. The developers have taken care of security feature too. The face recognition feature allows authenticated login once the user registers face through the application. A-VIEW has useful features for teachers in the form of live Quiz (where the attendees can see their results), polling to obtain feedback on a topic or issue during discussion, allowing attendees to pose questions through question interface, and application sharing for training or troubleshooting purposes. The teacher is further allowed for collaborative synchronized sharing of 2D and 3D animations and Videos.

See http://www.openbadges.org/
Potential to teach masses

A-VIEW is very suitable for teaching to large classes (can be a good platform for teaching as a MOOC – Massive Open Online Course). Its interface is very simple and thus even non-tech persons can easily use A-VIEW to teach or attend sessions by others.

Educational Reach / Implementation of A-VIEW Classroom

A-VIEW is being used not only in India but many other institutions over the globe like Radbound University, Netherlands; University of Texas at Dallas, USA; University of California, Los Angeles; Oakland University, USA; Carnegie Mellon University, USA; Athabasca University, Canada; etc. In India more than 350 universities and around 1000 colleges are taking benefit of this e-learning tool to connect qualified experts to the students.

How to use A-VIEW

In order to teach or attend sessions, we need to install A-VIEW. (Download from http://aview.in/index). We need a computer / laptop with Internet connection, a web-cam or a video camera, and headset/speakers/microphone.

Challenges

There are some areas which need to be attended to by the A-VIEW team:

- To make use of this platform, one need to download the software (around 50 MB), this may be a challenge at places with low bandwidth. Web-based hosted service that does not require download would be a better option to users.
- To schedule a class, A-VIEW team need to be contacted, thus a teacher or user cannot schedule a class on his or her own. This reduces usability of the software by an institution and creates dependency on the A-VIEW team. Thus, institutions cannot host the services themselves at present.
- In the classroom interface there are two windows, one for chat and other for questions. These may be integrated to improve usability.
- The older recordings available in library sometime give problem in loading or running.
- It needs good bandwidth at the teacher end to teach courses with graphical content.
- Provision of uploading files / content by the user be made so that (say in the form of assignment) teaching and learning can be made interactive.

End-note

A-VIEW is getting popular among the institutions due to its capabilities of attending to large number of students, technical features and governmental support. The team from A-VIEW provides full support in terms of hardware like video camera, speakers, microphone and laptop computer to the teacher conducting a session. It is hoped that future updates of the software will address some of the current challenges. Considering the fact that it is supported by Govt of India, it would make sense to release A-VIEW as Open Source Software (with downloadable source code), thereby helping to create a community of developers around the software who can upgrade and support the same at user organizations. It is also important because the government support for software development will not be there forever, and the software to remain up-to-date and competitive requires a business model around Open Source to remain sustainable for the user organizations.

http://aview.in/
http://aview.amrita.ac.in/

Dr. Ramesh C. Sharma is Deputy Director at the Defence Unit of Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. He can be reached at rcsharma@ignoua.ac.in
Forthcoming Events

27th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities

Conference Theme: Leveraging the Power of Open and Distance Education for Building a Divergent World - Today’s Solutions and Tomorrow’s Vision
01-04 October 2013, Islamabad, Pakistan.

For more information, contact:
AAOU 2013 Conference Secretariat
Room-8, Block-7,
Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan.
Email: aaou2013@aiou.edu.pk
Web site: http://overseas.aiou.edu.pk/aaou.asp

25th ICDE World Conference in China

The 25th ICDE World Conference will be hosted by Tianjin Open University, China, on 16-18 October 2013.
Conference Theme: New Strategies for Global Open, Flexible and Distance Learning

For more information, contact:
The 25th ICDE World Conference Organizing Committee
Tianjin Open University
No.1 Yingshui Road, Nankai District,
Tianjin 300191, P.R. China
Tel: +86 22 23679937
Fax: +86 22 23678502
Email: icde@tjrvu.edu.cn

63rd Annual Conference of International Council for Education Media

ICEM 2013 1-4 October 2013, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

For more information:
Website: http://icem2013.ntu.edu.sg/

E-LEARN 2013 - World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare & Higher Education

Las Vegas, Nevada: October 21-25, 2013

For more information, see:
Web site: http://www.aace.org/conf/elearn/

International Conference on Digital Libraries (ICDL2013)

27-29 November 2013, New Delhi, India.
The international conference on digital libraries will have conference presentations, workshops and tutorials on a range of topics of interest to librarians and academics. The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre (CEMCA) is one of the associates of the event to support participants from the Commonwealth Asian countries.

For more information, contact:
ICDL 2013 Secretariat
The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)
India Habitat Centre Complex, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi-110003, India
Tel: +91 11 24682100 or 41504900,
24644654 (Direct)
Fax: 24682144
Email: ICDL2013@teri.res.in
Website: www.teriin.org/events/icdl

PCF7: Empowerment & Transformation

The theme of COL’s Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7, 2 – 6 December 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria) is Open Learning for Development: Towards Empowerment and Transformation. PCF7’s co-host, the Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria, and the lead partner institution, the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) are working to make the conference fruitful within the context of development in Africa.

For more information, see:
http://www.pcf7.net

International Malaysian Educational Technology Convention,

IMEC7th
2013 Bandung Indonesia


For more information, see:
http://imetc2013.yolasite.com/