

OCW (OpenCourseWare) and MOOC (Open Course Where?)

Sergio Martinez, University of Cantabria
sergio.martinez@unican.es

Abstract

From the beginning, Open Educational Resources have had a clear and easy definition. Hewlett's updated OER definition begins: "*OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge*".

But what one person says is not always what another one understands and, in general, the term "open" has had very different meanings: accessible, reusable, free, without restrictions... These different meanings are not very useful to promote and spread OER, especially because they create insecurity both in users and content developers. What is the reason for the confusion?

Keywords

OER, REA, Open licenses, Creative Commons, OCW, MOOC, Open, Education

1. OER and OCW

The idea behind OER is really simple: educational materials can be used freely and almost without any conditions. So, like the Creative Commons website says, they should be *libres* (accessible and reusable) and *gratis* (available at no-cost).

The development of OpenCourseWare was based, from the start, in that idea, and all its materials were available with Creative Commons licenses; some with very open licenses (like CC BY) and some others with more restrictive ones (like CC BY-NC-SA, the one we use in the University of Cantabria). It would probably be better to use always CC BY, but we found it easier to involve professors if they could keep their commercial rights over their works.

We started with [OCW](#) in 2007 and our aim was not to make a commercial product, but to spread the knowledge transference from university to society, and to get professors used to developing and using Open Educational Resources. It was not easy, but in the end we have managed to involve more than 300 professors in Open Education and to publish more than 160 courses in our OpenCourseWare site. Besides, we have not only published individual courses, but full degrees too: Economics, Nursery, Mines and Energetic Resources.

Every user who comes to our OpenCourseWare site knows exactly what they can or cannot do with its educational resources, because the license is explicitly shown. And that's just the same in every OpenCourseWare site in the world.

2. MOOC development. Changes in the meaning of "Open".

In 2010, when the OCW project was firmly consolidated, some voices began to talk about the need of new tools in OCW to make it more interactive, dynamic and social. And it was also said that some kind of assessment was required. An open course is just like a book in a bookcase: you can read it whenever you want and, with the proper license, you can use and reuse it. But, if you add evaluations you are very close to a real online course, like those offered by the university to their enrolled students.

In the end, that progress was not made in OCW, but in a new educational online tool: Massive Open Online Courses. Both OCW and MOOC are quite similar, but they also have some differences:

Table 1. Differences between OCW and MOOC

OpenCourseWare	MOOC
Static	Dynamic
Always accessible	Accessible during the course is open
Without assessment	With assessment
Without accreditation	With accreditation
Individual	Collaborative
Copyleft	Copyleft?

OCW was never considered a threat to the universities, but MOOCs came in like a “tsunami” and as somebody once said that it is better to be surfing the wave than waiting in the beach (McKenna, 2012). We don’t think that’s true but we are quite sure that MOOCs can be a threat to the OER movement.

The problem between OCW and MOOC is the meaning we choose for the term “Open”. In OCW the meaning is crystal clear: free, accessible and reusable. In MOOCs, Open means free (the materials, at least) and accessible (during the course timetable), but we are not sure if they are reusable or not. The wikipedia definition for MOOC states:

Although early MOOCs often emphasized open access features, such as open licenses of content, open structure and learning goals and connectivism, to promote the reuse and remixing of resources, some notable newer MOOCs use closed licenses for their course materials, while maintaining free access for students.

While OCW sites were developed basically by higher education institutions, MOOC providers are mainly companies, like Coursera, Udacity or Miriada X and they tend to use copyright: unless indicated as being in the public domain or under Creative Commons Licenses, the content of the Site is protected by Copyright laws (Cheverie, 2013). We can see it in Coursera, for example:

All content or other materials available on the Sites, including but not limited to code, images, text, layouts, arrangements, displays, illustrations, audio and video clips, HTML files and other content are the property of Coursera and/or its affiliates or licensors and are protected by copyright, patent and/or other proprietary intellectual property rights under the United States and foreign laws.

But, at the same time, by participating in a course the users agree to grant each provider a wide license to do whatever they want with the user’s content, as we see in Udacity:

"With respect to any User Content you submit to Udacity (including for inclusion on the Class Sites or Online Courses) or that is otherwise made available to Udacity, you hereby grant Udacity an irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual, royalty-free and non-exclusive license to use, distribute, reproduce, modify, adapt, publicly perform and publicly display such User Content on the Class Sites or in the Online Courses or otherwise exploit the User Content, with the right to sublicense such rights (to multiple tiers), for any purpose (including for any commercial purpose); except that, with regard

to User Content comprised of a subtitle, caption or translation of Content, you agree that the license granted to Udacity above shall be exclusive".

The situation is more or less the same with edX. They say:

MIT and Harvard aim to make much of the edX course content available under more open license terms that will help create a vibrant ecosystem of contributors and further edX's goal of making education accessible and affordable to the world.

But edX does not specify what license this is or where can one find it.

MOOCs are a fantastic tool to learn and to participate in a collaborative space, but their setback is that they don't do much to promote OER, but just the opposite. In OCW users can use, reuse, adapt, spread an improve materials; in MOOCs users are only spectators. Usually, MOOC platforms themselves say that they are only "repositories" and that the universities are the ones that have to put their materials under open licenses; that's true, but it is also true that it is difficult to add open licenses if the platform is not designed to do so. Moreover, we should try to show it to the users in an easier way.

It is easy to understand, if we look at the facts. If someone visits the Open Education Europe website and looks for MOOCs, we can see that only 13% of those MOOCs are under open licenses. The rest are "not acknowledged" or "copyrighted".

The MOOC phenomenon has drawn a lot of attention in the last three years, but not many experts have talked about property rights. Last 2013 there was a Meeting in Madrid about MOOCs and one of the speakers said that the first "O" in MOOCs can mean both "accessible" and "free". When I asked about the meaning "reusable" through open licenses, he said that Creative Commons licenses were quite complicated to understand and not very important in this case. Surprisingly, the audience widely agreed on that idea.

But for us, working with open licenses in MOOCs have its benefits. We can see some of them in the Creative Commons website:

OER...

- can increase the reach of their materials by making the rights to use and adapt them crystal clear from the start;
- will be able to serve even more learners because they'll be granting legal permissions to use their course content in other educational settings; and
- do not have to respond to individual permissions requests from users and can instead focus on delivering quality educational content to the largest number of students.

Besides, by using open licenses we allow others to transform the work. Doing this, it is possible, for example, for the courses to be translated to other languages, increasing their impact.

And, finally, it is possible to use a "NonCommercial" Creative Commons licence only for educational purposes, keeping the commercial rights.

3. Miriada X MOOC platform.

The University of Cantabria is working with the platform [Miriada X](#) to showcase our MOOCs. Miriada X was created by Universia (a non profit company part of Bank of Santander, which gathers almost all Spanish-speaking universities) and Telefónica Learning Services (a subsidiary of the biggest communication company in Spain: Telefónica). Its first edition can be considered

a success (more than 200.000 students, 36.000 in our university) but yet there are some problems regarding open licenses.

Its license agreement states that all contents have to be licensed with Creative Commons, but there are no tools in the platform to tag its contents with the CC license. And so, we decided to include a note in every course saying "© The authors. This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA". Besides, we add the CC license in all the videos we upload to youtube. Nevertheless, it works and if you visit Open Education Europe you can see that they consider our MOOCs as OER. Moreover, there are only 15 courses in Spanish with a Creative Commons license, and 14 of them are from the University of Cantabria.

Now we are working on demanding of Miriada X a better way to include open licenses in our MOOCs, considering it as fundamental to the increase of OER's usage and impact.

4. UC Abierta

Our aim is to showcase and spread our knowledge all around the world through different projects like OCW, MOOCs and the Open repository (Ucrea). Thus, in 2013 we decided to launch a new website [UC Abierta](#) that gathers all our open initiatives and includes some useful information about intellectual property rights, open contents in the web, and news. At the same time the principals of our university have shown their commitment with an open access to academic, scientific and research production of the university.

Since 2007, when we started with OER, we have managed to involve more than 300 professors in open education, as we mentioned before. The resources of our university are globally disseminated and they are now some of the most searched in the web.

Moreover, the decision of showcasing our resources has contributed to improve considerably the quality of said materials. And this is good for students, professors and for the university itself. Professors now understand the opportunity of showing their own materials and using Open Educational Resources. And they are now more aware about the importance of observing intellectual property rights.

For us, OER have to be part of the Universities' social mission. Universities are not isolated islands, or, at least, they shouldn't be. They are part of a big framework and this framework is the one that has to benefit from using OER. Universities have to commit themselves to provide support to the society, and the best way to achieve this is by making the access to a good education easier for everybody.

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