

Open Content:
Open Source Learning Materials
– for teachers & students –

Dr. Scott Garrigan
Director of Professional Development



What is Open Content?

Modules, courseware, books, articles, photos, audio clips, video clips that are **free to use (by teachers and students)**.

By free, we usually mean:

- No cost to **obtain** or **use**
- No cost to **duplicate** or **disseminate**
- May not be commercially sold
- May not be plagiarized as “one’s own”

MERLOT - www.merlot.org

Modules or “Learning Objects” for use in higher ed courseware, including online learning activities.

- Searchable by subject
- The oldest and most respected site/source
- Modules are contributed by instructors
- A repository for **Learning Objects** that are parts of learning activities or courses (like a Blackboard activity).

MIT OpenCourseWare

<http://ocw.mit.edu/> (about 1800 courses)

- Free access to virtually **all** MIT course materials (started around 1997).
- Use single activities, [lectures](#) or entire courses
- For instructors and students
- Ideal for structured independent study
- OpenCourseWare Consortium spans the globe:
<http://ocwconsortium.org>

Other Open Courseware

<http://cnx.org/> – The *Connexions* Project:

- hosted by Rice University
- 3500 modules for nearly 200 courses globally
- Faculty from any institution may contribute

<http://wikiversity.org/> – Wikipedia folks, again

“Where teachers learn, and learners teach.”

- Yale has recently committed to open courseware.
- Far East universities are regional OCW centers.

Open Content Books

Project Gutenberg: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

Since 1971, digitized **copyright-free books** and made available for free download.

- **20,000 books** (many classics!)
Over 100,000 texts with partners!
- **2 million downloads** per month
- *Popular downloads:* Shakespeare, Dickens, Poe, Verne, Austen, Plato, Goethe, Wilde, daVinci, Doyle, Carroll, Stevenson!

Other Open eBook Sources

<http://ota.ahds.ac.uk/> academic arts/humanities

http://www.planetpdf.com/free_pdf_ebooks.asp?

Planet PDF has classics: Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Homer, Joyce, Conrad, Kipling, Dickens, etc.

<http://www.worldlibrary.net/> World eBook

Library: 400,000 pdf eBooks (\$9 annual sub)

New Open Content: *Wikipedia!*

<http://wikipedia.org/> world's largest encyclopedia

<http://wiktionary.org/> multilingual dictionary

<http://wikisource.org/> 70,000+ "pages"

And ... <http://wikibooks.org/>

And ...

<http://www.flatworldknowledge.org>



Wikibooks: Textbooks!

<http://wikibooks.org/>

Think free. Learn free.



- 38,000 modules from 1000s of textbooks
- Book-of-the-month: *Rhetoric and Composition*
– a 1st-year college textbook
- Wikijunior book of quarter: *The Elements*
- Collaboration-of-the-month: *C# Programming*
- Written by the folks who made Wikipedia

More Textbooks!

<http://www.flatworldknowledge.org>

New site for authoritative texts

<http://freereading.net>

Reading “textbook” recently approved by
Florida State Board of Education

Open Content Photos & Videos

<http://images.google.com/>

- Searchable image database
- Google/YouTube for videos
- WikiMedia has some audio/video clips

<http://www.everystockphoto.com>

about a million photos usable at no cost

<http://www.loc.gov>

Library of Congress has images, audio and
video clips relating to American History

The Internet Archive

<http://archive.org/> :

Universal Access to Human Knowledge

- Featuring the *Wayback Machine!*
- 320,000 texts
- 230,000 audio recordings
- 45,000 live music concerts
- 120,000 movies

OLPC Connection

<http://laptop.org/>

- The One Laptop Per Child project expects to use some Open Content to keep ongoing costs low. Textbook prices, even eBook prices by textbook publishers are just too high.
- A large part of textbook cost goes to middlemen like sales reps and advertising staff.
- Open content may help balance need & budget.

How to Use Open Content

- Teacher resource to add to course content
- Student resource for content or higher-level assignments. (find exemplars of each philosophical school we've studied)
- Structure & content for independent study
- Collaborative forum for course development
- To improve fiscal economy and equitable access
- To foster participatory, engaged "discussion"

Is Open Content Real?

Four trends suggest that Open Content is real:

- Track record.
- Becoming more organized.
- Second-generation refinements.
- Becoming legally protected.

Four Open Content Indicators

- Wikipedia & MIT OpenCourseware success.
- <http://www.opencontentalliance.org>
- <http://www.citizendium.com> – a spin-off of Wikipedia staff to create a site with content written by *certified experts*. Community creating second-generation refinements.
- <http://creativecommons.org> – *Creative Commons* legal protection for less-restrictive use.

OCW Rationale & Protection

- **Sharing** is an education tradition (esp. higher ed)
- **Helping** others learn and succeed
- **Builds on** strength and model of Open Source software.
- Partly **a reaction** to inflexible and restrictive copyright system.
- **Encourages** the production and **protects** the dissemination of creative work.

Meme Review

Intellectual property of commercial content is heavily protected by **copyright law** that favors the publishing industry.

High content costs (eg, sales, marketing) may discriminate against equitable access.

Demonstrated success of Open Content projects such as *Wikipedia*, *MIT OpenCourseware* and the *Gutenberg Project* suggest viability.

Open Content in Context

Open content is part of a larger technological context that includes **open standards** and **open source** software.

Together, they lower the threshold of participation in technology-supported teaching & learning, reducing the digital divide.

The question is not “*What good materials can we replace for free?*” but rather “***How can our teachers and students most benefit?***”

For information on how your school can take advantage of

Open Content

please contact:



Dr. Scott Garrigan
Director of Professional Development
sgarrigan@verizon.net
484-894-6162


