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On the map: towards a multidimensional understanding of Open Educational Practices

Conference or Workshop Item

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On the map

Towards a multidimensional understanding of Open Educational Practices

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#OER18, Bristol

18–19 April 2018

Can we connecting the different Opens?

Opening movements that relate to education

- Open Education
- Open Access
- Open Science
- Open Source Software
- Open Data
- Open Government

Openness takes different forms (see Pomerantz & Peek)
... even within Open Education



Do we know our history?

A simple trajectory...

- Roots in Open Access and Open Source
- Creation of MIT OpenCourseWare
- ‘Open Educational Resources’ defined 2002
- The rise of the MOOCs ...

Wait...

- Is openness digital?
- Is there a danger of reproducing our own ‘Silicon Valley’ narrative?
- Has there been less discussion of roots in *education* itself?

Opening moves in education predate the internet

Late 20th to early 21st Century: increasing massification and mode diversification throughout HE

Latter part of 20th Century: Open universities

19th Century: The Society to Encourage Studies at Home (see '[The Victorian MOOC](#)'), one-to-one distance tuition by and for women through the post

19th Century: Mechanics' Institutes (including London Mechanics' Institute, est 1823, now Birkbeck, University of London)

And further back - see Peter & Deimann (2013)

Openness of OER and MOOCs

Digital ‘Johnny-come-latelies’ of initiatives to open education.

- The openness of OER is linked to free access as well as quite a specific definition of good practice in licensing of intellectual property: a legal openness of content.
- The openness of MOOCs generally is around open (free) access to enrol, although this generally does not guarantee openness of course IP, and gaining credentials usually incurs cost.

... Even within the ‘mainstream’ of OE we are seeing quite different versions of open.

The turn to ‘practices’

The Cape Town Open Education Declaration (2007) placed the notion of *practices* at the centre:

open education is not limited to just open educational resources. It also draws upon open technologies that facilitate collaborative, flexible learning and the open sharing of teaching practices that empower educators to benefit from the best ideas of their colleagues.

A new term ‘**Open Educational Practices**’ has emerged, which offers an alternative take on openness in education.

A resource can be open because it is openly licensed, but what makes a practice open?

Openness of practice

- OEP is “*a broad descriptor that includes the creation, use and reuse of OER, open pedagogies, and open sharing of teaching practices*” (Cronin, 2017).
- OEP are “*defined as practices which **support the (re)use and production of OER ...promote innovative pedagogical models, and respect and empower learners as co-producers on their lifelong learning path***” (Andrade et al., 2011)

So...

- Beyond access: learning as co-construction and sharing.
- Challenges and changes educational cultures, flattens hierarchies.
- A very ‘open’ definition!

Open/Closed as binary

- Binary logic of open vs closed asks us to be unconditionally for open (and against closed)
- Raising the spectre of ‘closedness’ that only openness can exorcise
- This does not provide a conceptual toolkit to comprehend a full spectrum of contextual practices

Open/Closed: opposites, but on a continuum?

Closed

Open

An alternative proposal is that we consider a **continuum** with open and closed at either end.

- Accounting for the idea that some things are more open than others, rather than simply open or closed.
- But this idea works best if we are always thinking about the same kind of thing.

For Edwards (2015) “*openness is **not the opposite** of closed-ness, **nor is there simply a continuum** between the two...**all forms of openness entail forms of closed-ness**”.*

The Workshop

An interactive way of engaging with **openness / closedness** in educational practice and how these might take many forms.

Starting with a preamble similar to this one.



Microcases of open practice

Participants were asked to consider:

- In what sense(s) are they open?
- To whom are they open?
- Are they in any sense closed?

A
♥

Open University

The establishment of the United Kingdom's Open University in 1969 reflected a political commitment to public education. Earlier examples of part-time adult education, including evening and correspondence courses, coupled with a reliable postal service and access to educational broadcasting technologies (radio and television), provided the foundation for a new and more inclusive approach to higher education. The Open University waived the usual academic entry requirements and used a modular degree structure to make flexible, distance and non-traditional demographics, including women, the working class, people in prison, and others unable to access the traditional residential college mode of delivery.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/historyofou/>

5
♥

Wrapped Mooc

Ben is a computer science professor whose area of expertise is data mining and machine learning. He developed a free, open source data-mining toolkit, which has been downloaded and used worldwide. In 2013 he launched a MOOC to encourage people to learn to use this platform. The course is constructed around short videos that are available from YouTube (and from Youku in China with subtitles), an open textbook, and a series of interactive activities. The MOOC is also used 'wrapped', in other words, as a component of a taught, credit-bearing module. Students studying this module pay the standard enrolment fees, and are expected to complete the MOOC in their own time outside of face-to-face contact hours. They are provided with additional supplementary resources and guidance to which ordinary MOOC users do not have access, and complete assessments utilising the skills and knowledge they obtain from the MOOC.

<https://weka.waikato.ac.nz/explorer>

2
♥

Anti-social media

Cherie is a feminist geographer who has recently completed a PhD thesis on the dominance of masculinist discourse in massive multiplayer online games, such as *World of Warcraft*. She would like to disseminate her findings widely, but is aware that feminist cultural critic Anita Sarkeesian received death threats and rape threats for her critique of representations of women in video games (#GamerGate). Cherie is cautious about what she posts on social media as she does not want to invite trolling, or expose herself or teenage daughter to abuse or violence. She has avoided discussing her work in public online spaces, preferring to disseminate findings at local conferences where she feels safe because she already knows many of the participants. The full text of her thesis is freely available online from her university's digital thesis repository, but few people know to search for it.

6
♥

Use and re-use

Ben is a learning advisor who works with undergraduate and graduate students. He develops a model for use in a workshop intended to help students understand writer's block and overcome it through critical conversations with peers. The model is more successful than he anticipates, so he decides to share his practice with peers at a regional conference. He subsequently forwards his workshop materials and PowerPoint slides to colleagues inside and outside his institution with the understanding that they can be used and adapted for other audiences. He does not know about Creative Commons licensing, so does not assert his intellectual property rights or desire for recognition and attribution in this way. He subsequently becomes aware that his model has been used by someone else without any mention of his original contribution.

3
♥

Cultural mapping

Ocean is a senior lecturer with a background in the physical sciences. Her teaching is related to indigenous knowledge, including the scientific, astronomical, historical and geographical knowledge of significance to New Zealand Māori. She has developed an online assessment task for her second-year language and culture paper that asks students to use Google Earth, Google Maps, Google Sky and GPS to pinpoint places of significance to different *iwi Māori* (tribes) and write brief 'geo-biographies' (referenced narrative explanations). Each class builds on the contributions of previous cohorts of students, and an interactive *Te Kawa a Māui* atlas has been produced from selected content, which is freely available online:

<http://www.atlas.maori.nz/>

7
♥

Open to data

A growing group of academics are making use of Open Data as a teaching and learning resource. In encouraging students to use data that is freely available from open sources, such as official government statistics and raw research data, students can be scaffolded to think and act like teams of journalists, scientists, policy makers or activists. One reason for doing this is to develop students' capacity to become critical global citizens who are able to critique mainstream discourses, such as the portrayals of refugees and migrants in popular and social media. In order to open up the educational practices of academics using Open Data in this way, a collection of case studies has been published as an open access book.

<https://education.okfn.org/open-data-as-open-educational-resources-case-studies-of-emerging-practice/>

4
♥

Open in the evening

In November 1823, George Birkbeck proposed the radical idea of educating artisans, craftspeople and other working Londoners in the disciplines of the arts, sciences and economics, so as to bestow "the universal benefits of the blessings of knowledge". A month later, with donations from supporters and reformers, the London Mechanics' Institute was established to make a university education available to those who could not afford full-time study. The institute offered classes in the evening, so that working men could attend, and from 1830 it was one of the first colleges to admit women to study. Renamed Birkbeck College in 1903, and becoming a constituent college of the University of London in 1920, today Birkbeck continues to be "London's evening university", running most classes face-to-face from 6-9pm.

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/history>

8
♥

Stepping Up

A module called *Step Up to Postgraduate Study in Arts* was developed to bridge the transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study and to improve recruitment, retention and achievement. The module runs in the summer in advance of the first term of study, and is free, and non-credit bearing. Students who are intending to enrol in a Master's at the institution can opt-in and then engage as much or as little as they choose. Many of them have not studied for several years, as they are typically mature and studying part-time alongside work and family commitments. Students in this module have flexibility in the pace, place and mode of their learning, as it consists primarily of self-managed online learning and assessment activities, supported by opening and closing face-to-face events. The approach and success of *Step Up* have been shared widely and have informed the development of similar modules.

<http://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/8710/>

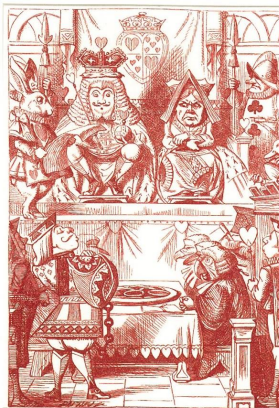
Exploring openings and closings

- The intention of the activity was to provoke discussion about different kinds of openings and closings beyond the digital.
- Participants were also invited to add their own case studies.

9 ♥ Uncommon creativity

Stephen is a teaching development specialist. He has been researching the job satisfaction and workload of eLearning lecturers, and the strategies they use to sustain their teaching in online environments. He decides to present his key findings as a poster of *Top Ten Online Workload Management Strategies*. He licenses this work with a Creative Commons: Attribution-Noncommercial-Sharealike licence that permits others to remix, adapt, and build on his work, provided they credit him, do not make a profit, and license their new creations under identical terms.

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wmier/publications/books/digital-smarts-enhancing-learning-and-teaching>



10 ♥ Textbook case

Christina is a lecturer in philosophy. She becomes aware that many of the students in her class cannot afford to buy the expensive print-based textbook she has prescribed, so decides to edit a free online textbook based around her introductory philosophy course. Christina uses her personal and professional contacts in philosophy and open education to source contributions to the book. The textbook is subsequently made available to students without charge and none of the contributors receive any royalties. It is released with a very permissive Creative Commons: Attribution (CC-BY) licence, which means the content can be reused, revised and remixed in any medium or format provided the creators are given appropriate credit and the changes are suitably acknowledged. She hopes the textbook will be used by philosophy lecturers worldwide, and that they will take up the opportunity to add their own interpretations and to adapt its content to better fit their contexts, courses and students.

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/chendricks/2017/04/15/>

K ♥ Knowledge Societies

MSc students studying towards Information Management or Information Technology qualifications at the University of the West of England use open datasets and websites to consider the benefits of being able to make sense of data for individuals, organisations and society. Website statistics and visualisation tools are used to help students consider the role of information and knowledge management and data literacy in knowledge societies and knowledge economies. Students are asked to interrogate and analyse trends and developments using open data to deepen their understanding of how data is used to provide information and deepen knowledge, but also how it is produced, consumed and commodified. This case study of teaching practice has been shared internally within the institution.

J ♥ To pay or not to pay?

EDX offers access to a broad range of MOOCs from leading universities worldwide. One such course is the University of Michigan's 8 week *Leading Change: Go Beyond Gamification with Gameful Learning* module, which seeks to support teachers to use gameful learning practices in schools. It was developed in partnership with the Microsoft K-12 Educational Leadership initiative, and Microsoft retains licensing and ownership of significant aspects of the content and technologies used. While to join this MOOC is free, participants must register and have their identities verified. They must also pay US\$49 if they would like to receive a Verified Certificate that can be used as evidence of successful completion for employers or educational institutions.

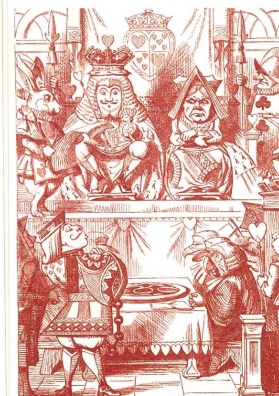
<https://www.edx.org/course/leading-change-go-beyond-gamification-michiganx-microsoft-education-gl101x>

J O K E R Your turn to play...



Q ♥ Citizen monitoring

The *Scuola di OpenCoesione* (Open Cohesion School) is a MOOC designed to support Italian high school teachers and students to develop civic awareness and engagement by challenging them to find out how public money is spent in their local communities. Participants collaborate in teams to investigate projects funded through the Italian Government's Cohesion Policies. Data obtained from the OpenCoesione portal, the Italian National Institute of Statistics and other public sources are used to assess the progress and challenges facing funded projects, so as to monitor the effectiveness of public investment. Students engage in data analysis, data journalism and creating infographics related to real-life civic issues. They then report their findings and evaluations to local communities and policy-makers, as well as sharing them publicly via the OpenCoesione website: <http://www.ascuoladiopencoesione.it>



Equity/Access
- needs format suitability.
- ability to participate
- Availability

- time access
- location
- tech
- associated costs
(conf, travel, etc.)

Cultural appropriateness

Open Data
- Raw data, not research
"peak open"



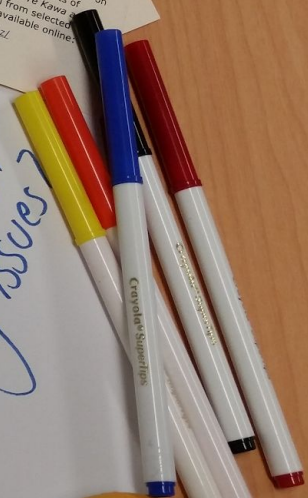
Use + Reuse.
Ben's ideas/product
w/o attribution.
He didn't CC license it.
issues obs.
(C)

Social Media
- concern that making publicly available publicly
(if it is controversial) ⇒
potential adverse treatment + social consequences

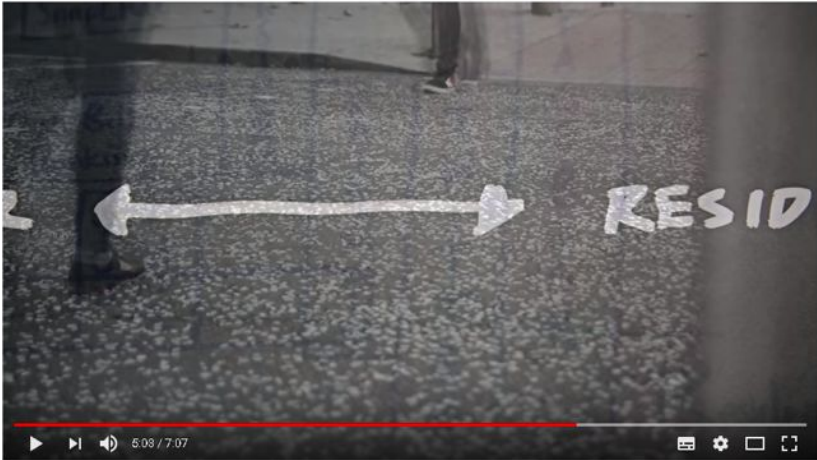
(To pay or not to pay)
* Free BUT validation → misleading?
* Identity verification → privacy issues

6 Use and re...
Ben is a learning undergraduate who develops a multidisciplinary block of content to write brief narratives to different 'geo-biographies' (places of the contributions of Māori (tribes) and students, and an interactive atlas has been produced from selected content, which is freely available online.
<http://www.atlas.mbori.nz/>

3 Cultural mapping

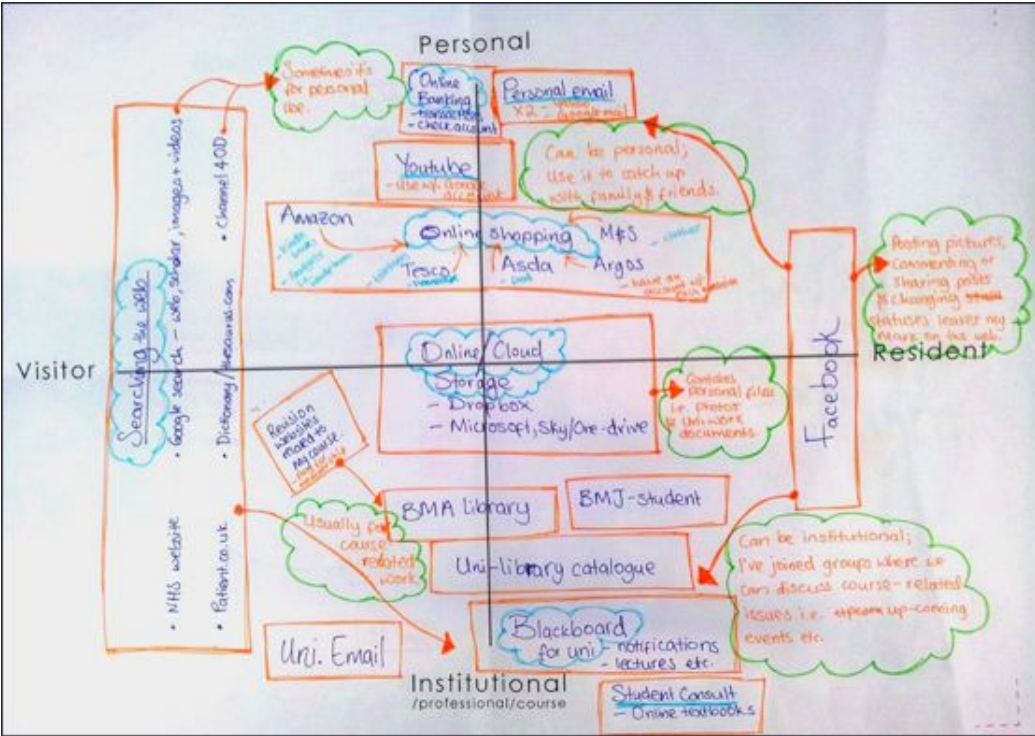


Drawing on 'Visitors & Residents' mapping



Visitors and Residents

<https://youtu.be/sPOG3iThmRI?t=3m17s>



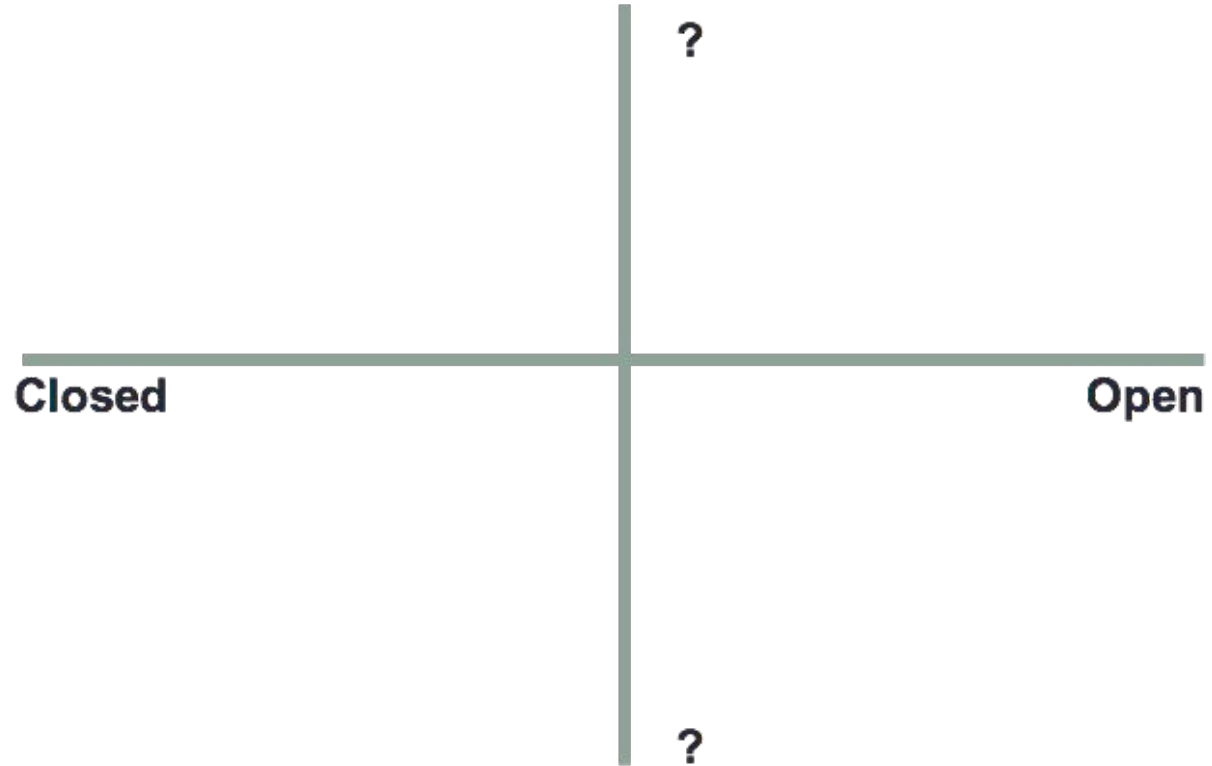
Adding another dimension

As in the V&R mapping,
two axes.

Closed-Open replaces
Visitor-Resident.

We asked:

“What might the other
dimension for
understanding OEP be?”



Workshops took place....

Conferences:

- ALT-C 2017 (Liverpool, UK)
- Learnfest 2017 (Hamilton, NZ)
- SOTEL 2018 (Auckland, NZ)

Invited presentations (London, UK):

- PGCert in HE groups at Goldsmiths and Birkbeck
- MLIS group at City
- L&T seminar at Birkbeck



Liverpool, Sept 6 2017

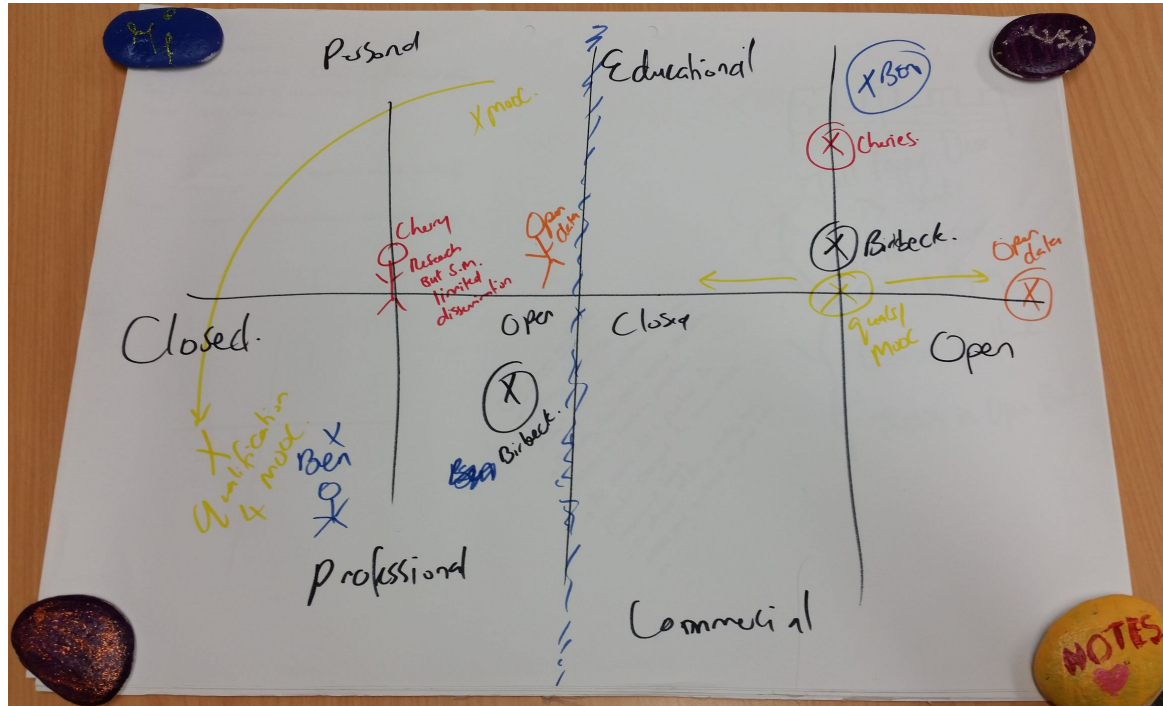
Dimensions

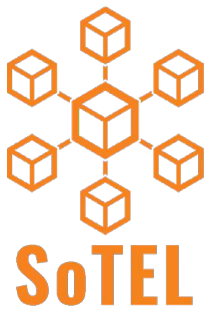
- free/ for profit
- within institution /
beyond institution
- technocratic / democratic
- formal / informal
- individual / social
- licensed/ unlicensed
- private / public
- corporate / non-profit
- local / global
- centralized / distributed
- objective / subjective

Hamilton, New Zealand, Nov 16-17, 2017

Dimensions

- free/ for profit
- low risk/ high risk
- social/ personal
- short/ long access (expiry)
- commercial/ educational
- personal/ professional





SCHOLARSHIP OF TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING

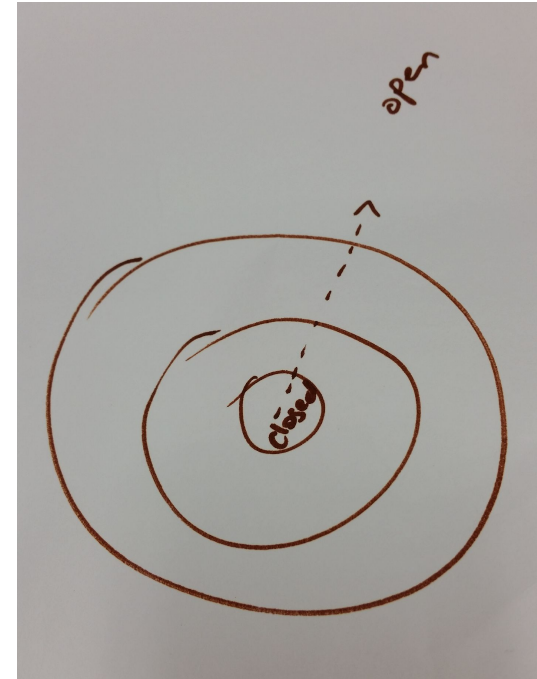
Auckland, New Zealand, Feb 15-16, 2018

Dimensions

- shared/unshared
- public/private
- layered/unlayered
- hidden/visible
- monetized/not monetized
- fenced/unfenced
- near/far (proximity)

Discussion

- Hidden openness
- Design and user interface
- Demotivating feedback
- Hubris and humility
- Knowledge networks vs. Knowledge societies
- Openness as layered



Summary

- Participation was enthusiastic and engaged
- High level of prior knowledge not required
- Participants inclined to critique the idea that any one other axis/dimension could ever be sufficient
- Tendency to identify elements of closure in the microcases *as weaknesses* of practice - but this provoked further group discussion
- Always need more time for everything

Conclusions

Openness is not fundamentally digital, despite the fact that in the current era educational practices labelled as open are increasingly likely to be technology-enabled.

When building communities of open practice, it may be more important to focus on the wider purposes of the OER movement:

- What we are intending to create? (a social commons? a community of scholars?)
- What are we attempting to subvert (the values of the neo-liberal university?)

Like other social phenomena, open educational practices are perhaps better understood as *contextual* and *multi-dimensional* rather than fitting a simple open-closed binary.

Thank you.



Comments, questions ...

@leohavemann & @jdawnmarsh