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The Challenge of Open: Empowering Students or Eroding Privacy?

Pauline Rooney

Technological University Dublin, Pauline.Rooney@tudublin.ie

Geraldine Gray

TU Dublin Blanchardstown, geraldine.gray@tudublin.ie

Lee O'Farrell

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education,
lee.ofarrell@teachingandlearning.ie

K.C. O'Rourke

Technological University Dublin, kevin.orourke@tudublin.ie

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Title: The challenge of Open: empowering students or eroding privacy?

Abstract:

Open education can mean different things to different people. A term which frequently refers to the creation, sharing and usage of open educational resources, open education can also refer to the use of technologies which promote collaborative, flexible learning and sharing of teaching practices, thus providing new opportunities for enhancing teaching and learning and assessment practices (*Cape Town Open Education Declaration, 2007*). Within this context, open education is often promoted as a means of widening access to education, improving equity and enhancing the student learning experience (Creelman, Cronin and Weller 2018). However in an increasingly privacy-conscious era, where data breaches are commonly reported and surveillance practices are accepted as part of the open web, it could also be argued that open practice feeds “data capitalism” (Myers-West 2017), eroding student and educator privacy in the process.

This highly reflective and evaluative panel presentation will explore existing and emerging concerns, challenges and associated privacy and ethical issues surrounding open education in an era of big data. In doing so, this panel presentation aligns with theme 1 of OER19, “Back to Basics”, exploring difficult questions such as open for whom? Whose interests are served by the open agenda and what are the implications for educators, students and for our higher education institutions?

Structure:

The panel will open with introductions to presenters and to the theme and objectives for the panel presentation and subsequent open forum (5 minutes). This will be followed by three short presentations which will explore potential, practice, issues, challenges and concerns surrounding open education and the associated privacy and ethical issues from the perspective of three key stakeholders:

- The staff perspective: 10 minutes
- The student perspective: 10 minutes
- The national/sectoral perspective: 10 minutes

This will be followed by a highly participatory and discursive open forum/Q&A session (25 minutes) where all delegates will be encouraged to pose questions to the presenters and to share their own thoughts, experiences and perspectives on open educational practices in an era of “Big Data” and the challenges that this poses for our institutions, our educators and for our students.

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- explore the potential value of open education, associated technologies and learning data for creating a supportive educational experience for students and for increasing students’ feelings of ownership, agency and self-regulation.
- consider staff, students and sectoral perspectives on the issues, challenges and concerns surrounding open education practices, technologies and associated use of learning data for supporting students in HE.
- examine the role of professional development resources and support in increasing staff and student digital proficiencies and ethical practices in relation to the use of open learning technologies and learning data, while ensuring a balance between openness and privacy.
- identify how we can collaborate with our institutional colleagues and our students in the design and provision of relevant professional development resources and guidelines.

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Cape Town Open Education Declaration [online] (2007). Available at: <https://www.capetowndeclaration.org/read-the-declaration> [Accessed 29 Nov 2018].

Myers-West, S. M. (2017) 'Data Capitalism: Redefining the Logics of Surveillance and Privacy', *Business & Society*. doi: [10.1177/0007650317718185](https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650317718185). [Accessed 29 Nov 2018].

Creelman, Cronin and Weller (2018) 'Open Education: What now? 2018 European Distance Learning Week Virtual Events. November 5, 2018 [online]. Available at: http://www.eden-online.org/eden_conference/open-education-what-now/ [Accessed 29 Nov 2018].