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OER Research Hub Data 2013-2015: Formal Learners
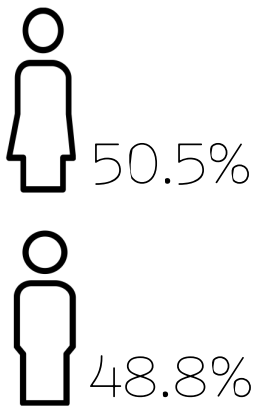
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FORMAL LEARNERS

The OER Research Hub is a project funded by the Hewlett Foundation to research the impact of open educational resources (OER) on teaching and learning. During 2013-2015 survey data were collected from approximately 7,500 users of OER around the globe. This report presents a frequencies analysis of responses obtained from FORMAL LEARNERS.

Dataset available for download at http://figshare.com/articles/OERRH_Survey_Data_2013_2015/1528263

Sample

50.5%

48.8%

Country of residence

- USA (38%)
- UK (23%)
- India (2%)
- China (2%)
- Canada (2%)
- Australia (2%)
- Brazil (1%)
- 118 other countries (29%)
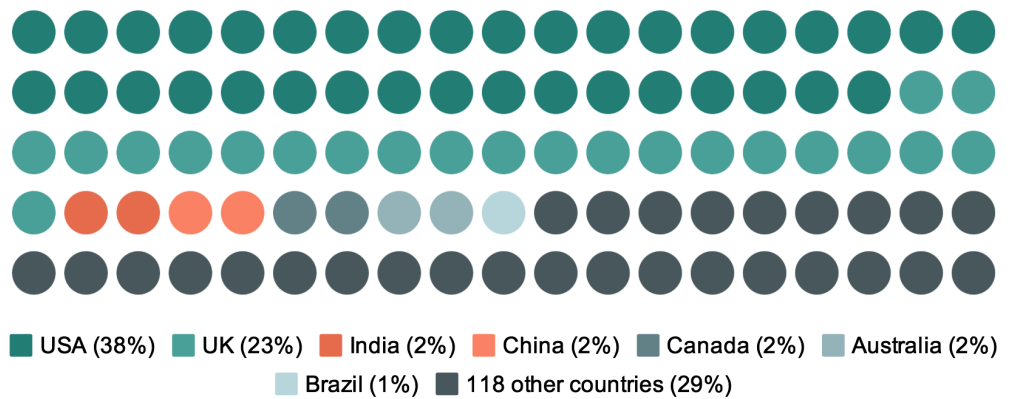
English as first language?

- YES (60%)
- NO (40%)

Disability?

YES 12.7

NO 87.3

Age

2.8 · 18.9 · 31 · 20.6 · 10.6 · 8.7 · 4.9 · 1.9 · .5

- >15 years
- 15-18
- 19-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- <75 years
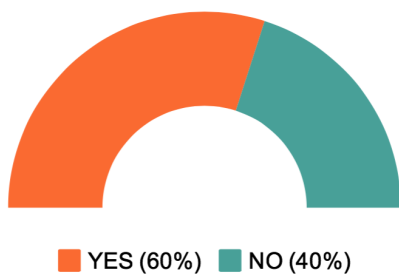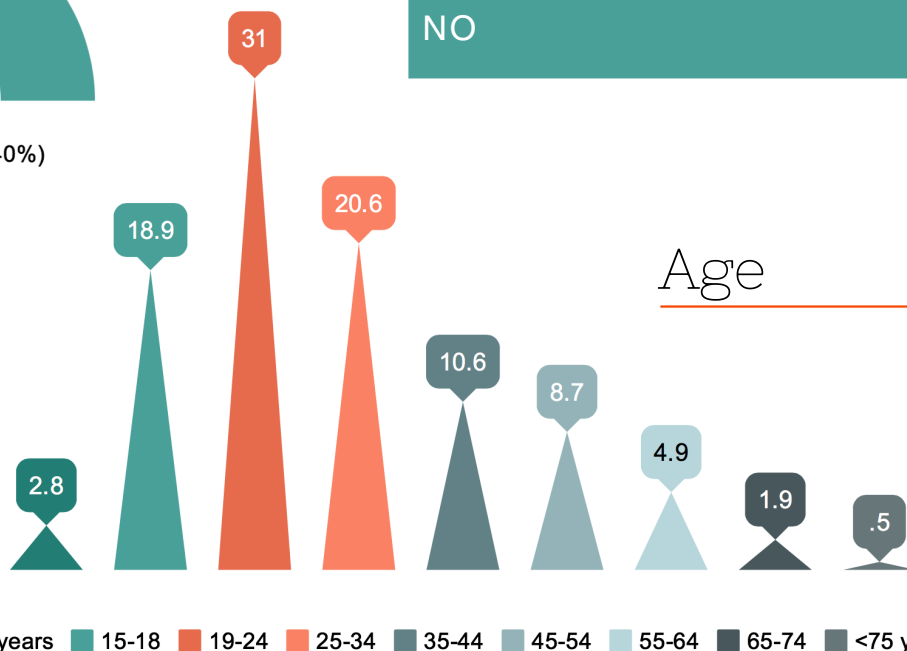
Decision to use OER

Which of the following factors influenced your decision to use OER? N=969

Factor	Value
The opportunity to study at reduced or no cost	88.1
The chance to try university-level content	41.1
The materials can be used flexibly	68.9
The materials can be accessed any time	79.6
The materials can be studied online	79.3
A desire to have a learning experience/study a course	72
A need to find information	25
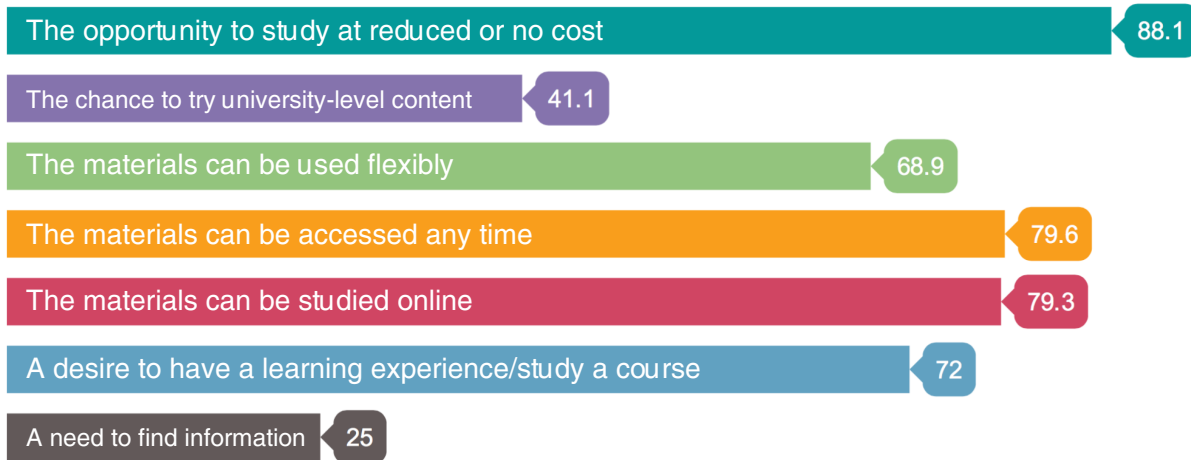
Cost and ease of access are the most important factors influencing formal learners' decision to use OER

From informal to formal

Did you study your subject via [OpenLearn] before joining your course? N=955

YES (30%)   NO (60%)   Not sure (10%)
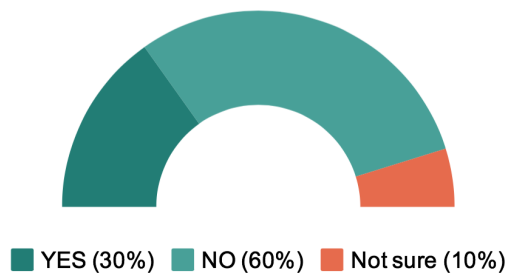
The percentage of formal learners that report having used open content prior to registering for their course represents an underreported benefit of OER from which HE can potentially benefit

Did your use of [OpenLearn] influence your decision to register for your current course of study? N=934

YES (32%)   NO (53%)   Not sure (15%)

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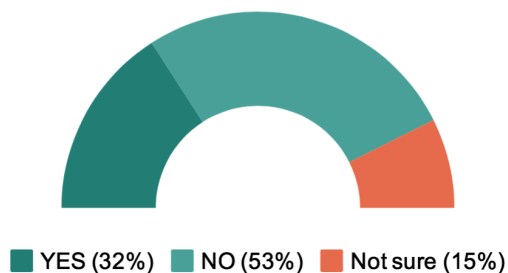
Use of OER

In what subject do you normally use OER? N=1199

Subject	Value
Computer & Information Science	29.1
Psychology & Philosophy	38.6
Religious Studies	13.6
Social Sciences	27.6
Languages & Linguistics	32.6
Science	43.4
Mathematics	27.9
Arts	25.4
Literature	24.2
History & Geography	28.2
Economics, Business & Management	27.4
Applied Science & Engineering	23.1
Medicine	14.9
Health & Social Care	14.7
Education Studies	16.6
Physical Education	7.3
Special Ed	4.4

OER coverage of subjects wider than STEM material

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Types of OER

Which of the following types of OER have you used for studying? N=1887

Type	Value
Videos	79.2
Podcasts	48.5
Images	61.3
Info-graphics	33.6
Games	31.3
Lectures	69.4
Tutorials	65.6
Quizzes	59.5
Full courses	59.8
Course modules	58.3
Open textbooks	79.1
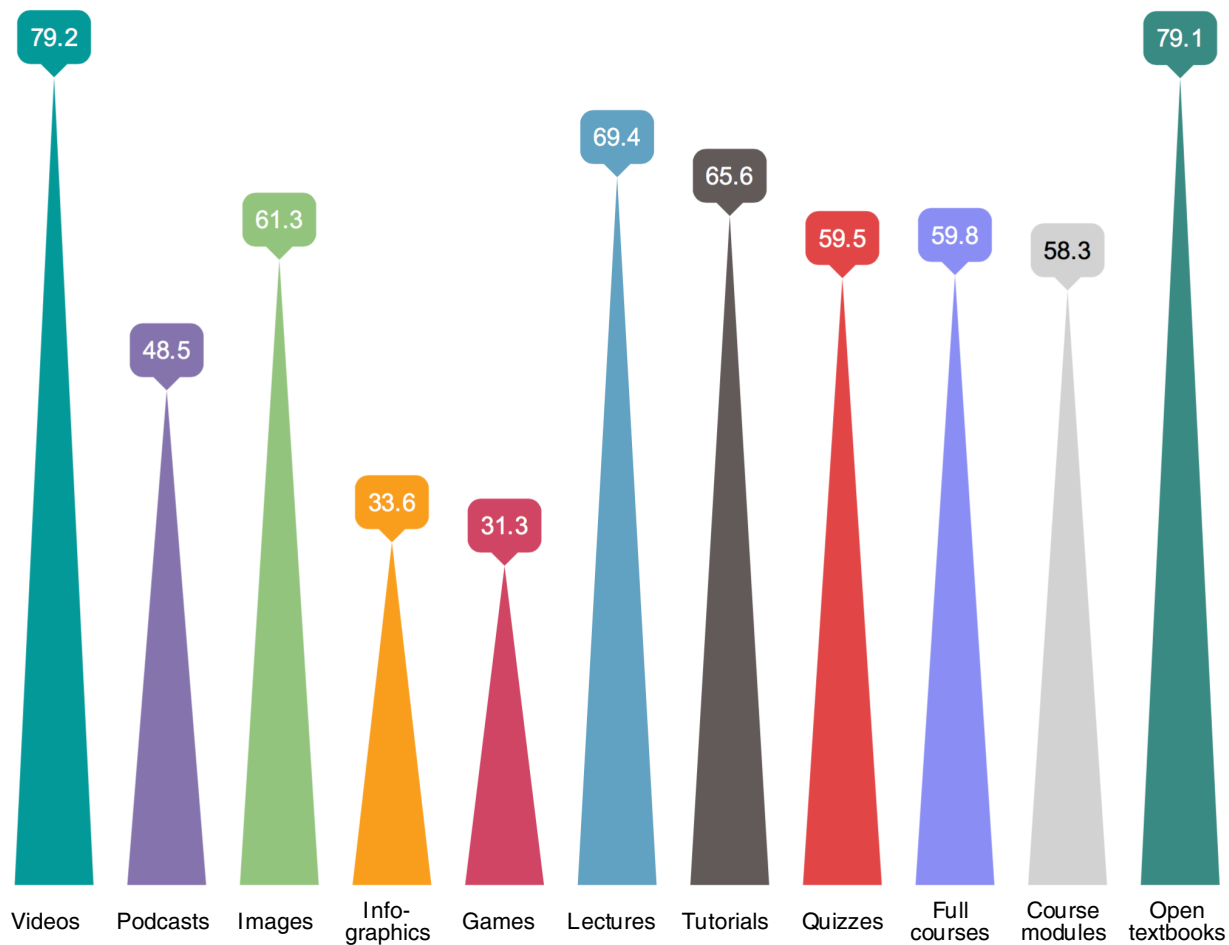
A smaller number of respondents (N=583) were asked about their use of lesson plans (50.1%), data sets (38.5%) and learning tools, instruments & software plugins (43.9%).

Formal learners use a broad range of open educational resources

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Impact of OER use

In which of these ways has your use of OER made an impact on your formal studies? N=1167

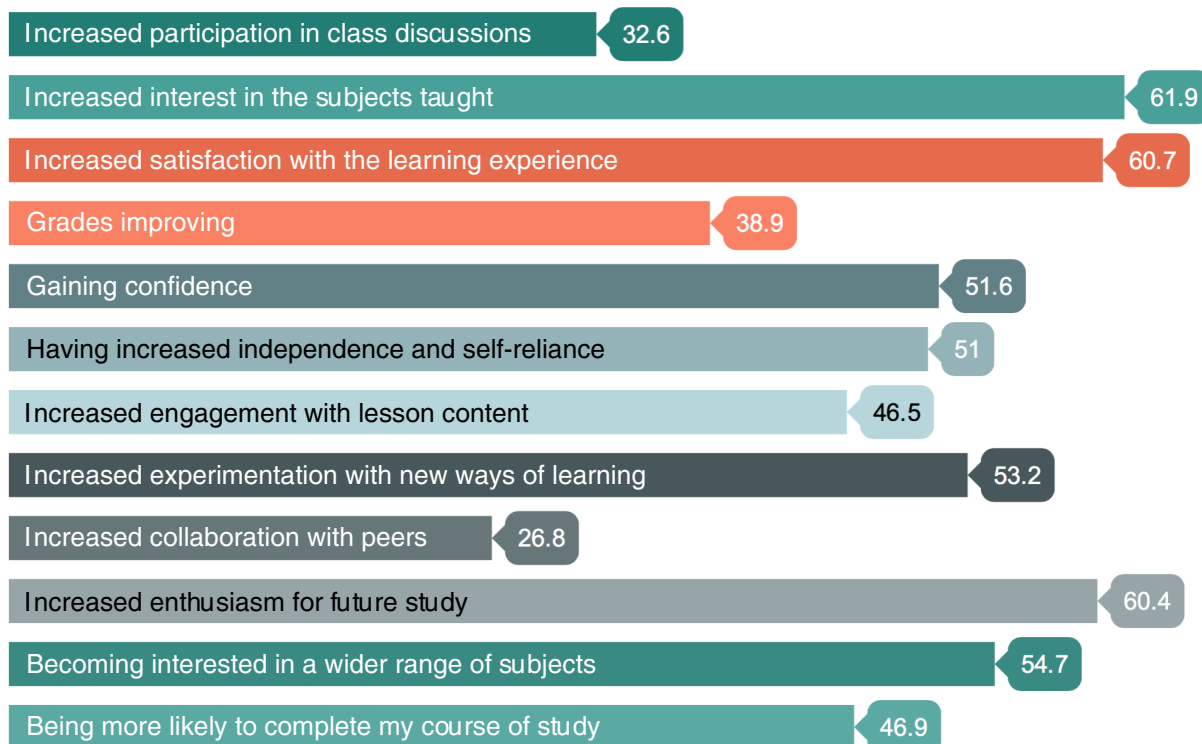|	
Increased participation in class discussions	32.6
Increased interest in the subjects taught	61.9
Increased satisfaction with the learning experience	60.7
Grades improving	38.9
Gaining confidence	51.6
Having increased independence and self-reliance	51
Increased engagement with lesson content	46.5
Increased experimentation with new ways of learning	53.2
Increased collaboration with peers	26.8
Increased enthusiasm for future study	60.4
Becoming interested in a wider range of subjects	54.7
Being more likely to complete my course of study	46.9

Biggest impact of OER use not on grades improving but on increased interest and enthusiasm for study

Do you believe you have saved money by using OER? N=322

YES (61%) NO (11%) Don't know (28%)
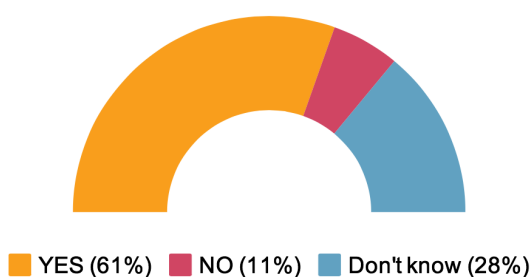
Do you believe your institution benefits financially by using OER? N=309

YES (47%) NO (9%) Don't know (44%)

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Selecting OER

Which of the following factors would make you more likely to select a particular resource when searching for open educational content? N=802

45% Evidence of interest in that resource (e.g. lots of downloads)

38% The resource being recently created, uploaded or updated

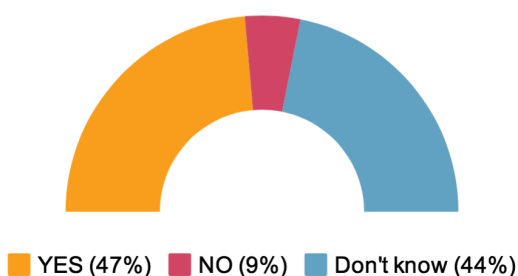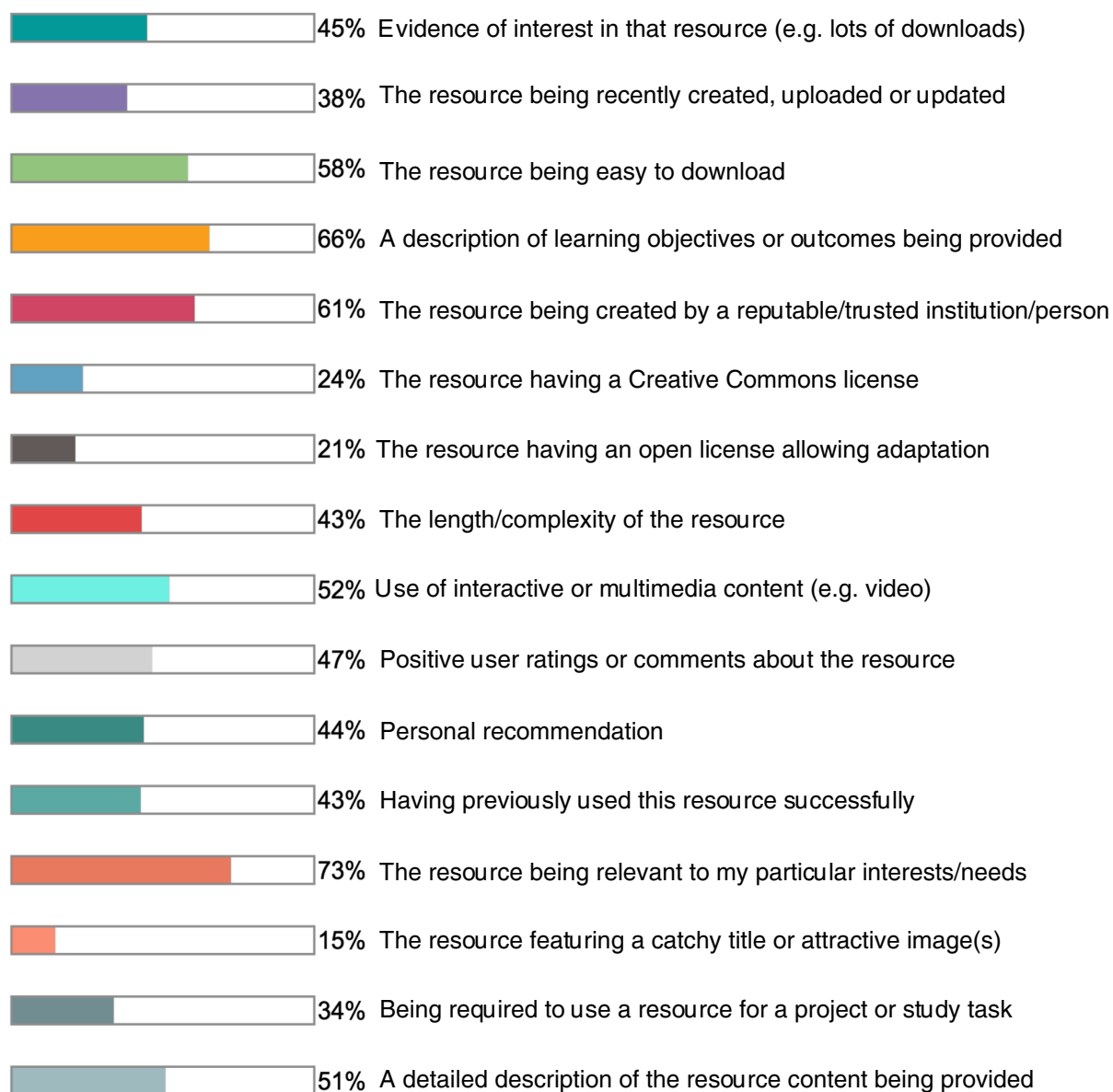**58%** The resource being easy to download

66% A description of learning objectives or outcomes being provided

61% The resource being created by a reputable/trusted institution/person

24% The resource having a Creative Commons license

21% The resource having an open license allowing adaptation

43% The length/complexity of the resource

52% Use of interactive or multimedia content (e.g. video)

47% Positive user ratings or comments about the resource

44% Personal recommendation

43% Having previously used this resource successfully

73% The resource being relevant to my particular interests/needs

15% The resource featuring a catchy title or attractive image(s)

34% Being required to use a resource for a project or study task

51% A detailed description of the resource content being provided

Relevance, reputation and clear learning objectives guide formal learners' selection of open content

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Challenges of using OER
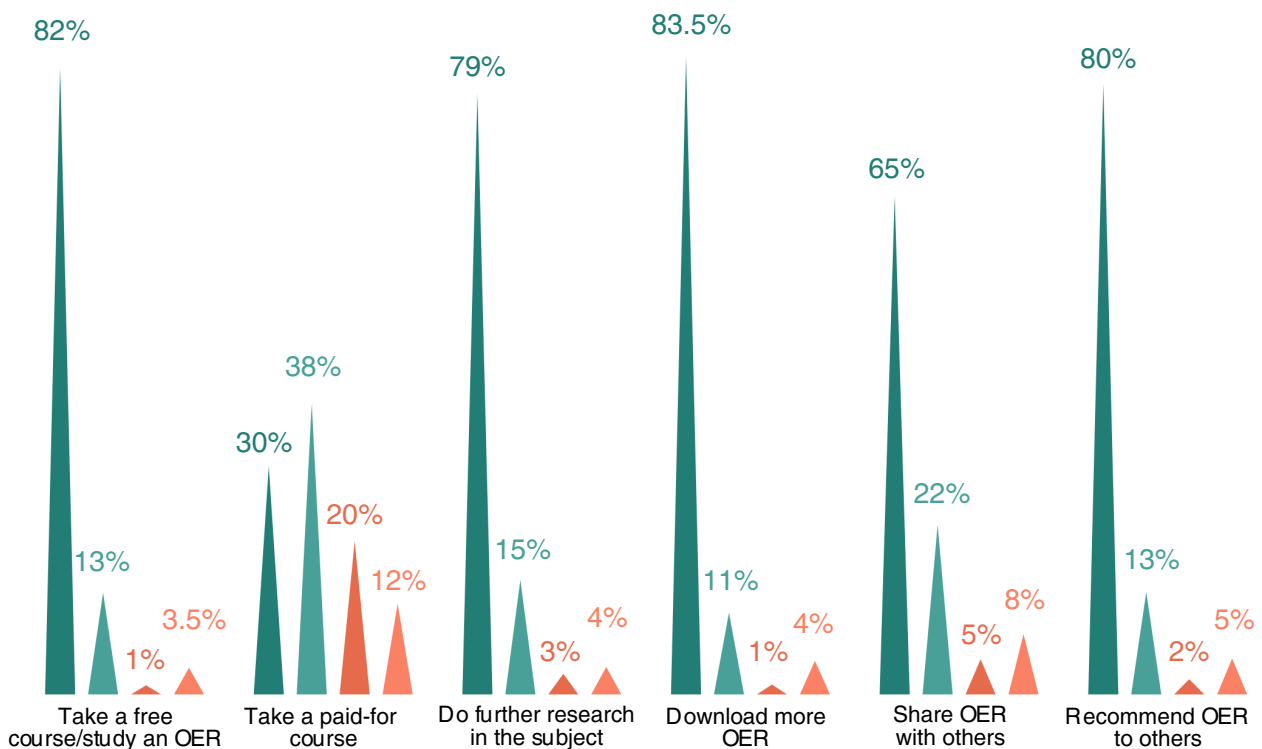
Which challenges, if any, do you most often face in using OER? N=1479

Discoverability of resources remains biggest challenge to OER adoption

Challenge	Value
Overcoming technology problems	27.7
Knowing where to find resources	46.4
Finding suitable resources in my subject area	52.5
Finding resources of sufficiently high quality	41.4
Finding resources that are up-to-date	34
Finding resources relevant to my context	29.2
Not having time to look for resources	27.5
Missing the support of a teacher	21.5

Future behaviour

As a result of using [OpenLearn], how likely are you to do any of the following? N=1464

■ More likely ■ No change ■ Less likely ■ Don't know

	More likely	No change	Less likely	Don't know
Take a free course/study an OER	82%	13%	1%	3.5%
Take a paid-for course	30%	38%	20%	12%
Do further research in the subject	83.5%	15%	3%	4%
Download more OER	79%	11%	1%	4%
Share OER with others	65%	22%	5%	8%
Recommend OER to others	80%	13%	2%	5%