

David Wiley, “Open Content”

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Background

Inspired by open source and free software, “open content” seeks to reasonably apply the principles of openness to non-software creative works including writing, images, sounds, and videos. David Wiley, who coined the term in 1998, is particularly interested in how open content can reduce the cost and increase the quality of education.

At its core “open content” describes a copyrightable work that is licensed in a way that “provides users with free and perpetual permission to engage in the 5R activities” which are retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute.

Key Points

5Rs

- Retain – the right to make, own, and control copies of the content (e.g., download, own, store, and manage)
- Reuse – the right to use the content in a wide range of ways (e.g., in a class, in a study group, on a website, in a video)
- Revise – the right to adapt, adjust, modify, or alter the content itself (e.g., translate the content into another language)
- Remix – the right to combine the original or revised content with other open content to create something new (e.g., incorporate the content into a mashup)
- Redistribute – the right to share copies of the original content, your revisions, or your remixes with others (e.g., give a copy of the content to a friend)

Legal requirements and restrictions can make content less open, as can poor technical choices.

Discussion Questions

1. How does copyright with open source interplay with copyleft (Stallman/GNU)?
2. What are the ramifications of open content educational materials?
3. What is the future of education with open content?
4. Is open content less expensive?
5. Is open content free of cost? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. Are textbooks really going away? Will they become irrelevant? Useable?
7. Do we really need to keep the textbooks that we have?
8. What do we do with the older versions of the textbooks?

Additional Resources

Future of OER. (2014). Iterating toward openness. Retrieved from <https://edtechbooks.org/-tmlX>

Open Content. (2014). Iterating toward openness. Retrieved from <http://opencontent.org/blog/>



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