Introduction to open educational resources (OERs)

What are OERs?

"An OER is any resource available at little or no cost that can be used for teaching, learning or research. The term can include textbooks, course readings and other learning content; simulations, games and other applications; syllabi, quizzes and assessment tools; and virtually any other educational material." - *Educause, a nonprofit association working in higher education and technology*

How can OERs help faculty?

PROBLEM	Lack of time or know-how to produce multimedia content to enhance course materials.	Asked to design and teach a course on a topic that is outside your area of expertise.	Limited class time for discussion, activities and group work.
HOW OERs CAN HELP	• OERs are multimedia – videos, audio, images, illustrations, animations • OERs are pre-produced modules • Can be integrated into existing course technology: Moodle, PowerPoint slide, course blog, email	• Use example syllabus to build the course framework • Identify themes and key materials with syllabus, activities and assessments • Find materials from areas outside the discipline	• Assign a video lecture as homework and have students come to class prepared to discuss it

Sounds great – what's the catch?

There are a few:

- Not centralized – OERs are scattered across several websites and can be time consuming to find
- Inconsistent quality – some are great, some are unusable
- Manual – inserting the objects into your course materials is a manual process

What do I need to do to use them?

The only requirement for using OERs is that you cite the work and obey the licensing restrictions the content author placed on the work.

Where can I find them?

OERs can be found on websites operated by universities, nonprofit organizations and for-profit companies.

Where to find OERs

Name	Web address	Object types	Fields of study	Sponsor/Owner	Description	Licensing	Scope (approx.)
GENERAL REPOSITORIES							
Saylor	www.saylor.org	All types	Many fields	Saylor Foundation - nonprofit	Organized by courses and units with learning outcomes	Creative Commons	Hundreds of courses
iTunes U	Access through iTunes application	All types	All fields	Apple Inc.	Content from hundreds of universities, free iTunes software is required to browse and download	Varies, check asset	Thousands
OER Commons	www.oercommons.org	All types	All fields	Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education	Searches many OER repositories at once, including Connexions, OpenCourseWare Consortium, Open Learning Initiative	Varies, check asset	24,000
MERLOT	www.merlot.org	All types	All fields	California State University	Many objects are peer-reviewed, 2000 etextbooks	Varies, check asset	14,000
VIDEO AND IMAGE REPOSITORIES							
Kahn Academy	www.khanacademy.org	Videos	Art history, history, math, finance, science	Khan Academy - nonprofit	Some videos created for K-12 but many can be a good refresher	Creative Commons	3,000
Creative Commons Search	search.creativecommons.org/	Images, videos, music	Not discipline specific	Creative Commons - nonprofit	Searches Creative Commons-licensed works on Flickr, Google Images, YouTube (video), Jamendo (music)	Creative Commons	Millions
TED	www.ted.com	Videos	Not discipline specific	TED - nonprofit	Short lectures from the world's leading thinkers	Creative Commons	Hundreds
YouTube EDU	www.youtube.com/education	Videos	All fields	Google	Lectures, presentations and interviews and other videos from universities in the US	Varies, check asset	Thousands
Academic Earth	academicearth.org	Videos	All fields	Ampush Media	Video lectures from Berkeley, UCLA, Columbia, Stanford, Michigan & more	Varies, check asset	Thousands
OTHER RESOURCES							
Open Culture	www.openculture.com	Ebooks, videos, courses, language lessons	All fields	Blog of a faculty member at Stanford	Lists of open ebooks, textbooks, videos, audio, language lessons, courses and more	Varies, check asset	Thousands
Internet Archive	www.archive.org	Ebooks, videos, audio, software	Not discipline specific	Internet Archive - nonprofit	Cultural objects	Public domain	A ton!

All types = "textbooks, course readings, and other learning content; simulations, games, and other applications; syllabi, quizzes, and assessment tools" (Educause)