

# Communities of practice in OER – experiences of a Subject Centre

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# The UK Physical Sciences Subject Centre

- Supports teaching and learning related activities across **chemistry, physics and astronomy**, and **forensic science** across UK
- One of 24 national Subject Centres, we are based at the University of Hull
- Small (but perfectly formed!) team with 6.1 FTE

## Range of activities supported

- Discipline network
- Discipline support
- Discipline events
- National conferences
- Resources
- Publications
- CPD with discipline focus
- Policy support/brokerage
- Development project funding
- Academic innovation

# Skills for Scientists project

- University of Edinburgh
- University of Hull
- University of Leeds
- University of Leicester
- University of Liverpool
- Loughborough University
- University of Manchester
- Newcastle University
- Open University
- University of Plymouth
- University of Reading
- Sheffield Hallam University
- University of Southampton
- Staffordshire University
- Universidade de A Coruña, Spain
- The Institute of Physics
- The Royal Society of Chemistry

# Challenges with OER

- Willingness to contribute resources?
- Working with larger consortium?
- Consortium agreement
- IPR
- Working with legal people! – (finding a common understanding)
- Meta tagging resources

# Community support – initiation of project

- Existing discipline community
- Involvement via several routes:
  - ▶ Active involvement with Centre (events, contributions etc)
  - ▶ On community mailing list
  - ▶ On Centre's generic email list
  - ▶ Word of mouth
- General 'friends of the Centre'

## Prior to funding call

- Raised awareness/interest amongst community
- Pencilled in meeting of interested parties
- Helped clarify potential workload/expectations for involvement
- Once bid accepted, only lost one early expression of interest (time constraints)
- Huge buy in due to community commitment

# Origins of resources produced

- Pre-developed with external funding (HEFCE, JISC etc)
- Open University (non-commercial)
- 'Core' University resources
- Ownership (and responsibility) key to project outcomes

## Feedback from project members

- Most had at least some prior understanding of OER
- ‘Wanted to learn something that I could pass on to colleagues/my subject community’
- Many resources were developed with external funding
- *“Having produced some valuable resources through another HEFCE funded project, I was keen to get these made available as widely as possible”*


## Skills for Scientists project – outputs

- Consortium of 19 partners from 17 institutions plus an independent partner
- Required to cover 360 credits of content – but have about 600 credits' worth
- Covers wide range of resources across chemistry, physics and astronomy and forensic science
- Involves discipline specific content, student support and outreach resources

## Post project feedback

- Only 1 won't create OER (“not my role”)
- I think this something that my university/community is positive towards
- *“An interesting exercise. Took longer than I had anticipated, but maybe no surprise there.”*
- Raised awareness with colleagues, department, institution, professional bodies

## Benefits/outcomes

- Greater awareness of benefits of OER
  - Promoting culture change
  - People more willing to share
  - People now creating their own OER
  - Broader institutional willingness to engage
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# STEM Project Wiki

The screenshot shows a PBworks.com workspace page titled "STEM OER Guidance Wiki". The page is last edited by Chris Taylor 6 days ago. The main content area contains a paragraph about the collection of guidance documents on Open Educational Resources (OER) prepared by STEM project teams from Higher Education Academy/JISC OER pilot projects (May 2009 to April 2010). Below this is a section titled "OER Guidance Documents" with a bulleted list of links: "User Guide to OER" (with a sub-bullet for "General introduction/FAQ and overview"), "IPR Clearance" (with a sub-bullet for "Issues to consider on intellectual property rights, ownership and licensing"), "Preparing, Packaging and Uploading Resources" (with a sub-bullet for "Steps required and guides on uploading to appropriate repositories"), "Evaluation and Quality Assurance" (with a sub-bullet for "Why and how you should evaluate and QA your materials before release"), and "Release, Dissemination and Sustainability" (with a sub-bullet for "Information on releasing and ensuring long-term sustainability of your resources and the OER movement"). At the bottom of the main content is an "Other Information" section with links to "Resources produced through Phase I of the contributing projects", "Contributing projects", "JISC Infonet Open Educational Resources InfoKit [External link]", and "Funding for this work".

**STEM OER Guidance Wiki**

last edited by [Chris Taylor](#) 6 days ago Page history

This work constitutes a collection of guidance documents on all aspects of **Open Educational Resources (OER)** prepared by the [STEM project teams](#) from a number of [Higher Education Academy/JISC OER pilot projects](#). These projects ran from May 2009 to April 2010, and this guidance is based on the teams' combined experiences working with practising academics over that time, to explore the issues surrounding OER production and release.

Though prepared by the STEM subject centres, we believe the information here is suitable for all higher education disciplines.

**OER Guidance Documents**

- [User Guide to OER](#)
  - General introduction/FAQ and overview
- [IPR Clearance](#)
  - Issues to consider on intellectual property rights, ownership and licensing
- [Preparing, Packaging and Uploading Resources](#)
  - Steps required and guides on uploading to appropriate repositories
- [Evaluation and Quality Assurance](#)
  - Why and how you should evaluate and QA your materials before release
- [Release, Dissemination and Sustainability](#)
  - Information on releasing and ensuring long-term sustainability of your resources and the OER movement

**Other Information**

[Resources produced through Phase I of the contributing projects](#)  
[Contributing projects](#)  
[JISC Infonet Open Educational Resources InfoKit \[External link\]](#)  
[Funding for this work](#)

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- Adding Metadata to Resources
- Concept of ownership in copyright and why it...
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**Guidance Documents**

- [User Guide to OER](#)
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- [Evaluation and Quality Assurance](#)
- [Release, Dissemination and Sustainability](#)

**Other Information**

- [Resources](#)

<http://stemoer.pbworks.com/>

## Community commitment

- *“I estimate that I have been working from less than the minimum wage!!”*
- *“I suspect that I was working for a rate well below the minimum wage!!”*

# Questions

- What are the motivations for releasing OER – commitment to community/funding/other?
- Will OER promote broader community change?
- Will more people now be willing to release ‘own’ resources?