

# HEA/JISC Open Educational Resources case study: pedagogical development from OER practice

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Access permitted: developing open access journals for early  
career researchers and staff development

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## Background

While the annual cost of UK higher education to the Government is approximately £2.2 billion almost £200 million of this sum is used by universities to cover the costs of accessing increasingly expensive peer-reviewed journals (Jha, 2012). Recent high profile reports of academics at the universities of Harvard and Cambridge calling for revisions to the current model of commercial publishing have given the open access movement renewed prominence in the popular press as well as in academic forums (Faculty Advisory Council, 2012; Jump, 2012; The Cost of Knowledge, 2012). The UK Minister of State for Universities and Science, David Willetts, has likewise recently called for a new culture of collaboration and openness that will result in a “seismic shift” in public sector research (Willetts, 2012). It is perhaps no surprise, however, that these debates about the merits of open access are taking place against the background of the latest UK Government Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) and its first double-dip recession since the mid-1970s as well as significant global economic austerity measures. These wider socio-economic trends are set to have a tremendous effect on the shape of higher education over the next decade, particularly in the area of research funding.

While the history of the open access movement can be traced back to the 1960s, it has achieved more widespread prominence and relevance since digital technologies became more popular during the 1990s and then subsequently with the advent of Web 2.0 and social media collaborative technologies dating from around 2005. Transitioning from print-based to online archives of articles has made digital content available to researchers via the web from any location at any time around the clock, yet it is often based on a pay-per-view principle that can be particularly restrictive for early career researchers and postgraduate students. The current system is dominated by three large global publishing houses (Elsevier, Springer and Wiley), owners of many of the world’s high impact peer-reviewed journals and approximately 40% of all purchased journal articles. While this system still provides huge profits for commercial providers, it is based on the labour of public sector academics who act as editors and peer reviewers, often free of charge, and profit merely as a result of a journal or publisher’s perceived reputation.

## Context

This case study focuses on the development of Open Educational Resources (OER) in the shape of an open access journal in a staff development context in UK higher education. At the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), the Centre for Research Informed Teaching and the School of Languages and International Studies have developed a number of in-house, peer-reviewed open access journals aimed at providing high quality forums for early career researchers. Combining with a current UCLan project funded by JISC’s Digital Infrastructure track to develop open access e-journals, one journal in particular – Journal of Second Language Teaching and Research (JSLT&R) – has been established to provide peer-reviewed, open access resources aimed at early career researchers (in their capacity as both authors, editorial staff and readers) in second language learning and applied linguistics, both within the University as well as internationally.

## Approach

This case study focuses on how the JSLT&R can provide a platform for the professional development of early career researchers by defining a framework of support to transition them into the publication culture of higher education. It is built on the assumption that teaching and research are indivisible and that a research-informed approach is required to develop the professional skills early career researchers need in higher education today. Part of this process also involves research mentoring to provide support for early career researchers who are unfamiliar with modern publication requirements, key terms and expectations. Emphasising the professional development opportunities afforded by open access solutions, it is argued, are important factors in making the wider case for transitioning from traditional commercial solutions, and should not play a mere secondary role to the economic case for open access.

Where postgraduate students and early career researchers find themselves using libraries that no longer have the funds to purchase expensive journals, they suffer from being denied access to primary research. The aim of the case is to identify a solution enabling these researchers to use open access publications and resources to aid their academic development and to foreground how open access can contribute to communities of practice to support the research process. The case intends to identify good practice to stimulate participation in research and publication and to aid understanding of academic impact and public engagement. The case draws on an auto-ethnographic approach from the perspective of the journal’s general editor, based on regular collaborative discussion and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders about the developmental process in face-to-face meetings as well as through the maintenance of a development team blog hosted on a secure internal server.



## Case study

### Institutional context

With approximately 35,000 students, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) is one of the largest providers of higher education in the United Kingdom. In addition to its main campus based in the north-west of England in Preston, UCLan also has campuses in Burnley and West Cumbria as well as new international campuses in Cyprus and Thailand, a network of partner international colleges and universities throughout the world, and one of the largest programmes of widening participation in the UK HE sector. As established in the University's key policy document covering the five-year period 2007-2012, the Medium Term Strategy (MTS), a central objective is to become both a "world class" and "modern university". In order to achieve this objective, the MTS is based on ten main principles, one of which maintains a firm commitment to establishing the University as a provider of world-leading research.

Recognising the diversity of research across this modern University has meant clarifying the relationship between two areas: first, research associated with traditional peer-reviewed publications and citations; second, a more applied strand of research engagement based on professional contexts and called Knowledge Transfer (KT). The University has been highly successful at encouraging academic staff to be research active in either of these two areas and the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) demonstrated that from 17 areas of assessment, 11 were returned as "world leading". Moreover, the University encourages the development of projects that promote research engagement and excellence across all of its 16 schools and supports a number of initiatives aimed at encouraging research active status and the staff development of early career researchers. Moreover, UCLan is a forward-thinking modern university that is well aware of the importance of digital technologies to contemporary teaching, research and scholarship (Weller, 2011), as well as the responsibilities necessary to promote rich research environments in which outputs can be freely shared with national and international scholars for mutual benefit.

One of the pillars of the University's research strategy has been the development of discipline-specific and interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journals aimed at involving researchers at different points in their career in the publication process in order to encourage a vibrant research culture. The focus on open access solutions is not therefore a response to a temporary trend, but is rooted in and complements the University's core principles of social and educational inclusivity, widening participation and research-informed teaching. As the case indicates, this nexus of principles provides an essential foundation for establishing open access solutions involving continuing professional development (CPD).

One challenge associated with the University's range of open access journals has been the seemingly random development of templates and approaches (in relation to technology, editorial policy and administration) that utilise a variety of stand-alone solutions that may not effectively communicate with one another. Further challenges associated with the use of in-house journals concern issues of copyright, duplication of digital content, the potential for the loss of content, as well as the costs involved in the use of a non-standardised or scalable approach. To deal with this evolving context a solution was required that promoted open access engagement while also being relatively inexpensive, could be used by a variety of academic staff across the spectrum in different disciplines (both technical and non-technical), and was rooted in a supportive atmosphere of continuing professional development (Burnapp, 2011). The desired solution should be scalable, lead to a framework that could be replicated by other schools across the University, and incorporate effective and efficient workflows for authors, editorial staff and administrative support.

While arguments for open access often seem highly persuasive at first glance, especially given the assumption that it involves a cost-free solution, the reality is that the business case has still to be made with sufficient rigour in order to understand the costs involved (Bell, Schmoller and Sharpe, 2012). Furthermore, the business case has to engage with the academic perspective to produce a sustainable solution for the future. Even with open access, someone has to pay for the work involved (the editing, copyediting, proofing, producing and hosting of the final completed version of the journal). When Universities assume the role of open access publishers, they still have to clarify how these activities operate alongside a range of related functions and responsibilities from marketing to graphic design, as well as registering the renegotiation of workload models for academic staff appointed to editorial roles. Pathways between the two main alternatives associated with open access, the 'gold road' (where although access is free, the costs are carried by authors or supporting organisations) and the 'green road' (where authors use a repository to make their articles freely available to anyone on the web), still need to be negotiated (Harnad *et al.*, 2008; Houghton and Oppenheim, 2010). The process of recognising and shaping the complex variables that contribute to policy in this new area of open access needs to be articulated rather than assumed and remains a central part of this ongoing project (Bynner, 2012).

## Digital shift

At UCLan the process of moving to open access has to be seen within the wider context of its commitment to integrating digital scholarship and understanding the needs and expectations of students, staff and academics. JSLT&R was developed against the background of the University's Digital Shift policy, a ten-point strategic plan implemented by the University's campus-wide Learning and Information Systems (LIS), which seeks to deploy digital technologies across the University to enhance teaching, learning and scholarship both in and outside of formal teaching contexts (UCLan, 2012). The Digital Shift initiative focuses on the efficient creation, use and management of digital content for academics, administrative staff and students in a way that utilises Web 2.0 technologies to promote user-generated content (UGC), feedback, support, communication and collaboration. Web 2.0 platforms and technologies such as social networking platforms, web logs (or blogs), wikis and podcasting, provide easy to use and robust platforms for users to publish and disseminate content. The Digital Shift policy has played an important role in contextualising and legitimising the role of digital technologies and building an effective pedagogical case for their development. While this can be seen as a top-down initiative, a central component of its integration has been the importance of regular staff development opportunities with mandatory training for all academic and administrative staff involved in course delivery. The Digital Shift has therefore established a clear rationale for integrating digital technologies across the University and for educating stakeholders about issues relevant to digital scholarship (e.g. copyright, digital archives, preservation, licensing and collaboration) and has paved the way for an informed transition process for open access journals.

## Central Lancashire online knowledge (CLoK)

Building on the Digital Shift platform, previous grant-funded projects at UCLan have put in place many of the key elements required for the digital infrastructure to support open access publishing and the maintenance and preservation of its associated archive. A central pillar of this infrastructure, the Central Lancashire Online Repository (CLoK), is an open Institutional Repository (IS) powered by EPrints 3 developed by the University of Southampton, and supported by a JISC-funded project (<http://clock.uclan.ac.uk>). Since the completion of its pilot project in September 2010, CLoK has become an important central service for the administration and preservation of self-archiving research at the University. Each of the University's 16 schools has appointed a CLoK liaison officer and policy frameworks have been established by each research cluster in relation to the types of outputs that can be archived as well as commitments to uploading access to digital research outputs in PDF form. As a result, CLoK now includes a burgeoning range of outputs, covering traditional peer-reviewed articles (either in finished or pre-publication format), doctoral theses in electronic form, and other publications from book reviews to non-refereed articles of interest to the scholarly community. Links to recently added research articles and a variety of related statistics about deposits, frequent searches and downloads are available in a user-friendly dashboard feature that adds an extra dimension of transparency and interactivity.

CLoK has played an important role, then, in raising consciousness about a range of important publication issues related to creating, maintaining and developing digital archives in open access formats within the University community. Developing a reliable digital repository is essential for engaging the University community with the open access agenda, sharing research and good practice, promoting an inclusive approach to research collaboration and dissemination, building the reputation of those belonging to the research community, and engaging stakeholders in reflection on the process of scholarly work. Repository staff, research cluster liaison officers and content-based authors themselves, are tasked wherever possible with archiving the complete text or latest pre-publication versions of all publications entered in its database. Copyright for deposited work remains with the original authors, though any publication deposited in the repository provides the University with the right to preserve and manage it in ways that are deemed appropriate for its future preservation and dissemination. A full and detailed overview of CLoK guidelines relating to policies and standards on metadata, data, content, submission and preservation are available online (see CLoK, n.d.).

## Open access journal

The open access journal project emerges from this previously established context and its success has been reliant on having established this infrastructure as an important prerequisite. Indeed, the General Editor of the JSLT&R was also the research cluster liaison for the CLoK repository, a fact that made the transition process even more seamless. The journal therefore builds on the previous work with CLoK as well as a JISC-funded project (Publishing Online to Preserve Digital Scholarship or POPS) to develop a fully functioning open access journal and archive that responds to key initiatives in the area. Key aspects of the POPS project are engaged with establishing the technical infrastructure; benchmarking/ePrints developer community; corporate standardisation; institutional and professional academic requirements; determining efficient workflows; and the education and dissemination processes involved in the project. Related specifically to the open access journal, POPS was concerned in particular with: evaluating the role of academic staff in the process due to their role as digital champions or early adopters in relation to the wider UCLan academic scholarly community; understanding the nature of the academic and administrative support required by stakeholders involved in developing the open access

journal and its digital infrastructure; and being aware of the requirements of the wider academic community outside the particular and local context of UCLan in relation to expectations and demands for access to and preservation of digital archives of peer-reviewed scholarly work.

The open access journal project was concerned with using the University's online repository (CLoK) alongside a suitable open access platform to create a free or low-cost digital publication platform including an archive and editorial process. This model was built around the concept of sustainable scholarship and advanced as a rigorous alternative to print-based journals. It was envisaged that the journal could act as an example of good practice and encourage the University to develop a wider engagement with an open access culture and institutional change vis-à-vis research in the digital age. This would mean being transparent with regard to editorial and peer-reviewing processes so that early career researchers could benefit from involvement. Opportunities to disseminate the published research would enable wider access to the research across HE and into the FE sectors nationally and internationally.

### Setting up the journal

In September 2010 the *Journal of Second Language Teaching and Research* (JSLT&R) was established as an open access journal in the School of Languages and International Studies. The initial impetus behind the journal was to promote research-informed teaching (RIT) among the 23 members of the School. The initiative came from the Dean of School who had previously established a successful faculty journal at a university in Thailand, as well as the journal's General Editor who had been a member of the Editorial Board of a highly successful faculty journal at a university in Japan – the latter in particular had provided an exemplary model in that it had been running for over 14 years, was MLA listed, was available in both print and electronic versions and, while merely a faculty-level journal, received subscriptions from numerous universities in the Asian region and beyond. Both journals were peer reviewed, had prominent international advisory boards consisting of leading scholars, and played a significant role in contributing to the scholarly development and support of faculty members, particularly early career researchers in their first three years of post-doctoral work, as well as via the community of practice established by the support and mentoring of Associate Professors and Professors. Having two open access journal champions with significant previous experience of open access and a firm belief in sharing good practice rooted in continuing professional development were highly significant factors in the development of the journal at UCLan.

Further impetus came from the particular scholarly context of the School of Languages and International Studies as a number of staff members were in the process of completing their doctoral degrees and there was a need to transition and mentor them through the research and publication process. Engaging other members of staff who were considering pursuing doctoral degrees was also a contributing factor in that the journal was envisaged as a forum to engage them in publication and applied scholarly research and to challenge the idea that research was an avenue closed to them until later in their careers. An open access journal was perceived as an ideal conduit for these staff development activities.

Based on previous experience, then, the creation of an internally focused journal for staff members was a model of publication that key members in the development team were familiar with. Nevertheless, the format had serious limitations regarding impact and the rigour applied to reviewing processes. Involvement of the early career researchers in the REF 2014 was also an important contributing factor and therefore it was necessary to consider how the journal could enhance its prestige by encouraging external involvement from national and international early career researchers in addition to those in the School of Languages. This would also create a wider audience for authors to write for and in turn act as a motivating factor. An editorial group consisting of the General Editor and two Co-editors, both of whom were early career researchers, was formed to establish the aims and objectives of the journal:

*This is a new, open-access journal which hopes to provide a platform both for established and early-career researchers. JSLTR is engaged with building a community of practice (both online and offline) and supports debate and scholarship in second language teaching and research. The journal is published twice a year and accepts research papers and forum articles from the fields of English language and modern language teaching. Research papers and forum articles are all subject to peer review before being accepted for inclusion. (From 'Focus and Scope' of JSLT&R)*

*This journal provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. (From 'Open Access Policy' of JSLT&R)*

The editorial group decided that the journal should be based on a number of key principles: it required transparent international standards with regard to peer-reviewing protocols; it would focus on early career researchers in the main though established researchers would also be welcome to submit as they acted as examples of good practice; it would aim to support staff in the School of Languages and involve them in editorial and peer-review activities to underline our commitment to research-informed teaching; it would support national and international annual and biannual workshops, seminars and academic conferences aimed at early career researchers. One of the most important factors was a clear editorial and publication process in which all roles of stakeholders could be clearly seen and tracked by those involved, while also allowing editors to negotiate the process that best suited their disciplinary context. Figure 1 shows the recommended workflow of OJS that served as a basis for the JSLT&R.

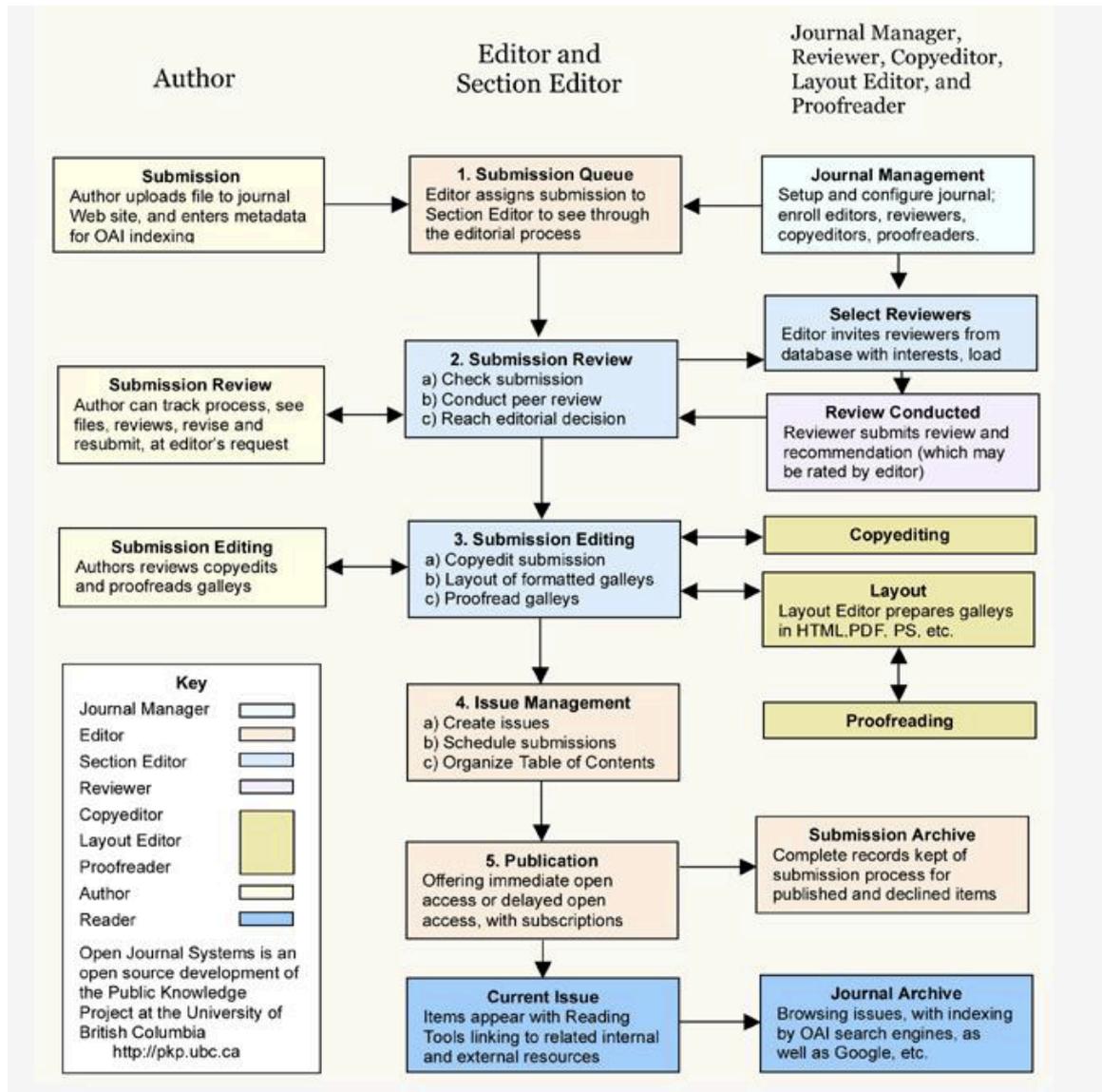


Figure 1: OJS editorial and publishing process

### Technical infrastructure

With these aims in mind, the online journal was initially established within the University's current webpages utilising its existing web content management system called RedDot (Open Text Web Solutions Group, 2012). Alternatives were discussed, including open source blog application such as WordPress or collaborative wikis such as WikiSpaces, but each of them presented a range of challenges regarding interoperability and journal management. These challenges included the need to (i) consider the corporate image of the University's webpages so that the journal was consistent with the requirements of University services such as Marketing, (ii) find a web interface that was easy to manage for editors, reviewers and readers, (iii) design a system that standardised the editorial process, and (iv) produce an interface that connected the open access online journal with the University's digital archive CLoK.

Another related issue in the process concerned intellectual property rights (IPR). In response, journal managers decided on a system in which copyright for the digital content (e.g. the academic articles) would remain with the authors of each article. As publishers of the content, the University uses a non-exclusive licence granting it rights to publish and maintain the content. Contributing authors subscribe to a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 licence granting others the opportunity to share (copy, distribute and transmit the work), remix (adapt the work) and make commercial use of the work (Creative Commons, 2012).

Initially, the journal was established using the University's existing and rather cumbersome web content management system. It was necessary to train the Senior Editor in the use of RedDot in order to add, update and manage content. As the Senior Editor had previous HTML and webpage design experience this was an acceptable interim solution, however, both Co-editors lacked this experience and willingness to learn HTML for this specific purpose and this led to a lack of participation, confidence and engagement with the platform. Arising from this context it was apparent that a web interface was required that (i) permitted ease of access for all members of the existing editorial team based on an intuitive design such as WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get), (ii) shared a commitment to open access and engaging with the wider open access community, and (iii) enabled efficient searchability in relation to metadata and the management of a digital archive.

The project was driven by the need to use up-to-date technologies to guarantee the quality standards required of contemporary peer-review publications while at the same time developing and utilising a template that could contribute towards open access publications in future. The principles of open access were central to this endeavour, as were the requirements to provide a rigorous scholarly environment to enable digital preservation (Bell, Schmoller and Sharpe, 2012). Building on this was the requirement to make digital content from the journals feed into the already existing framework of digital content management available via the University's CLoK system, which has been preserved to capture and disseminate content aimed at the REF 2014. The system must also respond to the rapidly developing array of open access journals available at the University and aimed at encouraging participation in the research and publication process. Such an infrastructure has to engage with existing practitioners who were leading the development of open access digital content at UCLan and to do so by developing a supportive environment for continuing staff development.

Following discussion and the successful POPS grant funding, the initial RedDot solution was discarded in favour of an e-journal based on the increasingly widely used Open Journal Systems (OJS, 2012) interface allied to the University's CLoK system as a digital archive for external facing content. As one blog post from a member of the editorial staff suggested:

*The most important thing for the users of a journal is the content. And in fact if it looks too closely associated with a school, some may see it as very inward-looking and just a vehicle for the members of that school to publish in it. I think a good journal has to be outward-facing and international to be credible. The fact that [the University] is associated with it then improves the research reputation of the institution. If it becomes a publicity vehicle alone then it damages the research reputation. So, yes, the association with [the University] should of course be clear, as we created it (!) but not at the expense of content ... Personally, I think the OJS platform is simple and effective. It could look better but when I go to a journal I am not really bothered about design, the issue is whether I can find things easily and how easy it is to navigate in general.*

Resulting from these changes, specific objectives included: (i) the development of an open access infrastructure that enabled the development and archive of digital content that conforms to national standards in relation to Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs); (ii) develop appropriate protocols for creating digital archives for peer-reviewed journal content accompanied by relevant documentation; (iii) acknowledge the requirements of academic and administrative staff involved in the management of scholarly publications in a digital infrastructure.

## Overview of the journal

The OJS template provided a user-friendly template for establishing a structured approach. The journal was divided into four main sections as shown in Figure 2 including, (i) People (Contact, Editorial Team, International Advisory Board), (ii) Policies (Focus and Scope, Section Policies, Peer Review Process, Publication Frequency, Open Access Policy, Welcome to JSLTR), (iii) Submission Guidelines (Online Submissions, Author Guidelines, Copyright Notice, Privacy Statement), and (iv) Other (Journal Sponsorship, Site Map, About the Publishing System). This gave the journal a professional and structured format that maintained its own identity, while also allowing it to draw on the developing community of OJS publications and the evolution of quality standards associated with it.



Figure 2: Overview of the structure of the journal in OJS

## Measuring stakeholder involvement

A key component of the project is concerned with measuring stakeholder involvement in the process. This is an ongoing activity and a variety of tools have been used to engage readers, authors, editors and support staff in the process. As a key focus was on establishing the appropriate editorial approach to be adopted, a blog involving key stakeholders was developed and maintained throughout the project. Blog postings gave academic and support staff the opportunity to discuss options, challenges and concerns arising from the project with one another in a reflective environment in which responses could be archived for future reference. The blog thus played a significant role in creating a community of practice and support necessary for the project. It is anticipated that this forum will continue during the first year of the journal as development matures and act as a vital source of continuity allowing the thoughts, concerns and challenges presented to stakeholders to emerge. Future research on stakeholder involvement will also engage with debates that suggest open models can improve article access, impact rates and author satisfaction with the editorial and publication cycles (Harnad *et al.*, 2008)



## Learning from OER

Since its inception the second generation of the internet or Web 2.0 has been concerned with promoting a culture of sharing, collaboration and participation. When applied to an educational context, Web 2.0 underlines the social aspect of learning and research and draws on the principles of OER to emphasise the need for supportive networks of like-minded researchers or communities of practice. As a result, from wikis to blogs and social networking, there are now more opportunities for authors to engage in the publication process, to publish in greater quantities and to publish faster than ever before. With the aid of e-repositories, digital archives can easily be created, accessed and searched to aid collaborative ventures in teaching and research. Through the use of mobile technologies news and research can be disseminated instantly and read around the globe. Yet while we live in the digital age, in the academic sphere, access to these resources, though created by staff from public funds and financial support, can still be denied and many of the leading impact journals continue to rely on outdated publication cycles that can considerably lengthen the whole publication process, and the time from submission to final printing can often be anywhere from six months to one year if not longer in some cases. Quality academic publications, then, can be expensive, slow to publish and may marginalise work by academic staff who are in transition to evidence-based scholarship, providing them with little in the way of professional mentoring and support.

The development of the open access journal presented here generated a number of lessons for those involved in the project, for the wider University community and potentially for the HE sector:

- While the transition to open access is an urgent issue in the current economic climate when many libraries are confronted with cost-cutting exercises, the economic argument is not the only one that needs to be heard. The case for open access has to involve a variety of stakeholders involved in the process, including marketing, library and technical services, repository managers, editorial staff, potential editors, readers and authors. If the solution is to be sustainable it needs to be focused on preserving scholarship rather than merely on its cost effectiveness for university administrators.
- The solution adopted in this case was firmly rooted in an approach that stressed the continuing professional development gains to be made from pursuing the open access solution. Consequently, more inclusive and effective frameworks for publication based on research-informed teaching have sought to involve a wider range of academic staff in publication and open access journals present opportunities for producing faster publication cycles than print-based journals, a requirement in the digital age when access to information is expected and demanded before it goes out of date.
- Setting up an open access journal from the beginning entails less resistance and cost-based challenges that transitioning from a print-based publication. Nevertheless, while the economic and staff development cases present strong arguments for open access, it is clear that researchers are still required by key research funding exercises like REF 2014 to publish in established high impact journals. Affecting the transition of mid-career researchers in search of promotion or tenure to open access publications will remain a significant challenge.
- The use of OJS provided a range of advantages: (i) its templates provided a clear and simple design for the journal – this enabled the journal to have its own unique identity; (ii) a new volume of the journal can be created very quickly without the need for specialised skills or knowledge of HTML; (iii) through the existing functions of the repository, the content can be easily searchable; (iv) the connection between the repository and the journal will mean there is no duplication of digital content and this is very useful for tracking of statistics associated with the reading process; (v) OJS has a significant developer and support community from which free plugins are frequently available to customise the journal and to enhance its contemporary feel; (vi) OJS has clear and established protocols for dealing with the editorial and peer review process.
- In order to promote the dissemination of open access journals it is important to join with like-minded communities. One such community is the Directory of Open Access Journal (DOAJ) (<http://www.doaj.org>), which can be used to enhance the journal's visibility and readership. The DOAJ also acts as a quality control mechanism.

### Future developments

A significant feature of the OJS platform is the addition of plugins created by other developers and freely available to the community. Such interactive features highlight the most read articles as well as those most highly rated by readers. As the open access format recognises the importance of social media, future developments of the journal will explore this

relationship further by emphasising the potential for collaboration and interaction with readers and reviewers through tagging, adding comments and rankings, collective reviewing, bookmarking, tweeting and RSS feeds. While it is often assumed that today's readership are both familiar and confident advocates of social media technologies, the journal will explore the preferences and interests of its readers through surveys and other channels of communication to encourage feedback and interaction.

The experience of producing the open access journal creates a repository of competence and experience that other journal editors and schools can tap into. Opportunities to publicise the work of the project on campus will be pursued to disseminate good practice. In the spirit of openness and transparency and given the focus on early career researchers, the journal will strive to make available reviewers' work to each other.

It is important to join with other groups and organisations that support open access initiatives. Arising from the project, we are considering membership of the Committee on Publishing Ethics (COPE) (<http://www.publicationethics.org>), an organisation aimed at journal editors and administrators concerned with advancing high standards of ethics in journal publication.

While open access publications are set to become increasingly important over the next five years in the area of languages, little has yet been specifically produced on open access journals. Canning's (n.d.) website, Yazik Open, provides a very helpful online database which links to over 3,000 items of open access language focused research. It also features an open access journal publication every month (<http://www.yazikopen.org.uk>). For helpful advice and support on the general area of OER in languages, readers are recommended to visit The Open University's Languages Open Resources Online project (LORO) (<http://www.open.ac.uk/education-and-languages/loro/>). To examine the transition of a major print-based journal to an open access format, readers are referred to the journal, *Research in Learning Technology*, which left Routledge for OJS in 2012 (Bell, Schmoller and Sharpe, 2012).



## Conclusions

This case study emphasises the strategic importance of open access principles alongside the need to encourage staff development (for research, individual and collaborative research) through the use of open access scholarship, while at the same time stressing the importance of preserving digital archives. The case for open access cannot purely be built on the economic case; it is important for all stakeholders in a community of practice to be aware of the case for open access and their place within it.

It has been the aim of the project to establish a framework for future open access journals; to understand the role of academics in the process and to develop an environment where open access journals can thrive. These aims are ongoing. Similarly, the project is deeply concerned with sustainability, both in relation to the central principle of the archive and in relation to embedding the project in the wider context of the University's Digital Shift project as well as commitments to open access principles such as Open Metadata.

It is noteworthy that Canning (n.d.) has developed a website to feature open access journals specifically in the disciplinary area of languages. This idea could be developed further to have national or international sites that list open access journals specifically in the different subfields of linguistics and applied linguistics under the umbrella of a national or international association.

While the case for open access often seems overwhelming, it is clear that it will require a concerted effort from academics and support staff to confront the risks associated with turning away from traditional commercial publishing. It is hoped that this project will contribute to further discussion about the role of open access in languages and lead to a set of guidelines or open access journal toolkit (Stone, 2011) that can be used to develop an open access community in languages within the higher education sector.



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