

ABSTRACT

“Open” approaches have the potential to enhance research, learning, and global knowledge sharing, and contribute to social justice. The open movement in higher education now extends beyond open access to content through a vision of transparent collaborative processes.

We use an inclusive definition of Open, considering activity alongside content, and also incorporating infrastructures. We propose a high-level typology and model of Open to inform policy design and strategy delivery.

Our preliminary work (2014) categorizes 12 domains of open as 3 broad types, elaborated in a relational model depicting interactions and reciprocal influences in an evolving open culture and worldview. Our emerging findings reveal important commonalities in the theoretical bases and practical benefits of the multiple open domains, supporting the case for promoting a unified policy agenda.

Some guides exist for atomistic policies, but few studies have explored what a coherent holistic open strategy might look like for higher education institutions. Our goal is to fill this gap with a multi-country survey and policy analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Open activities in the higher education arena are evolving in a complex, pluralist context, where multiple definitions exist with varying levels of consistency. Scholars identify synergies between the different approaches to openness, but discussion and development of policy and practice occurs in specialist communities of interest, proceeding along parallel tracks, rather than across related domains.

A Working Definition

The European Network for Co-ordination of Policies and Programmes (e-InfraNet, 2013, p. 12) envisions Open as the default *modus operandi* for higher education, and offers a simple overarching definition:

“Open means ensuring that there is little or no barrier to access for anyone who can, or wants to, contribute to a particular development or use its output”
(e-InfraNet, 2013, p. 13)

BACKGROUND

Relationships and Culture

- Different open domains overlap, support each other, and stimulate new forms of openness
 - Open research data building on open access papers and open source software
 - Open educational resources using open source systems leading to shared pedagogies and peer learning
- Dependencies and synergies among open domains indicate the significance of coordination and culture
 - “Where ‘open content’ is used and produced in ‘open processes’ within an open infrastructural setting, a culture of ‘openness’ gradually emerges”
(e-InfraNet, 2013, p. 13)

Multiplicity and Fragmentation

- Diversity of initiatives, managed at different levels:
 - institutional (MIT OpenCourseWare), consortial (edX), international consortial (OCW), national agencies (Jisc), international governmental (EU), foundations (P2P)
- Initiatives pursued by different communities of practice
 - often with little or no connection between programs
 - “a patchwork development of multiple open approaches, in response to different drivers in different contexts, that vary in maturity; there is not yet an ‘Open’ Agenda as such”
(e-InfraNet, 2013, p. 7)

“I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew)

Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who”
(Kipling, 1902)

CONCEPTUAL MODELS

Table 1. Open Types and Domains

Open Type	Open Domain
Open Content	Open access to research publications (OA) Open data Open educational resources (OER) (a.k.a. open courseware, OCW) Open bibliography (a.k.a. open metadata) Open source software (OSS)
Open Process	Open development (a.k.a. open development method, ODM) Open educational practices (OEP) Open peer review Open science/open research Open innovation
Open Infrastructure	Open standards Open systems

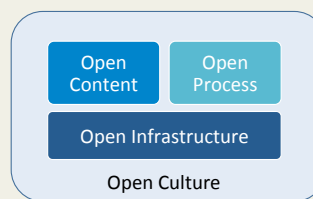


Figure 1. A High-Level Open Typology

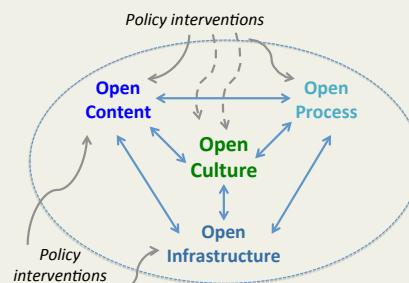


Figure 2. An Evolving Model of Open

DISCUSSION

Case for Convergence

Willinsky’s (2005) arguments for the (“unacknowledged”) “convergence” between OA and OSS can be extended to other Open domains to demonstrate coherence:

1. Different open domains have a shared “commitment”
2. They are governed by common “economic principles”
3. The domains have shared characteristics (from 1 and 2)

We suggest an additional argument:

4. The *de facto* interconnectedness between the open domains is continuing to develop (Corral & Pinfield, 2014, p. 302).

Benefits and Limits

The coherence of the open agenda is further evidenced by 6 shared benefits: visibility and impact; reuse; innovation and agility; cost effectiveness; quality enhancement; and reputation and trust (e-InfraNet, 2013; Read, 2011).

However, opens have “natural” limits, which need to be identified and tested for policy-making purposes, e.g.,

- OA – limited to royalty-free literature
- Open data – limited by personal or commercial confidentiality
- OER – limited by selectivity
- OSS – limited by a strong mixed economy

Notions of “selectivity” and “mixed economy” may (be used to) perpetuate fundamentally non-open approaches.

METHODS

The next phase of our research uses Kipling’s questions (also known as the 5W1H problem-solving method or WWWHWaW) as a “sensitizing framework” for fieldwork (Patton, 2002, p. 278), and Ackoff’s (1970) 3 principles of interactive planning (Participation, Continuity, and Holism) as a model for strategy and policy development.

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