THE SERIES

This is the eighth publication in the "5 Things" series. The 5 Things we recommend are intended to be eclectic and thought-provoking. They may be journal articles, blog posts, podcasts, interviews, reports, or just about anything else that we think is important to read, watch or hear about this topic. For the general concept, this series is deeply indebted to the EDUCAUSE "7 Things You Should Know About…" reports.

THE TOPIC

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are online, free, open access materials for teaching and classroom use. With the rising costs of higher education, particularly in the area of textbooks, OERs have become increasingly important in discussions about how to make college and university coursework more affordable. Academic librarians have entered into this conversation by helping educators locate OERs, making OERs more accessible and discoverable, and by promoting the development of open resources. Instruction librarians now must include OERs in the array of online resources they teach and work with faculty and instructors as they seek to understand the access, licensing, quality, and other issues associated with OERs.

1. Sutton, Shan C., and Faye A. Chadwell. 2014. "Open Textbooks at Oregon State University: A Case Study of New Opportunities for Academic Libraries and University Presses." *Journal of Librarianship & Scholarly Communication* **2 (4): 34-48. doi:** 10.7710/2162-3309.1174**.**

Oregon State University Libraries has joined a growing movement within library publishing that is changing librarians' relationship to OERs. Libraries no longer simply help to discover and curate existing OERs but actively fund and publish new OERs. Sutton and Chadwell offer an overview of library publishing and describe how OSU Libraries formed a partnership with the OSU Press to publish open textbooks authored by OSU faculty. Other libraries hoping to publish open textbooks will benefit from OSU's experience as outlined by Sutton and Chadwell, who discuss, among other factors, how to collaborate with other university departments, how to manage workflow, and how to establish open textbook publishing as an economically sustainable endeavor. **Approximate reading time: 30 minutes.**

2. Kazakoff-Lane, Carmen. 2014. *Environmental Scan and Assessment of OERs, MOOCs and Libraries: What Effectiveness and Sustainability Means for Libraries' Impact on Open Education.* **Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.** http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/publications/whitepapers/Environmental%20Scan%20and%20Assessment.pdf**.**

This report provides an overview of OERs, MOOCs (massive open online courses) and the contribution that libraries can make in both of these open education contexts. Kazakoff-Lane describes the development of OERs and MOOCs, including key events and stakeholders. The report identifies challenges involved in the creation of OERs and MOOCs and outlines roles for libraries in both movements. The "effectiveness" and "sustainability" of OERs and MOOCs are Kazakoff-Lane's key themes throughout. In the report's conclusion, the author urges libraries to "pay close attention to policies and agreements that constrain open education." Thorough and informative, this 47-page report includes an extensive bibliography for further reading. **Approximate reading time: 45 minutes.**

3. Kortemeyer, Gerd. 2013. "Ten Years Later: Why Open Educational Resources Have Not Noticeably Affected Higher Education, and Why We Should Care," *EDUCAUSE Review Online,* **February 26.** http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/ten-years-later-why-open-educational-resources-have-not-noticeably-affected-higher-education-and-why-we-should-ca**.**

This piece presents four hurdles to widespread adoption of OERs in higher education: discoverability (metadata and searching), quality control (editorial and peer review), the last mile (organization, context, and assessment), and acquisition (contribution and "openness"). Kortemeyer describes the challenges related to each hurdle and proposes a

solution for improving OER adoption in general – a global enterprise learning content management system that could unify and advance disconnected developments in digital textbooks and MOOCs. The LON-CAPA system is highlighted as an existing model. **Approximate reading time: 15 minutes.**

4. Allen, I. Elaine, and Jeff Seaman. 2014. *Opening the Curriculum: Open Educational Resources in U.S. Higher Education, 2014.* **Babson Survey Research Group.**
http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/openingthecurriculum2014.pdf.

This report builds on several previous Babson Survey Research Group studies on faculty and administrators' awareness and attitudes towards OERs. In this study, Allen and Seaman investigate how faculty attitudes and adoption of OERs has changed since the last study in 2011 and examine the factors that have influenced these changes. The results reveal that a thorough understanding of OER definitions and licensing was not necessary for classroom adoption, that faculty perceived the quality of OER sources to be equivalent to traditional sources, and that the main barrier to adoption was the difficulty faculty experienced in locating and evaluating OER resources. In addition to reporting the research findings, Allen and Seaman offer detailed analyses of previous survey questions and share justifications for changes made in this study to address the misunderstandings found in previous investigations. This 52-page study includes the full table of results and the complete survey. **Approximate reading time 30 minutes.**

5. Billings, Marilyn S., Sarah C. Hutton, Jay Schafer, Charles M. Schweik, and Matt Sheridan. 2012. "Open Educational Resources as Learning Materials: Prospects and Strategies for University Libraries." *Research Library Issues: A Quarterly Report from ARL, CNI, and SPARC*, **no. 280, 2-10.**
http://publications.arl.org/rli280/.

Placing OERs in a broad context of the open access movement, the authors discuss such materials in terms of economic theory that treats resources as "goods." In this view, digital information can be a "private good," "public good," or a "toll or club good." They describe some OERs as purely "open access," making them public goods; while others are "hybrid," with certain parameters established by publishers and libraries to regulate access, making them toll or club goods. In this framework, the authors discuss the Open Education Initiative at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, which began in 2011 to address the high and increasing costs of textbooks. This initiative provided grants to faculty to explore and develop alternatives to traditional textbooks, including OERs and hybrid OERs, and resulted in substantial cost savings for students. The authors discuss the success of the program and particular challenges that emerged. The article presents a succinct example of OERs as an alternative to traditional materials and demonstrates possible roles of the library as a partner and leader in such programs. **Approximate reading time: 15 minutes.**