EDITORIAL

JIME Editorial December 2017

Martin Weller and Ann Jones

This issue features four articles, which although not part of a themed issue nevertheless exhibit several unifying characteristics, particularly in relation to open educational practice. Two of the papers are explicitly concerned with Open Educational Resources (OER), and two with social media use by academics. But they all demonstrate different interpretations of how openness is shaping modern practice. There is a global perspective to this issue, with papers reporting on research in Rwanda, across the Global South, the US and a global survey.

Nkuyubwatsi (2017) looks at the applicability of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) OER in Rwanda. While the MIT OER are free, they often consist of lists of further readings, and his analysis reveals that many of these further resources are not openly available. This limits one of the primary drivers of OER, in that they are adaptable to different contexts. This paper highlights that OER are only one part of a broader educational and resource ecosystem, and their impact is restricted when other key components remain closed.

The second paper to look at OER is that of Morales and Baker (2017), who investigate secondary students' perceptions of open textbooks in the US. The response to the use of openly licensed textbooks was largely positive. They report that students appreciate the ability to write, amend and add to these resources. Additionally, the knowledge that their teachers are editing the open textbook every year encourages them to provide feedback on the resource. In contrast to the Nkuyubwatsi's findings, here the open resource acts as a catalyst to finding more open resources.

The paper by Goodier (201X) is also concerned with an OER initiative, that of ROER4D in the global south. Her focus is however not on the use of the resources, but on the surrounding community. This project had numerous collaborations across multiple countries and thus establishing a network of practice was a key aim. Goodier investigates how their strategic use of Twitter accomplished this and proposes a Utilization Focused Evaluation framework, to map a workflow through which the project's Twitter network growth could be tracked over time.

In the second paper to focus on social media, Jordan and Weller (2018) examine its use by academics, utilising an open data set provided by Nature and using analysis of the open text comments. This paper focuses on the academic use of social networking sites (SNS); which is a particularly timely topic given that academics are often under increasing pressure, by the institutions for which they work, to have active profiles on such sites, in particular to enable their research to be visible and accessible. This work demonstrates that academics see a broad range of benefits but also, a much greater proportion of the sample raised negative issues.

As well as their useful individual contributions these articles jointly highlight two interesting, and growing aspects of openness. The first is the possibilities for research that open data affords. Three of the papers make use of openly available data and resources to conduct their analysis, for example through the use of open data sets or Twitter analysis. This means that permission to do so is not required, and data gathering is greatly simplified. This relates to the second aspect, namely that the papers highlight the impact of an ecosystem of open practice and resources. The MIT open courseware is limited in value if it cannot call upon open resources, while the open textbooks become enriched by the addition of such resources. The use of social media by educators becomes valuable when they share ideas, resources and practice openly, and thus encourage others to participate.

Competing Interests
The authors have no competing interests to declare.

References

Goodier, S 2018 Evaluating the Network: A Workflow for Tracking Twitter Interactions Using Social Networking Analysis. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education.* 1: 2, 1–13. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.449

Jordan, K and **Weller, M** 2018 Academics and social networking sites: Benefits, problems and tensions in professional engagement with online networking. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education.* 1: 1, 1–9. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.448

Morales, R and **Baker, A D** 2017 Secondary Students' Perceptions of Open Science Textbooks. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education.* 1: 8, 1–9. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.455

Nkuyubwatsi, B 2017 Revisiting the Reusability and Openness of Resources in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Open Courseware. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education.* 1: 7, 1–9. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.447

Open University, GB
Corresponding author: Martin Weller (martin.weller@open.ac.uk)