Our Heritage

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Utility of Open Educational Resources

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Abstract

Today in this era of globalization we have access to vast amount of information at our fingertips. But what is the importance of such information which cannot be utilized to its full extent for teaching, learning and research purpose. There are strict copyright rules which prohibits us from using the information available to us. Open Education Resources enables us to use this digital resources available on global platform without the fear of violating the copyright rules. OER are teaching, learning and research material in digital or any other medium that are available in public domain or are released under an open license that are permitted to use with limited or no restriction of cost, use, adaptation and redistribution by others. If people are aware of the concept of OER, they can utilize the abundant material available on internet for enhancing teaching, learning and research capabilities.

Keywords: OER, Creative Common License, TIPS framework.

Introduction

In this era of Globalisation vast amount of information is available to us. We can say that this is the era of information explosion. Although we have the access to plenty of information electronically but it is not possible to use this information because of strict copy right rules. What is the importance of such information which cannot be utilized fruitfully for educational learning processes? Open Education resources are boon to education which permit to use quality digital material without the fear of violating copyright laws. OER enables us learn digitally by using learning material available on the global platform of internet.

Open Educational Resource

The term 'Open Educational Resources' was firstly used in year 2002 at UNESCO's Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries. Teaching, learning and research material in digital or any other medium that are available in public domain or are released under an open license that are

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permitted to use with limited or no restriction of cost, use, adaptation and redistribution by others come under the category of open educational resources. Textbooks, curricula, syllabi, lecture notes, teacher's guides, references and readings, simulations, experiments and demonstrations, assignments, projects, audio, video and animation are included in the category of Open Educational Resources. All these resources are available as freeware and can be used with varied degree of copyrighted usage and can be distributed under Creative Common Public License. In today's era OER has gained popularity throughout the world because of its user friendly aspect and has its influence in India also. Today many frameworks are emerging on how to govern licensing of OER for utilization by people. Under licensing of OER some allows user to copy the resources where as some permits user the provision of adaption, editing or remixing. The most suited or well-known license used for OER is Creative Common License. Creative Commons licenses are the standard license being used for OERs. Any online or digital resource available on the web cannot be called as an OER. We can call a digital OER only if it provides an appropriate licenses like the creative commons public license and has certain characteristics.

Characteristics of OER

- Open to all-OER should be accessed by everyone. It means OER should be accessible to anyone, anytime and anywhere at his/ her convenience irrespective of who is accessing the data. The term open also specifies that material should be available freely to everyone as per their needs and they don't have to pay for royalties or license fee.
- Cost-Usually OER are provided free of cost to the users and users can download it freely from the websites. Sometimes there may be little or minimal cost associated with the material then it should be taken care of by the university or institution that maintains the website.
- Reusability-The OER developed should be reusable means the material developed should be globally useful. It should not be developed keeping in mind the needs of a person of some specific locality or institute.
- Relevance-Relevance is an essential attribute for OER. It implies that the matter should be genuine and should provide in depth knowledge of the concerned topic It should provide insight and meaningful learning to the users. The learner should get useful information from OER as he obtains

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from any standard offline reference books or resources.

- Simple and easy to use-The OER should be prepared keeping in mind the needs of an average user. It should be written in such a way that every person should be able to understand it. The language should be simple and the material should be developed in user friendly format which is easy to access, download and print.
- Copyright Licensing-The most important characteristic of OER is copyright licensing. Creative Common License provides copyright to OER and Under Creative Common licensing OER is available as freeware or with various degrees of freedom of use and distribution.
- Five R's of OER-OER should have five R's, which mean that is, we should have

Reuse-the permission to use a content shared by someone in its altered form.

Revise-the permission to alter the content shared by someone as per user's choice, i.e. adapt, modify, add, tweak or improve.

Remix-the permission to combine two or more OERs to form something new as per our needs. We can modify an OER and then combine it with another OER according to our necessity.

Redistribute-the permission to share the original OER or the revised or remixed versions with others.

Retain-the permission to access the OER and keep it with us after our use.

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