# Week 3- Open Dissemination

Welcome to week three! This week we’ll be looking at how to increase the impact of your research by disseminating openly. We’ll be exploring what ‘open’ dissemination means; the role Technology plays in open dissemination; licences that support reuse of resources; Open Access Publishing and consider some of the benefits and disadvantages of ‘open’ dissemination.

For each section there is a short activity and, as a conclusion to the week, we’ll be asking you to start thinking about your own research interests and how openness could impact on your practice. This activity will draw together the work you’ve doing over the past few weeks and we’ll be revisiting this activity next week when we’ll be looking at evaluation and reflection as part of open research practice.

**What is Open Dissemination?**

Firstly, let’s look at what it means to disseminate in general and then focus on the open element of dissemination.

Dissemination is a widely used term, and one that you probably have a general interpretation of, but it is useful to consider a formal definition at the start of the week, so we can consider how open dissemination may differ. Dissemination forms a large part of many research projects, and so research funders provide a good starting point for a definition we might use. The European Union defines dissemination as “the process of making the results and deliverables of a project available to the stakeholders and to a wider audience”. (http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/management/Fact\_sheet\_2010\_10.html)

According to the EU, there are four main purposes of dissemination:

* Raise awareness
* Inform
* Engage
* Promote

These four functions are worth bearing in mind, as some methods are tools are better suited to a particular function than another, while others will perform all four simultaneously. For example, if you are designing a poster or handout to raise awareness, it may contain less information than one designed to inform a particular group.

Open Access publishing

One traditional aspect of dissemination that varies with open dissemination is the publication of research articles that may arise from a project. Over the past decade Open Access publishing has increased in uptake, with many research funders now mandating that any articles arising from their funding must be made openly available. Open Access is usually interpreted to mean “free online access to scholarly works”, although the Budapest Open Access Initiative (2002) gives a more formal definition, which encompasses not only free access in terms of cost, but free from copyright constraints also:

“By ‘open access’ to this literature, we mean its free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited.”

A project may decide from the outset that any publications will be published under an open access agreement. But this in turn may restrict the number of journals that can be considered, or have implications for the budget (many publishers charge Article Processing Charges, APCs, to publish openly).

As well as publishing articles openly, there is now also a move to publish all data arising from research openly, using an open license so that others might use it.

# Why does Open Access matter?

# Forum Activity 1 (20 mins)

In the forum, list three reasons why *The Royal Society of London* may wish to make their work open access. What are some of the benefits and some of the issues that may be associated with their approach? Use the following article:

*The Royal Society of London* to launch new Open Access Science Journal: <http://www.theguardian.com/science/grrlscientist/2014/feb/18/royal-society-open-access-science-maths-new-journal>

**Further Reading:**

Benefits of Open Access for research dissemination

<http://www.openoasis.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=146&Itemid=253>

Right to Research Coalition "Why Open Access?

<http://www.righttoresearch.org/learn/whyOA/index.shtml>

Interview with Niek Huizenga on OA and the difficulties people in Africa experience:

<http://whoneedsaccess.org/2012/05/15/niek-huizenga-young-entrepreneur-and-it-specialist/#more-290>

Budapest Open Access Initiative (2002) Read the Budapest Open Access Initiative <http://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/read>

[SPARC](http://www.sparc.arl.org/) fact sheet <http://www.theguardian.com/science/grrlscientist/2014/feb/18/royal-society-open-access-science-maths-new-journal>

## Forum Activity 2 (15 mins)

Having looked at one particular aspect of open dissemination, namely open access publishing, we will now consider it more broadly. **In the case of the OER Research Hub project,** our research has been supported and facilitated by ‘open’ dissemination. This open dissemination approach was an integral part of the initial project bid and has helped us meet and deliver our project goals.

We have deliberately:

* Created a project identity on various tools including Twitter, Scoop.It, YouTube and Flickr.
* Made the project blog the core part of our project identity
* Shared our research progress; outputs and methods on a regular basis, via our website/blogs and other media, and made blogging a formal requirement for visits, presentations, etc
* Created and used our OER Impact Map to encourage contribution and feedback from the rest of the OER community
* Endeavoured to communicate our messages promptly and as widely as possible, including sharing “in progress” work.
* Shared our data openly, including survey results
* Shared our tools openly to create a researcher pack

For this activity let us consider how open dissemination might differ from traditional dissemination. We looked at a definition of dissemination at the start of the week, and for now we can consider open dissemination to be conducting those practices using open technologies and approaches. Briefly list three characteristics of open dissemination, considering how operating in the open may be different. Use the forum to list your thoughts.

**Discussion:**

The act of dissemination, in itself, may appear to be ‘open’, but the approach to traditional dissemination is quite different from ‘open’ dissemination. When we disseminate openly, there is more emphasis on currency, spontaneity, community involvement and sharing throughout the process.

# Facilitating Open Dissemination: The Role of Technology

With the advent of technology and the growing influence of social media communities, we now have a wider interpretation of ‘openness’. The concept of sharing of outputs is no longer just viewed in a formal sense (e.g a journal publication), but, outputs could include informal ideas, suggestions and presentations.

**Here are some examples of how technology has been supporting openness to a wider community**:

1. Stephen Downes curates blogs on a wide range of topics relating to educational technology, and publishes a daily and weekly digest. <http://www.downes.ca/>
2. *True Stories of Open Sharing* is compiled by Alan Levine and “…shares moving, personal stories that would not have been previously possible, enabled by open licensed materials and personal networks”: <http://stories.cogdogblog.com/>
3. The *School of Open* course *Why Open?* includes an incredibly useful and diverse set of resources (see Section B *Case Studies and Stories of Openness*) which look at the benefits and drawbacks of openness in a variety of contexts including research. See: <https://p2pu.org/en/courses/588/content/1283/>

Activity 3 (30 mins)

Think about some technologies that support and facilitate open dissemination. **Select one of these tools, and use it to explain why you would chose this particular tool to disseminate your project. Post a link to your creation, with a short explanation as to why you chose this tool, in the Google doc here <url>.**

In selecting a channel, think about your project’s audience and what they could easily gain access to.

**Discussion:**

Here are some more examples of the technologies that support and facilitate open dissemination:

* Social Networks e.g. Facebook; Twitter
* Blogs
* Open access publishing
* Open data release
* Use of media, eg video, podcasts

Outputs for dissemination may differ from project to project and a challenge may lie in deciding where outputs should be disseminated. Each project would need to consider the most appropriate and effective medium for communicating messages with its stakeholders. For example, does your community have ready access to internet? Is your community active on a particular social network? Does your community regularly engage with blogs?

In particular, social networks can play a key role in open dissemination as they help create a community network around a particular theme. Such networks facilitate easy sharing via modes suitable to different audiences.

# Open Licensing

For dissemination to be considered as ‘open’, reuse of a project’s output, be it data, presentations, video or articles, would be explicitly encouraged. A special licence, such as one from [Creative Commons](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/), would usually be adopted to promote reuse. Licensing is an official way of outlining to the public your conditions on how they may share and use your research.

The Creative Commons licence has a number of ‘flavours’, so the rights owner can choose whether or not to place a set of restrictions on the reuse of their material and what those restrictions should be. These are explained on the Creative Commons website (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/).

You can see some of the more detailed arguments about particular licenses on this Peer2Peer University course (scroll down to the links under the heading “Arguments about benefits and drawbacks of specific Creative Commons licenses”: [**https://p2pu.org/en/courses/588/content/1283/**](https://p2pu.org/en/courses/588/content/1283/)

Activity 4 (45 mins)

Choose one output from your proposed project (it can be a presentation, blog post or a framework document, and does not need to exist; it can be a planned one) and:

A) Consider which of the [Creative Commons licences](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/) you would use.

B) What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of someone else’ choice?

Share your thoughts in the Google document here <URL>.

In selecting your licence, you may wish to consider: your CC commitment; know why your project would prefer a particular licence, over another; be sure of conditions and options of each available licence option.

**Further Reading**

Some factors (discussed by [JISC](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/)) to consider when choosing a CC licence:

<http://sca.jiscinvolve.org/wp/files/2009/04/11_sca_ipr_cc_licences.pdf>

## Activity 5 (40 mins)

You’ve reached the final section of week three. To end this week of the course we would like you to think about your own research interests and plan your own mini-research project. This activity should bring together all of the ideas you have discussed over the past three weeks of the course.

Think of all the different things you would need to consider when planning a research project (you can look back at week one of the course if you need a reminder of things you might need to think about). In what ways could you incorporate open research practices into your research project?

Share your research project idea and tell us in what ways (if any) you think openness might be able to make a difference to your research process. We’ve created a Google spreadsheet for you to use, which is available here<URL> We’ll have time to discuss your ideas in this week’s Google Hangout, and will be revisiting your ideas next week.

<In Google spreadsheet>

What is the aim of your research project? What are you trying to find out? Why?

*<Grid headings> Question/Solution/Openness issues*

What methods will you use?

What data will you gather?

What will you release openly?

What license will you adopt?

What dissemination approach will you take?

**General Reading:**

[P2PU](https://p2pu.org/en/)’s Case studies of Open Dissemination[**https://p2pu.org/en/courses/588/content/1283/**](https://p2pu.org/en/courses/588/content/1283/)

Weller, M *The openness-creativity cycle in education -A Perspective* in JIME, 2012, 02

<http://jime.open.ac.uk/article/2012-02/pdf>

Weller, M The Virtues of Blogging as Scholarly Activity <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Virtues-of-Blogging-as/131666>

Wiley, D., and Green, C. (2012). Why Openness in Education? In Oblinger, D. Game Changers: Education and Information Technologies. Educause

Open Humanities Press. What is Open Access. Retrieved from: <http://openhumanitiespress.org/resources.html>

The Open University’s Open Learn Course on Open Education

<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/open-education/content-section-0>