

AUSTRALASIAN OEP SIG DIGEST

MAY 2020 ISSUE

With thanks to the US OER Digest Team for reuse of some international content.

Australasian News

COVID-19 AND OPEN: In the last SIG gathering, the group discussed the opportunities, challenges, and approaches to openness in the current Australasian environment. Many staff have been able to progress open awareness and open education initiatives. Sarah Lambert from Deakin was kind enough to take notes and share via [Google Docs](#). Please add any information from your institutions.

ADVOCATING FOR OPEN: Based on the April discussion, the [SIG May meeting](#) will focus on groups on campus dedicated to open education. Whether you have (or would like) a working party, committee, or any other structure to support OEP, come along, share your experiences, and learn from the membership. May 26th, 3.00-4.00pm (AEST), please email Adrian.stagg@usq.edu.au if you do not have a link in your meeting request to the Zoom space.

CC LICENSING COURSE: The OERu offers a free and open 'Certificate of competency in Copyright and Creative Commons Licensing'. [Find out more](#). (Via Wayne Macintosh)

#OER4Covid. Responding to the international COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the OER Foundation (OERF) in New Zealand, which coordinates the OERu, have joined forces to establish an [Open Educational Resources for Covid \(OER4Covid\)](#) community. The goal is to assist educational institutions around the world to transition to online learning. (Via Wayne Macintosh)

OER LIBRARIANS. Are you considering the appointment of an OER Librarian? [Open Oregon provides some advice](#) for one-year contract positions and what can be reasonably achieved in that time.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE solutions are being discussed in Australian Higher Education, but what can we learn from others? Creative Commons are 'cautious' about AI, [and here's why](#).

International news

2.8 MILLION NEW OER: Creative Commons (+Wikimedia, Google Labs, Smithsonian's OA team and more) helped the Smithsonian adopt an open access policy and [dedicate 2.8 million works into the public domain](#) using CC0.

STUDENTS SUE: Students from New Jersey have filed a class action lawsuit against Cengage, McGraw-Hill, Pearson, and campus bookstores chains. The plaintiff alleges that automatic billing models violate antitrust laws, and amount to a "conspiracy" that eliminates cheap alternatives for students. Publishers say they are prepared to "defend vigorously" their billing program.

MERGER CANCELLED: College textbook publishers McGraw-Hill and Cengage [called off their proposed merger](#) this month in response to antitrust concerns [raised](#) by the U.S. Department of Justice and other agencies. The companies cited hefty divestitures as the reason for abandoning the deal, as they would have had to sell off too many overlapping products to satisfy antitrust enforcers. From the beginning, the

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proposed merger was [criticized](#) by a wide range of higher ed stakeholders because it would further consolidate the textbook market, leaving students with fewer choices and higher prices.

UNESCO ON OER: In response to the COVID pandemic, [UNESCO has](#) urged member countries to promote learning and knowledge sharing through OER worldwide by encouraging the implementation of the [OER Recommendation](#) that Member States adopted last November. "The COVID-19 crisis has resulted in a paradigm shift on how learners of all ages, worldwide, can access learning. It is therefore more than ever essential that the global community comes together now to foster universal access to information and knowledge through OER," [reads the call](#), co-signed by Moez Chakchouk and Stefania Giannini, Assistant Directors-General for Communication and Information, and for Education at UNESCO, respectively.

New open texts

CHEMISTRY. Michigan State University's Melanie Cooper and Michael Klymkowsky released [CLUE: Chemistry, Life, the Universe and Everything](#). This introductory chemistry text works to move students from reciting to understanding and applying foundational ideas of the subject.

ANTHROPOLOGY. [Explorations: an Open Guide to Biological Anthropology](#). Anthropology is the study of humanity, in all its biological and cultural aspects, past and present. It is a four-field discipline comprised of biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and linguistic anthropology. The focus of this book is biological anthropology, which explores who we are from biological, evolutionary, and adaptive perspectives.

UNIVERSITY WRITING. [Informed Arguments: A Guide to Writing and Research](#). Funded by the Texas A&M University OER grants, this text seeks to foster student confidence in their ability to read, write, research, and speak publicly.

RESEARCH. [A Quick Guide to Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences](#). This resource is intended as an easy-to-use guide for anyone who needs some quick and simple advice on quantitative aspects of research in social sciences, covering subjects such as education, sociology, business, nursing. If you are a qualitative researcher who needs to venture into the world of numbers, or a student instructed to undertake a quantitative research project despite a hatred for maths, then this booklet should be a real help.

Research and Reports

NEW REPORT: Bay View Analytics, formerly the Babson Survey Research Group, released [their survey on attitudes](#) and knowledge of open textbooks among faculty. The report shows knowledge of open textbooks among faculty has reached over the fifty percent mark for the first time, and that faculty using open materials rate them to the same level of quality as commercial materials. The report also cites automatic billing as a potential hazard for expanding the adoption of open materials.

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING. The latest issue (Vol 21/2) is out! [Read it here](#).

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