

OCW Consortium: learning through the worldwide sharing and use of free, open, high-quality education materials organized as courses

Special Session

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Abstract— A special session is proposed to present the current status of OpenCourseWare Consortium from different viewpoints: from the OCWC Board of Directors's view, UNIVERSIA as leader of a regional OCW consortium, and best practices of other universities.

Keywords: *open educational resources, ocw*

I. INTRODUCTION

Global educational systems are unable to meet current needs. Systems of primary, secondary and higher education around the world are struggling to find the resources and trained educators required to meet the demands for education and certification, particularly in the face of rapid population growth and economic development. The current global economic crisis exacerbates these problems through the creation of a displaced labor force in need of retraining at a time when resources supporting educational systems are further diminished.

Technology is an increasingly disruptive force on educational systems, both positively and negatively. The Open Educational Resources (OER) movement is a trend toward the creation of openly-licensed resources including open references such as Wikipedia, open access journals, open educational technologies, open text books, open data sets, open learning object repositories, shared resources such as iLabs and many others. Open educational resources are proliferating in type and number. There is a rapidly increasing number of open educational resources attracting ever-higher levels of use. As of yet, few synergies have emerged between these related but separate undertakings, and as a whole the movement often provides a confusingly kaleidoscopic array of resources and opportunities. The progress and promise of OER, however, both remain substantial. Open educational resource creation and use is becoming a widespread global best practice. The spread of OpenCourseWare publication, open access publication, as well as the use and integration of OER into new materials, are all increasing. Forums such as the UNESCO-OER mailing list are bringing together a global OER community.

The OpenCourseWare (OCW) project, as part of the OER movement, started at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in the year 2001, with the aim of offering pedagogical materials in an open and free of charge basis to society. The mission of the OpenCourseWare Consortium is to advance formal and informal learning through the worldwide sharing and use of free, open, high-quality education materials organized as courses. An OpenCourseWare (OCW) is a free and open digital publication of high quality university-level educational materials – often including syllabi, lecture notes, assignments, and exams – organized as courses. This philosophy is being spread to the world main universities creating the OCW Consortium (OCWC), in which more than 250 universities and associated organizations worldwide committed to advancing OpenCourseWare sharing and its impact on global educational opportunity. The OpenCourseWare Consortium (OCWC) has been formed [4] with the proposal of expanding the reach and impact of opencourseware by encouraging the adoption and adaptation of open educational materials around the world.

II. FOCUS AREAS

Papers of this special session will highlight some of the work related with OCW movement with representation in the following areas:

- The OpenCourseWare Consortium (OCWC) is undergoing a period of rapid growth and organizational development. The number of participating institutions, live OCW sites, and total available courses are all increasing rapidly. The Consortium is straining to develop the organizational structures needed to accommodate this growth. The OpenCourseWare Consortium is just developing as an organization. We will count on the representation of the OCWC Board of Directors of the OCWC to explain how the Consortium faces the dual challenges of developing initiatives to support Consortium goals and developing the systems and infrastructures needed to operate the organization.

- Subconsortia are emerging in increasing numbers around the world. Regional groupings of OpenCourseWare projects are emerging around the globe, bringing large groups of universities into the OpenCourseWare Consortium. UNIVERSIA, one of the greater networks of university cooperation, which merges 1,070 universities and higher education institutions in 11 countries of Latin America, leads the OCW UNIVERSIA and tries, under the cultural and geographic affinity of the Latin American space, to facilitate the presence of the institutions of higher

education of this region in the world-wide OCWC and to promote the open publication of its courses and others educational contents in the languages of our community. The OCW Universia view for our current situation will be presented in this session.

- The consortium helps you create content—more effectively and more efficiently—by providing an environment for the sharing of best practices among our members. Some of these practices developed by other technical insitutions will be presented.