Unleashing the power of online networks through openness

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OE Global 2017

e/merge africa
unleashing the power of networks
Programme

1) Opening activities

2) How the e/merge Africa and ROER4D networks use openness

3) Strategies and tools to map and analyse developing networks

4) Using Peer assists as a tool to ‘do “open’ better”

5) Reflections, insights and persistent questions
Human Spectrogram
Us and our networks
Researchers

Practitioners

e/merge africa
growing e-learning capacity together
e/merge Africa is an African online network that serves to:

- **share** good practice and good research
- **provide** facilitated spaces for community of practice interactions
- **foster** fruitful conversations across related specialist professional practices

The landscape includes **educators**, **course designers**, **researchers**, **professional development experts**, **technologists**, **educational managers**, **policy experts** and **postgraduate students**
In 2016

30 countries (18 African)

Top five:
South Africa
Nigeria
Kenya
Zimbabwe
Ghana

506 signed up
321 active
160 participants in
Facilitating Online
Tools used by the team...

Email
Google Hangouts
Google Docs/Drive
Facebook
WhatsApp
Messenger
Skype
Team Viewer
Tools for growing our community

Email list
Open source LMS
Live meeting server
Wordpress sites
Google Docs/Drive
Facebook group/ events
Twitter
Linked In
YouTube channel
Some Challenges faced

- Achieving critical mass in events
- Participation between events
- Improving curation and dissemination of resources
- How much openness?
Our Facebook Group

ROER4D
Research on Open Educational Resources for Development
The purpose of the **ROER4D** network

Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams

OE Global 2017
9 March 2017
In what ways, and under what circumstances can the adoption of OER address the increasing demand for accessible, relevant, high-quality and affordable education in the Global South?
ROER4D has 100 researchers & assistants across 18 sub-projects in 26 countries across 16 time zones, supported by 2 full time and 9 part-time “hub” team members at the University of Cape Town, South Africa and the Wawasan Open University, Penang, Malaysia.
ROER4D Objectives

1. Build an empirical knowledge base on the use and impact of OER in education
2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers
3. Build a network of OER scholars
4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice
5. Curate output as open content

Internally within the sub-project ROER4D team

Externally with other researchers, OER funders, government agencies
ROER4D Key Evaluation Areas

1. Build an empirical knowledge base on the use and impact of OER in education
2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers
3. Build a network of OER scholars
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5. Curate output as open content

Using the utilization focused evaluation (UFE) framework
ROER4D Key Evaluation Areas

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KEQ:
To what extent has ROER4D built a network of OER scholars?
Strategies and tools to map and analyse developing networks: The case of using Social Network Analysis in ROER4D

Sarah Goodier
ROER4D Evaluation Advisor

OEGlobal 2017
9 March 2017
Outline

• What is social network analysis (SNA)?
• Why use SNA?
• How to use SNA: The case of ROER4D
• Evaluating networking in ROER4D
• Discussion & conclusion
WHAT IS SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS?
Social network analysis =

Visualising, exploring and understanding structural data about relationships between members within networks
Social network analysis =

Visualising, exploring and understanding structural data about relationships between members within networks
WHY USE SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS?
• While building a network, **understanding how it is growing and developing** can provide key information that can inform future network building.

• Can consider:
  – different timepoints
  – types of relationships
  – Strength of ties
  – Etc.
EVALUATING NETWORKING IN ROER4D
1. Build an empirical knowledge base on the use and impact of OER in education
2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers
3. Build a network of OER scholars
4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice
5. Curate output as open content

**KEQ:**
To what extent has ROER4D built a network of OER scholars?
Twitter in communications

- **Objectives**: Build a network of OER scholars, Communication about ROER4D
- **Activities**: Social media activity (general & targeted)
- **Outputs**: Improved visibility of ROER4D online
- **Outcomes**: Increased engagement with ROER4D online, Expanded ROER4D network, Expanded audience for ROER4D’s research outputs, Improved reach of ROER4D’s research outputs
- **Medium- to Long-Term**: Improved use of ROER4D’s research, Outputs and information reach ‘right’ audience
To improve ROER4D’s communication strategy

To have proof of concept about ROER4D’s networking model

To what extent has ROER4D built a network of OER scholars?

Social media networks analytics e.g. Twitter

Tools

- Twitter Analytics
- TAGS
- NodeXL
Use(s)

To improve ROER4D’s communication strategy

To have proof of concept about ROER4D’s networking model

KEQs

To what extent has ROER4D built a network of OER scholars?

Measure

Social media networks analytics e.g. Twitter

Tools

Twitter Analytics

TAGS

NodeXL
NodeXL

Interactions - 7-day window

7-day snapshots:
Network diagrams of replies and mentions

Data collected monthly or when the PIU requires an update

- For general network visualisations and analysis SNA
- Helps you to graph the relationships between entities
- Add-on for Excel
- Direct importing of (some) social media data
NodeXL

Interactions - 7-day window

7-day snapshots:
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Used to:
- Visualise the growing number of followers of the ROER4D Twitter account
- Investigate who was interacting with that account at defined timepoints
NodeXL

Key
- Orange: Indirect tweeters
- Green: Isolated network
- Blue: Isolated tweeters
- Pink: Direct and central tweeters
DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION
How could you use NodeXL in your project?

- Visualise your internal project network over time
How could you use NodeXL in your project?

- Track network growth over time
How could you use NodeXL in your project?

- Compare social media accounts to identify audiences
Key points

- SNA focuses on relationships – good for networking
- Define your purpose: What do you want to know?
- Gather data to answer your questions
- Act on that data to inform your networking activities

- Evidence of success in the ROER4D project
- Informed project & fueled improvement

- Can be applied to other projects
Recommendations

- Network as widely as possible online, and strategically with face-to-face meetings

- Track your project’s networking

- Analyse your project’s network: this is a valuable “at-a-glance” showcase of your project

- Find free or cost-effective network tracking and visualisation tools that meet your requirements
Thank you!

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Biggest challenges in growing our networks?

We invite you to share these and map them in groups of four or five. Decide together on one that you’d like to nominate for more attention in this workshop.
Using Peer assists as a tool to ‘do “open’ better” within and across networks
Leveraging on available expertise
Ride on the wings of experts

Or

Provide the expert wings
Grow Your Innovation

Grow your network
Achieve your target through peer assist
The Peer Assist Process

Purpose of a Peer Assist is to:

- Gain assistance and insights from others – it is not a review
- Identify possible approaches/solutions or new lines of enquiry
- Share learning i.e. knowledge sharing through participatory learning,
- Enable collective problem solving.
- Help develop networks amongst participants
PEER ASSIST
UNLEASH THE EXPERIENCE & INSIGHT IN YOUR LANDSCAPE OF PRACTICE

THE PROCESS:

Questions
Re: Clarification
Suggestions
Reflection by challenge presenter

What's NEXT?

THE CHALLENGE

Questions
Re: Assumptions

Network

Landscape of Practice

Workshop presented at #eLA15 by @emergeAfrica

@Tony_emerge
@zwakausu
@alicebz
@Jakobp
@Mohamed
@GabrielKonaguma
@nicolapallitt

Sketchnote by @nicolapallitt
Reflections, Questions

ROER4D
Research on Open Educational Resources for Development
ROER4D is hosted at the Centre for Innovation in Learning & Teaching, University of Cape Town

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e/merge africa
unleashing the power of networks

e/merge Africa is a professional development network for educational technology practitioners & researchers in African higher education.

Regular professional development activities include:
• online seminars & workshops
• short courses online
• conference workshops

Become a member today!
Sign up for our newsletter via our website. You will receive emails about upcoming events.

Peer assist sessions
Do you have a professional challenge related to eLearning practice that’s hard to crack? Would others benefit from a conversation around this topic? Let us know by applying to be a challenge presenter for one of our online peer assist sessions. Please see our website for details.

Call for speakers
Nominate a speaker (someone else or yourself) via our website to present a webinar or workshop/ seminar series.

Contact us
info@emergeafrica.net

e/merge Africa is a project of the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching at University of Cape Town and is supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

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growing e-learning capacity together

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