OPEN, READY AND AGILE: DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR THE ROER4D PROJECT

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Open, ready and agile: developing a communications strategy for the ROER4D project

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Overview

- Introduce the ROER4D project
- Research communications
- Developing the ROER4D research strategy
- Enabling factors: Readiness, Agility & Openness
Most OER research taking place in Global North

http://oermap.org/oer-evidence-map/
In what ways, and under what circumstances, can the adoption of OER impact upon the increasing demand for accessible, relevant, high-quality, and affordable education in the Global South?
Research on Open Educational Resources for Development in the Global South

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL POLICY, PRACTICE and RESEARCH in developing countries by better understanding the use and impact of OER

PROJECT CLUSTERS

- OER Desktop Review
- OER Survey
- Academics’ adoption of OER
- Teacher educators’ adoption of OER
- OER adoption in one country
- OER impact studies
- Baseline educational expenditure

roer4d.org
facebook.com/ResearchOERforDevelopment
twitter.com/roer4d

August 2013 - February 2017
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 research documents produced and data collected as open data
Our work is situated in field of research communications

- Changes in discourses around how and what of research communications [2]
- Increasing number of channels, media and formats
- Orgs/funders keen on seeing research impact and uptake [1]
- Media and content consumption habits and expectations of research ‘recipients’

Factors affecting nature of research communications

A need for an informed and deliberate approach to communicating research about OER

Communicate OER research in Global South

- Northern OER research has louder voice
- People unaware of what is happening in OER or open ed in developing countries
- We know more about OER activities but not enough about evidence to inform policy

Communicating to non-OER communities

- The “iceberg model” of OER engagement (Weller, 2014)[1]
- Communicating to constituencies for whom OER is not a primary activity but a means to an end or a happy by-product

An IDRC funded research project to build and mentor Communication and Evaluation for IDRC flagship projects

http://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.ca/

Welcome to Evaluation & Communication in Practice – a workspace for DECI-2: Developing Evaluation & Communication Capacity in Information Society Research – an IDRC-funded research project. This site includes the outcomes of the earlier DECI-1 project (Developing Evaluation Capacity in ICT4D) that focused only on UFE-mentoring in Asia.
Steps in the DECI-2 Research Communications process

1. Assessing Program Readiness
2. Situational Analysis
3. Purposes
4. Audiences
5. Methods & Media
6. Communication Objectives
7. Communication Strategy Design
8. Pretesting
9. Implementation
10. M&E
11. Institutionalization
Progression through the process

The steps are iterative, not linear

1. Assessing Program Readiness
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Developing the communications strategy

Developing a communications strategy with DECI-2 team at Feb 2014 workshop
Defining purposes, objectives, methods and media

Purpose

Media
Four key purposes for ROER4D Communications

1. Visibility for project
2. Knowledge generation
3. Networking
4. Research capacity development

These have informed our communications activities
ROER4D Communications overview

Internal communications

- CMS (Vula)
- Email
- Virtual meetings (Skype, Adobe Connect)

External communications

- Website
  - Blog
  - Resources
    - Project events
  - Newsletter
- SlideShare
- Twitter
- Facebook Page
- Conferences
- OpenUCT repository
Tweets per week

- Average: 7.75 tweets per week

Data downloaded from Twitter Analytics; analysis conducted in Excel: grouped individual tweets into tweets per week
Tweets per week

- Average: 7.75 tweets per week

- GO-GN and OCWC, Slovenia (end April 2014)
- UCT T&L Conf. (end November 2014)
- OER Asia Symposium, Penang (end June 2014)
- GO-GN and OpenEd, USA (end November 2014)
Activity around tweets (per week)
Activity around tweets (per week)

GO-GN and OCWC, Slovenia (end April 2014)

GO-GN and OpenEd, USA (end November 2014)

OER Asia Symposium, Penang (end June 2014)
Activity around tweets (per week)

GO-GN and OCWC, Slovenia (end April 2014)
GO-GN and OpenEd, USA (end November 2014)
OER Asia Symposium, Penang (end June 2014)

Recommendation:
Continue tweeting around events as this draws higher levels of engagement
"ROER4D" search: replies and mentions
(at 2 March)

Going to track over time

Data fetched from Twitter’s API via NodeXL; Frucherman-Reingo algorithm graph constructed in NodeXL
“ROER4D” search: replies and mentions
(at 2 March)

Going to track over time

Recommendation:
Pick up conversations with key people identified from these snapshots
Enabling factors for research communications

- Readiness
- Agility
- Openness
Readiness

The DECl-2 approach specified organisational readiness as key to starting a Communications (and Evaluation)

- Staff: skills and attitudes (not all researchers want to communicate!)
- Time and resources
- Enabling environment, management support

But too many unknowns to be really ready.

We need to be “ready to be un-ready”
Agility

What is agile?

“successive approximation aka iterative development is central to agile methodology. It’s how you proactively gather feedback…so you can further improve”

Examples

• Rapid and incremental re-design of website and information design of pages - ongoing
• Audience analysis – newsletter as well as social media
• Amending objectives as new information comes to light
• Responding to evaluation data and making changes

Why does agile feel natural?
Openness and open research

http://tinyurl.com/ROER4D-Bibliography
Enabling **principles** for research communications
Thank you!

Questions?
Comments?
Links

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Presentations: www.slideshare.com/roer4D
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