



*European Standards for Open Education and Open Learning  
Resources  
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*O1-A1 Research paper  
Partner 4 –ELN- UK*

## EU-StORe

Research paper referring to open learning material and open  
education resource

Partner 4- European Learning Network Ltd

**Project Title:** European Standard for Open Education and Open Learning Resources

**Project Acronym:** EU-StORe

**Title of the task:** Open learning resources and open education

**Activity Code:** O1-A1

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## Open learning material and open education resource

Open Educational Resources (OER) are materials for learning, teaching, research or other educational purposes that can be used, adapted and redistributed freely, without constraints - or with very few constraints - related to copyrights. Such materials can be courses, lesson plans, presentations, books, handbooks, homeworks, questionnaires, activities for the classroom or for the laboratory, games, simulations, tests, audio or video resources and many more, available in digital format or on a physical support, to which the access is free.

Open resources are resources to which the access is free or for a moderate fee, from anywhere in the world and from any type of platform – from the computer, from the table or from the phone. However, OER are not only digital resources or those associated with e-Learning. OER can also be resources in physical, printed format.

In order to be called open educational resources, they must be free or have a reduced cost, to not have a commercial purpose, to be accessible from anywhere in the world and with any type of technology and, moreover, to have a free licence. However, this is not an universally accepted point of view and there exist several definitions for open educational resources. For example, in the definition adopted by UNESCO there is comprised also the part of free licensing, whereas OER Commons does not mention the type of licence that the resources need to have. The concept of Open Educational Resources was defined for the first time in 2002, within a UNESCO meeting in Paris.

Beneath the actual documents, the concept of Open Educational Resources may comprise also specialised instruments such as the software needed for developing, using and delivering educational materials, including that needed for searching and organizing the contents, as well as the virtual communities for learning and teaching.

We must ask where to find OER. In order to be sure of the open nature of the materials found, there needs to be checked the licence under which they are published. A complete and sure list of all OER initiatives and databases is impossible, given their dynamic nature. Thus,

even if the number of freely available documents increases daily, the finding of documents of interest remains a task for the user.

In order to find OER, one can start from a specialised search engine, such as: [www.globe-info.org](http://www.globe-info.org); [www.folksemantic.com](http://www.folksemantic.com); [www.discovered.labs](http://www.discovered.labs); [www.creativecommons.org/search/en](http://www.creativecommons.org/search/en) (which contains a directory with only scientific resources -[www.creativecommons.org/science](http://www.creativecommons.org/science)); [www.ocwconsortium.org/courses/search](http://www.ocwconsortium.org/courses/search) etc. Basically, there exist millions of

open resources than can be used. OpenCourseWare offers open educational resources using a general licence from the Creative Commons suite: BY-NC-SA – Attribution – Noncommercial – Distribution in Identical Conditions.

## OER in Romania

Till now, in Romania we cannot speak about a consolidated environment for the development and exploitation of Open Educational Resources. However, there exists an initiative of the Ministry of Education, given the introduction in the Romanian education system of digital handbooks, but without a big success. A detailed classification of projects and resources related to OER, was realized by Holotescu (2014), in form of a detailed map of all resources available in Romania - trainings, practices or open pedagogies, as well as the POERUP Romania report.

Romania is currently active in this movement especially through trainings and courses, both for the pre-university education and for the university education. There are however various national events related to open resources, created by the professors from pre-university education. At the same time, there are some strong communities around the topics of free software, open access, open data, free licences - communities that develop OERs and organise events on this topic.

Some of Romanian OER are as follow:

### 1. DidaTec

The project seeks to improve the education and training process in the technical university education system by realizing a complete and unitary programme for the initial and continuous training of the academic staff. The programme is focused on integrating interactive teaching and learning techniques and IT&C among the professors' competences. So far, over 1000 professors have benefitted from this programme.

## **2. MOOC experiment at the Politehnica University of Timișoara**

Is professor Carmen Holotescu who has realized at the Politehnica University of Timișoara an experimental course of the Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) type. The

purpose of the course was to familiarize the students with this type of interactive learning and to show them the new trends. Students were able to learn which are the most important platforms and offers of the MOOC type, but also about the various possibilities to learn and interact during the courses.

## **3. Moodle Romania**

Moodle is an e-learning platform that offers services and modules for the development of an online learning and assessment environment. Moodle offers a set of components and modules, communication instruments, virtual classroom and digital library that allow the management, documentation, tracking and monitoring of the teaching programmes, of classes, of the activity of trainers or of online events that intervene in a course scenario. Moodle helps with the construction and management of the digital contents of the lectures or of other categories of resources and activities. The platform is a free software, anyone can download and install it. Moodle Romania <http://www.moodle.ro/course> offers courses for teacher training in using new technologies, also hosts/supports courses for schools and universities.

According to global statistics, in Romania over 70% of universities use Moodle and only 20% of schools and highschools. The EDU Moodle Romania network has more than 15000 users and more than 400 professors have prepared an online lecture on Moodle yearly. Moodle Romania manages more than 180000 user accounts and more than 250 Moodle instances from the preuniversity, university, business environments, from public institutions and NGOs.

#### **4. iTeach**

iTeach aims to create an advanced virtual environment dedicated to the professional development of teaching staff, that integrates web 2.0 instruments and facilities specific for virtual communities, for informing and training, for facilitating the exchange of experience, for developing long-distance teaching projects, for, socio-professional cooperation, for the natural acquaintance with the new technologies. On the iTeach platform there are available several online courses that target the development of the pedagogical and specialty competences of the enrolled teaching staff. The core of the offer is the Teach Advanced Online software, created by Intel. Other available courses are developed by deliverers of training from Romania: the Institute for Education Sciences, the Centre for Innovation in

Education (TEHNE Romania), departments for the training of academic staff from universities etc.

Members of iTeach can publish articles in specialty journals, such as Pedagogy Journal, Elearning.Romania, EDICT, as well as in the online journal iTeach. Also, on the platform there exist several available resources, proposed by trainers and representatives of the institutions for initial and continuous training. An advanced system for communication between professional groups allows access to various flows of local, county-wide or national announcements that contain information specific for the educational environment.

#### **5. MEDEAnet and MediaSIS ActiveWatch**

MEDEAnet and MediaSIS ActiveWatch get involved in a wide range of activities, especially in the area of monitoring and advocacy, as well as in social interventions with regard to good governance policies, freedom of expression, anti-discrimination and media education. ActiveWatch has published the first handbook for media education in Romania and organises trainings on this topic for educators, gets involved in studies and workshops with students and professors from the secondary education system and makes available support materials for the professors interested in media promotion. ActiveWatch is one of the partners of the MEDEAnet project, whose aim is to train participants from the primary and secondary education about various web environments, software applications and methodological instruments. In particular,

MEDEAnet workshops focus on promoting good practices using media in the classroom or in long distance learning.

## **6. Institute for Education Sciences - Centre for Online Learning**

The Institute for Education Sciences has initiated a series of online courses on topics that are complementary to those from the education plans, hosted on the Moodle platform. The courses are aimed at students, teaching staff, school principals, experts, school counselors as well as at all those interested in specific educational aspects. Among the creators of course modules, of the methodology and online platform there are professors or researchers from the Institute for Education Sciences, authors of handbooks, evaluators but also other experts from this area.

## **7. Online academy**

The online academy is a site that offers free courses for business, personal development, foreign languages, IT&C, education. Most courses are free, but there exists also the possibility to take part, on the same platform, in several fee-based courses that are approved by higher authorities.

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