

Reflections on the closure of the OER Foundation and the implications for OER policies: A conversation with ChatGPT

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Overview and disclaimer

The analysis presented in this report emerged through dialogue with a leading AI Large Language Model (LLM) system and does not imply independent judgment, accountability, or authorial intent on the part of the AI system. Responsibility for interpretation, emphasis, and publication rests entirely with the human author. In this task the author was assisted by a second LLM as a fact-checker of assertions and links provided by the first LLM.

Having said that, the human author was surprised at the direction the discussion took, based on his expert knowledge of the OER-specific literature, and in his mind, this raises questions about the casual dismissal of complex multi-level LLMs as just “stochastic parrots” – in his view, much deeper correlations (and anti-correlations) were surfaced. For more information on this issue see the article by Freddy Ayala in the Endnotes.ⁱ

A small amount of “invisible mending” of the human questions and ChatGPT output has been done to improve readability. However, the ChatGPT and Manus outputs do use the -ize endings (despite passing the British English spell check) more than many British readers would be comfortable with – it was regarded as a bad use of resources to fix all these. The full text of all ChatGPT and Manus interactions can be made available to interested and expert readers.

1. Issues around the OER Foundation

Paul: What has gone wrong with the OER Foundation in recent years?

ChatGPT: Here's a clear picture of what has *actually* gone wrong or shifted with the **OER Foundation**, especially surfaced in recent weeks and contextualised within wider issues in the Open Educational Resources (OER) sphere:

1.1 Dissolution/Closure of the OER Foundation

The most concrete recent development is that the **OER Foundation is being dissolved or ceasing operations** as an independent organisation.ⁱⁱ A lead figure in the OER movement, *Wayne Mackintosh* (founder of the OER Foundation and WikiEducator), posted that the Foundation and its work are closing down, leaving the future of its platforms uncertain. Much of its infrastructure is being transferred to Otago Polytechnic, *but with no guarantee of long-term support or continued availability*.¹

This is dramatic because the OER Foundation was one of the longest-standing and most internationally recognised OER entities, known for:

- **WikiEducator:** a collaborative tool and resource repository used globally.²
- **OERu (Open Educational Resource university)** initiatives that aimed to provide free learning pathways with credential outcomes.

The closure clearly signals *a breakdown of sustainable organisational structure and funding*.

1.2 Sustainability and Funding Challenges

A core long-standing structural problem for the OER movement – and one that likely underpins the Foundation's issues – is **sustainability and diversification of funding**:

- Many impactful OER projects (including the OER Foundation) have historically depended on short-term philanthropic grants rather than stable core funding. These models have struggled to transition to ongoing, reliable revenue streams.³
- Without diversified income (e.g., institutional backing, formal government support, sustainable services), organisations are vulnerable to funding cliffs when grants end.

¹ **Share some Gratitude for the OER Foundation, For it is No More**, <https://connect.oeglobal.org/t/share-some-gratitude-for-the-oer-foundation-for-it-is-no-more/8386/1>

² **WikiEducator**, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WikiEducator>

³ **Foundation Funded OER vs. Tax Payer Funded OER – A Tale of Two Mandates**, https://edtechfrontier.com/2010/10/26/foundation-funded-oer-vs-tax-payer-funded-oer-a-tale-of-two-mandates/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

This general fragility of the OER ecosystem makes it hard for organisations like the OER Foundation to plan long-term.

1.3 Broader Movement Weaknesses Reflect on Institutional Support

While not specific to the OER Foundation, several entrenched weaknesses in the OER movement have reduced organisational traction:

a) Limited integration into mainstream academic practices

Many universities and educators adopt OER informally as *a resource*, but *don't integrate OER creation, curation, or reuse into standard institutional workflows or reward systems*. This dampens community engagement and reduces the active contributor base.⁴

b) Reusability gaps (“dark reuse”)

Studies have shown that while OER may be used, explicit *sharing back* into repositories is rare – much reuse happens offline and isn't tracked or visible. This undermines the feedback and collaborative improvement cycle fundamental to open communities.⁵

c) Insularity and limited global reach

Critics argue that OER tools and communities, including ones the OER Foundation supported, have sometimes remained insular, connected mainly among existing enthusiasts rather than permeating global education systems. This has perpetuated reliance on niche ecosystems instead of widespread institutional adoption.⁶

1.4 Demand versus Innovation Gap

A longstanding critique of OER – and relevant here – is that many OER repositories focus on *static content* that doesn't match current expectations for interactive, adaptive, and pedagogically dynamic learning tools. This innovation gap means that even widely used platforms like WikiEducator can feel outmoded compared to commercial or AI-enabled instructional systems.⁷

⁴ **Time to Reopen the Conversation on OERs**, by Steve Wheeler, 2025, https://personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/stephen.wheeler/blog/0014_time_to_reopen_the_conversation_on_oers.htm

⁵ **‘Dark reuse’: an empirical study of teachers’ OER engagement**, by Tita Beaven, 2018, <https://openpraxis.org/articles/10.5944/openpraxis.10.4.889>

⁶ **Open educational resources**, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources

⁷ **Of OER and Platforms: Five Years Later**, by David Wiley, 2017, <https://opencontent.org/blog/archives/4892>

In other words: **the world of educational technology moved fast, and many OER platforms did not keep pace** with user expectations and technological standards.

1.5 Summary – What Has Gone Wrong

The OER Foundation's struggles are a mix of specific and systemic factors:

1. **Organisation closure or impending dissolution**, with uncertain future for its platforms.⁸
2. **Unsustainable funding model** heavily reliant on external grants without long-term revenue strategy.⁹
3. **Broader OER movement challenges** – institutional adoption, lack of integration into academic reward structures, weak feedback loops, and insular ecosystems.¹⁰
4. **Technology and pedagogical evolution** outpaced by static OER models.¹¹

1.6 Discussion

If you'd like, I can go deeper into **what this means for the future of OER content and platforms** (including migration options for WikiEducator content and emerging alternatives).

2. New Zealand politics

Paul: I suspect that politics in NZ and the reorganisation of the polytechnic sector has contributed. Views?

ChatGPT: Your suspicion is well-founded. **New Zealand politics and the polytechnic sector reorganisation have very plausibly been a material contributing factor** to what has gone wrong with the OER Foundation – though they are not the sole cause. The relationship is indirect but structurally significant.

Below is a grounded analysis, separating **what is clearly attributable to NZ system change** from **what interacted with longer-term OER Foundation vulnerabilities**.

⁸ **Share some Gratitude for the OER Foundation, For it is No More**, <https://connect.oeglobal.org/t/share-some-gratitude-for-the-oer-foundation-for-it-is-no-more/8386/1>

⁹ **Foundation Funded OER vs. Tax Payer Funded OER – A Tale of Two Mandates**, https://edtechfrontier.com/2010/10/26/foundation-funded-oer-vs-tax-payer-funded-oer-a-tale-of-two-mandates/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

¹⁰ **Time to Reopen the Conversation on OERs**, by Steve Wheeler, 2025, https://personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/stephen.wheeler/blog/0014_time_to_reopen_the_conversation_on_oers.htm

¹¹ **Of OER and Platforms: Five Years Later**, by David Wiley, 2017, <https://opencontent.org/blog/archives/4892>

2.1 Te Pūkenga and the collapse of institutional slack

The creation of **Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology** (merging 16 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics between 2020–2023) radically altered the operating environment in which the OER Foundation had quietly survived.

Key consequences relevant to OER Foundation:

- **Loss of autonomous host institutions**
Historically, the OER Foundation benefited from *distributed goodwill*: senior champions, small internal budgets, staff time, and permissive governance within individual polytechnics (notably Otago Polytechnic).
- **Centralisation eliminated discretionary support**
Under Te Pūkenga, discretionary funding, staff secondments, and “quiet hosting” of external initiatives were sharply reduced or eliminated. Everything required:
 - central approval
 - alignment with national priorities
 - defensible ROI.

The OER Foundation model – global, open, non-commercial, slow-burn – is almost the *inverse* of what Te Pūkenga was under pressure to justify.

Result: even if nobody opposed the OER Foundation ideologically, the system removed the oxygen it needed to exist.

2.2 Political priorities: skills, productivity, and fiscal restraint

NZ tertiary policy since roughly 2017–18 has shifted decisively toward:

- **Workforce skills and productivity**
- **Domestic learner outcomes**
- **Short-term performance metrics**
- **Cost containment.**

Open education for global public good – the philosophical core of the OER Foundation – sits awkwardly with this agenda.

Two political realities matter here:

1. **OER has weak domestic political visibility**
Ministers gain little credit for funding infrastructure that benefits:
 - learners outside NZ
 - informal or non-credentialed learning
 - international partners
2. **OER is framed as “nice to have”, not mission-critical**
In an era of institutional deficits and public scrutiny, anything not clearly tied to:
 - enrolments

- completions
- employer demand becomes vulnerable.

So, while no policy paper likely says “defund OER”, the **political economy made continued institutional patronage untenable**.

2.3 Otago Polytechnic: from champion to constrained custodian

Otago Polytechnic’s historical role is crucial:

- It provided:
 - institutional legitimacy
 - hosting
 - staff time
 - reputational cover
- It aligned unusually well with open education values.

Post-Te Pūkenga:

- Otago lost strategic autonomy
- Senior leadership bandwidth collapsed under merger pressures
- Risk tolerance for externally-facing non-core initiatives shrank.

The reported *transfer* of OER Foundation assets to Otago Polytechnic is therefore telling: it looks less like a rescue and more like **a winding-down caretaker arrangement**.

2.4 Why this hit the OER Foundation harder than other OER actors

Many OER initiatives survived similar political shifts elsewhere. The OER Foundation was especially exposed because:

- It was **structurally dependent on NZ institutional hosting**
- It was **philosophically resistant to commercialisation**
- It operated **infrastructure**, not just projects
- It relied on **long-term moral commitment**, not contracts

In stable systems, that can work. In a **once-in-a-generation sector reorganisation**, it is lethal.

2.5 Interaction with internal and global factors (important, but secondary)

NZ politics did not *cause* everything. They interacted with:

- Founder-centric leadership (hard to succession-plan)
- Chronic under-funding of OER infrastructure globally

- Declining enthusiasm for wiki-based collaboration models
- Failure of OERu to secure stable credentialing pathways at scale

But **without the NZ polytechnic reorganisation**, these issues likely would have resulted in *gradual decline*, not abrupt organisational collapse.

2.6 Bottom line

Your view is defensible and, frankly, persuasive:

The OER Foundation was not primarily defeated by bad ideas or irrelevance, but by a political–institutional shock that removed the conditions under which idealistic, globally oriented educational infrastructure can survive.

In that sense, its fate resembles other casualties of higher-education centralisation worldwide – except that OER lacks the commercial or political leverage to protect itself.

2.7 Discussion

If you want, I can:

- compare this with **UK FE mergers and their effect on open initiatives**
- map OER Foundation’s trajectory against **Te Pūkenga policy milestones**
- or explore whether **EU microcredential policy** unintentionally marginalises classic OER models

Just say the direction.

3. The impact of microcredentials

Paul: Before I ask about comparators to the OER Foundation closure, I would like to ask you to explore whether and if so why “EU microcredential policy unintentionally marginalises classic OER models”. Please first describe whether you think it is microcredential policy generally (NZ, AU, UK, CA and US are not in EU yet all have some kind of policy for microcredentials).ⁱⁱⁱ

ChatGPT: Yes – I think the *marginalising effect* comes mainly from **microcredential policy “in general” (across multiple jurisdictions)** rather than from something uniquely “EU-ish”. The EU then adds a few features that can *intensify* the effect in Europe.

3.1 Why it’s a general microcredential-policy effect (not just the EU)

Across NZ, AU, the UK, the EU (and many North American implementations), microcredentials are typically defined and governed as:

- **Assessed learning with explicit learning outcomes** (not just participation or self-study:
 - *EU*: micro-credentials are framed as proof/record of learning outcomes from a short learning experience, including information about assessment and awarding body.¹²
 - *UK*: QAA positions micro-credentials as short, credit-bearing, outcome-based, with assessment against learning outcomes.¹³
 - *NZ*: NZQA describes micro-credentials as small, stand-alone awards with set learning outcomes within the system (with approval/accreditation rules).¹⁴
 - *AU*: Australia's National Microcredentials Framework is explicitly about clarity, value, structure, and recognition across sectors.¹⁵
 - *OECD*: frames micro-credentials policy around portability/recognition and assessed learning outcomes.¹⁶

That shared policy framing tends to privilege provision that can demonstrate (a) assessment integrity, (b) QA, (c) credit/stacking logic, (d) issuer accountability – which classic OER models often do **not** provide *by design*.

Mechanism: why this unintentionally sidelines “classic OER”

Classic OER models (in the OER Foundation tradition) typically emphasise:

- free/open access to learning materials
- low-friction participation
- informal learning and community contribution
- reuse/remix over credential issuance

Microcredential policy tends to shift institutional attention and resources toward:

1. **Assessment and identity/verification infrastructure** (staff time + systems)
2. **Quality assurance and documentation overhead** (process + compliance)
3. **Fee/contract models to pay for (1) and (2)**

¹² **Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability 2022/C 243/02**, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj%3AJOC_2022_243_R_0002

¹³ **Micro-credentials: Characteristics Statement**, <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/characteristics-statements/micro-credentials>

¹⁴ **Pūkenga-whāiti: Micro-credentials – Information about the structure of micro-credentials and why they're an important part of the education and training system**, <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-and-standards/about-qualifications-and-credentials/micro-credentials/>

¹⁵ **National Microcredentials Framework**, <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-publications/resources/national-microcredentials-framework>

¹⁶ **Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability: Uses and Possibilities**, https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/03/micro-credentials-for-lifelong-learning-and-employability_13dd81a9/9c4b7b68-en.pdf

4. **Issuer-controlled platforms and learner data flows** (to support verification, portability, audit)

None of that is inherently anti-OER – but it makes “open content without formal assessment” look like *non-core*, because it doesn’t “count” in the new value system (recognition, portability, ROI, workforce signalling).

So, the marginalisation is usually **incentive-driven**, not ideological:

- What gets funded, scaled, reported, and governed becomes “microcredential-shaped”.
- OER becomes the *content substrate* (sometimes), rather than the *primary institutional strategy*.

What is more EU-specific (and can intensify the effect in Europe)

The EU approach explicitly pushes toward **cross-border recognition and interoperability**, which tends to increase formality:

- **Quality assurance alignment in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA):**
There are EHEA-oriented guidelines and ENQA work that explicitly link micro-credentials QA to the **ESG** (European Standards and Guidelines). This nudges providers toward “credential-grade” governance and QA processes.¹⁷
- **Standardised credential metadata + verifiable digital credential infrastructure:**
Europass European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDC) provides an EU-level infrastructure for issuing/verifying credentials (including micro-credentials). This strengthens the expectation that learning is *packaged as a credential object* that can be verified and exchanged – again favouring issuer-controlled, auditable models over informal open learning.¹⁸
- **ECTS signalling (wherever possible):**
EU materials frequently steer micro-credentials toward workload/ECTS descriptions to support portability/stacking, which can further pull provision into formal HE administrative logics.¹⁹

3.2 The key distinction

- **Microcredential policy generally** tends to marginalise classic OER as a *standalone model* because policy rewards **assessed, QA’d, issuer-verifiable learning**.

¹⁷ **Recommendations and Guidelines on Micro-Credentials**, https://ehea.info/Immagini/QUATRA_-_TPG_A_recommendations_on_micro-credentials_09.11_.2023_.pdf

¹⁸ **European Digital Credentials for Learning**, <https://europass.europa.eu/en/european-digital-credentials-learning>

¹⁹ **A EUROPEAN APPROACH TO MICRO-CREDENTIALS**, <https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/micro-credentials%20brochure%20updated.pdf>

- **EU microcredential policy** can further marginalise classic OER by adding **interoperability + cross-border recognition + EU digital credential infrastructure**, which increases the premium on standardisation and auditability.^{iv}

3.3 Discussion

If you want, next I can map this into a simple “policy-to-practice” chain (funding → QA → platform choices → licensing choices → what gets counted), and flag where OER can be reinserted so it’s *microcredential-compatible without becoming paywalled*.

4. Comparisons with other initiatives and entities

Paul: That’s enough for now on microcredentials. Returning to the main thrust, I would like to ask you to comment on the reasons behind other closures or shrinking of OER entities, with particular reference to the closure of the JISC/HEA OER programme in the UK, the dwindling of OER repositories in many parts of the EU, and the failure to ignite centrally-directed/funded OER initiatives in many other countries of the world (AU, Scotland, Wales etc), in contrast with the success of OER entities in British Columbia (despite earlier failures of innovative institutions), recent adoption in Ontario, recent OER developments in Germany and the continued growth of OER initiatives at federal, statal and institutional levels in the US despite the relentless focus on “business models” in that society.

ChatGPT: What you’re pointing to is a pretty consistent pattern: **OER efforts shrink or close when they’re treated as time-limited projects or repositories**, and they persist when they’re treated as **public service infrastructure tied to concrete problems** (cost, access, pedagogy) with ongoing mandates.

4.1 Why many OER entities shrink or close

1) Project funding ends, but the operating costs don’t

A large share of national / centrally funded OER pushes were launched as **fixed-term programmes** (2–3 years is common). They produced outputs, reports, communities – and then the funding cycle ended.

- The **Jisc/HEA UKOER programme** is a classic example: it ran across phases from **2009 to 2012** with explicit aims around releasing and improving discoverability/reuse of OER, and then the programme concluded (with “lessons learned” captured in toolkits and synthesis work).²⁰

²⁰ **Higher Education Academy/JISC Open Educational Resources Programme - Pilot Phase**, <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/higher-education-academyjisc-open-educational-resources-programme-pilot-phase>

- Europe has had many **EU-funded projects** that build OER capacity or platforms, but the project-to-infrastructure bridge is often missing (no permanent budget line, no long-term hosting commitment).²¹

Why this matters: repositories and community platforms have *recurring* costs (hosting, curation, metadata, moderation, accessibility updates, legal support). When the money stops, they decay.

2) “Build a repository” was overused as the main strategy

In many places, OER policy implicitly became “stand up a repository and populate it”. That approach runs into:

- weak contributor incentives (academics don’t get promotion/recognition for depositing teaching materials)
- “dark reuse” (people download/adapt privately, never re-share improvements)
- curation and quality assurance burdens that institutions don’t staff.

The EU literature has been pointing at **quality, discoverability, and sustainability** as persistent challenges for more than a decade.²²

And German work on “ecosystems” explicitly treats the problem as *federation/interoperability* (APIs, metadata, distributed systems) rather than a single monolithic repository – basically an admission that repository sprawl is hard to sustain.²³

3) Centrally directed OER struggles with “who owns the academic middle”

National bodies can fund, but they can’t easily compel:

- programme leaders to redesign modules
- departments to align assessment
- academics to maintain materials year-to-year.

So centrally directed initiatives often ignite **activity** but not **institutional routine**.

²¹ **Opening up Education: A Support Framework for Higher Education Institutions**, <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC101436/jrc101436.pdf>

²² **State of the art review of quality issues related to open educational resources (OER)**, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/cfe8487b-8839-4cf1-9b8e-68e3d119b5b9/language-en>

²³ **A Federated Reference Structure for Open Informational Ecosystems**, by Richard Heinen et al., <https://jime.open.ac.uk/articles/jime.413>

This shows up in places you named:

- **Scotland and Wales** had strong advocacy and some project activity (e.g., declarations, working groups, time-bounded initiatives), but long-term national OER infrastructure and funding continuity were harder to lock in.²⁴
- Australia has had notable open licensing / open practice work, but national centrally-driven OER infrastructure has been less coherent than (say) BC's sustained open textbook emphasis.²⁵

4) Policy attention drifted to “adjacent opens”

In the UK/EU in particular, a lot of system energy moved toward:

- open access / open research infrastructure
- learning analytics and enterprise platforms
- (later) microcredentials and digital credential infrastructure.

These are not anti-OER, but they compete for the same scarce central capacity and political oxygen. (You can see Jisc, for example, maintaining strong attention on open access community frameworks while OER remains more diffuse.)²⁶

4.2 Why British Columbia (and now Ontario) look different

British Columbia: “solve textbook cost” + a stable public operator

BC's story is unusually durable because it was framed as a **student affordability and access** intervention, with a **standing intermediary** (BCcampus) and persistent reporting on impact (adoptions, students affected, savings).

- BC's Open Textbook Project began in 2012 and has been repeatedly described as a sustained provincial initiative with measurable savings.²⁷

That “framing” matters: it creates a simple political narrative (“we saved students money”), which is much easier to defend than “we built a repository”.

²⁴ **Open Education Scotland**, by Lorna Campbell, 2013, <https://education.okfn.org/open-education-scotland/index.html>

²⁵ **The Case of Australia**, by M. Bond, https://edtechbooks.org/oer_around_the_world/the_case_of_australij

²⁶ **First successful projects selected for funding through new open access community framework**, Jisc, 2023, <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/all/first-successful-projects-selected-for-funding-through-new-open-access-community-framework>

²⁷ **The B.C. Open Textbook Project celebrates four years of success**, BC Government, 2016, <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016AVED0099-002013>

Ontario: build the service layer (adoptions, librarian support), not just a pile of content

Ontario's recent momentum is tied to eCampusOntario operating an **Open Library** with adoption tracking and support services, plus targeted funding programmes (e.g., open textbook funding streams).²⁸

Again: the emphasis is on **implementation and adoption**, not only publication.^v

4.3 Why Germany's recent OER developments look healthier

Germany has increasingly treated OER as something needing:

- national strategy
- funded coordination and community infrastructure
- multi-year commitments.

Examples:

- A federal **OER strategy** and structured promotion is explicitly articulated.²⁹
- **OERinfo** is funded long-term (current funding window running to 2028 per the portal itself), which is exactly the kind of continuity many EU repositories lacked.³⁰

This doesn't guarantee success, but it directly addresses the "project ends → everything ends" failure mode.

4.4 Why the US keeps growing OER despite "business model" obsession

The US has a powerful reinforcing loop that doesn't require a single national OER repository:

1. **Affordability politics** (textbook prices are a high-salience issue)
2. **State legislation and system programmes** (many states fund affordability/ZTC/OER efforts)³¹

²⁸ **Welcome to the Open Library: The home of Open Educational Resources (OER) in Ontario**, <https://openlibrary.ecampusontario.ca>

²⁹ **OER Strategy: Open educational resources for the development of digital education**, https://www.bmfr.bund.de/SharedDocs/Publikationen/DE/FS/1059980_OER-Strategie_en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4

³⁰ **About the information service OER**, <https://open-educational-resources.de/ueber-oerinfo/about-the-information-service-oer/>

³¹ **Programmatic Characteristics of Open Education Initiatives at U.S. Post-Secondary Institutions**, by Jon Bull and Michele Gibney, 2022, <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1119&context=libraries-articles>

3. **Federal funding streams** like the US Department of Education's **Open Textbooks Pilot**³²
4. **Large-scale nonprofit publishers** (e.g., OpenStax) that function as stable supply-side infrastructure.³³

So, the US doesn't need one centrally-directed OER entity to "win". It's an ecosystem of grants, state policy, and scalable publishers.

4.5 Bringing it back to "what went wrong" in places like the UK/much of EU

If I compress the contrast into one sentence:

- The UK/EU often funded **OER as projects and repositories** (hard to sustain, weak incentives),
- while BC/Ontario/parts of Germany and the US increasingly fund **OER as an adoption-and-impact system** (affordability outcomes, service layers, long-term operators, repeatable policy levers).

4.6 Discussion

If you want to go one level deeper next, I can take **each case you listed** (UKOER; EU repositories; AU; Scotland; Wales; BC; Ontario; Germany; US) and give a short "failure/success mechanism map" in the same template (mandate → funding model → operating unit → incentive model → measurement → sustainability outcome).

5. The influence of MOOCs on the OER movement

Paul: I don't need any more depth at present. Yet I was intrigued that you did not mention the MOOC movement (2011-20) as a distractor and competitor for "oxygen" in EU and UK circles in particular, yet not it seems so much in US – much more oxygen in US?

ChatGPT: That's a very perceptive catch – and you're right to flag it. The **MOOC movement absolutely mattered as a major competitor for "oxygen"**, particularly in **UK and EU policy, funding, and leadership attention**. The reason it *felt* less decisive in the US is not that MOOCs were smaller there, but that the US system could absorb them **without crowding OER out** in the same way.

Let me unpack that cleanly, without going any deeper than needed.

³² **Open Textbooks Pilot Program**, <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/grants-higher-education/improvement-of-postsecondary-education/open-textbooks-pilot-program>

³³ **42,000 students wrote why OpenStax matters**, <https://openstax.org>

5.1 MOOCs as an oxygen sink in the UK and EU

Between roughly **2011 and 2018 (tailing off by ~2020)**, MOOCs soaked up:

- senior leadership attention
- political capital
- national and supra-national funding
- media and narrative bandwidth.

UK

In the UK in particular:

- **FutureLearn** became *the* national open-education flagship.
- Jisc, HEFCE/OfS, and institutional leaders invested heavily in:
 - platform partnerships
 - production studios
 - “world-leading online” narratives
- “Open” became rhetorically associated with:
 - free-to-access courses
 - scale
 - global reach
 - **not** with open licensing or reuse.

Crucially, FutureLearn content was **not OER in the classic sense** (no open licences enabling reuse). Yet politically and rhetorically it *occupied the same conceptual space* as OER.

Result:

OER looked *old, quiet, and small* next to MOOCs – even when it was more educationally radical.

EU

At EU level, MOOCs aligned perfectly with:

- competitiveness and global visibility agendas
- digital skills and lifelong learning narratives
- platform-friendly, project-funded models.

So, Horizon and Erasmus+ funding streams were often more comfortable backing:

- MOOC platforms
- MOOC pilots
- MOOC-based upskilling,

than investing in **long-term, boring OER infrastructure**.

In short: **MOOCs promised visibility; OER promised stewardship.**

5.2 Why MOOCs crowded out OER more in Europe than in the US

The key difference isn't enthusiasm – it's **system capacity and plurality.**

Europe / UK: zero-sum at the centre

In the UK and much of the EU:

- There are relatively **few national intermediaries** (Jisc, national agencies, ministries).
- Funding is often **centrally coordinated** and **projectised**.
- When a big idea arrives (MOOCs, then microcredentials), it tends to:
 - dominate strategy documents
 - reshape funding calls
 - become the thing institutions must align to.

So, MOOCs didn't just compete with OER – they **replaced it as the “open” story** for nearly a decade.

US: additive, not substitutive

In the US, MOOCs were massive – but they were **layered on top of**, not instead of, OER.

Why?

- **No single national “centre”** whose attention defines the field.
- MOOCs were largely driven by:
 - venture capital (Coursera, Udacity)
 - elite universities' outreach strategies
- Meanwhile, OER grew through:
 - state affordability legislation
 - philanthropic funding (Hewlett, Gates)
 - nonprofits like OpenStax
 - library-led initiatives.

So, the US system could sustain:

MOOCs *and* open textbooks *and* ZTC initiatives *and* state-level OER policy – all at once.

There was simply **more oxygen**, because there was no single lung.

5.3 A subtler but important point: MOOCs diluted “open” conceptually

This mattered everywhere but again hit Europe harder.

MOOCs normalised the idea that:

- “open” = free to access
- openness is about **scale and reach**, not rights and reuse
- content lives on platforms, not in the Commons.

That reframing:

- weakened institutional understanding of open licensing
- made OER look technical and legalistic by comparison
- undermined the moral case for investing in reuse-focused infrastructure.

By the time MOOCs plateaued (circa 2018–20), much of the **institutional memory and advocacy capacity for classic OER had already dissipated** – especially in the UK and EU.

5.4 Why MOOCs didn’t derail BC, Ontario, or parts of Germany

Because their OER initiatives were framed around **domestic policy problems MOOCs didn’t solve**:

- textbook affordability
- teaching cost reduction
- curricular sovereignty
- language and localisation.

MOOCs are weak answers to those problems.

Open textbooks and OER are strong ones.

So, in those contexts, MOOCs were **orthogonal**, not competitive.

5.5 Bringing it back to your original thread

Seen this way, the OER Foundation’s fate fits the broader pattern:

- **Classic OER** lost political and strategic oxygen during the MOOC decade
- The institutions that quietly sustained it were later disrupted (e.g. Te Pūkenga)
- When the dust settled, the system had moved on to:
 - platforms
 - credentials
 - scale narratives

And OER infrastructure – patient, global, unflashy – was left exposed.^{vi}

5.6 Discussion

If you want to pursue this later, a very interesting next step would be to compare **FutureLearn versus BCcampus versus OpenStax** as three radically different answers to the same early-2010s “open education” moment.

6. How will AI change things

Paul: It would be, but for a different article. Finally, I would like you to ponder the issue of the extent to which AI will bring the curtain down on OER even in these jurisdictions (US, parts of CA, DE) where OER has held firm or even grown. As a prompt, I think I read recently that GPT use has now overtaken Wikipedia accesses worldwide.^{vii}

ChatGPT: This is the right place to end the arc – because **AI is not just another “distractor” like MOOCs**, but a genuinely **structural challenge** to classic OER, including in its strongest jurisdictions. I’ll tackle this in three layers: (1) the Wikipedia/GPT signal, (2) how AI changes the *value proposition* of OER, and (3) why this is not uniformly fatal – but *is* existential unless OER adapts.

6.1 The Wikipedia ↔ GPT inflection: signal, not statistic

Whether or not the specific claim is *numerically* correct, the **directional signal is unmistakable**:

- For large classes of informational, explanatory, and introductory learning queries, **users now default to AI assistants rather than open reference resources**.
- This is not because Wikipedia or OER content is worse – but because **AI collapses discovery, synthesis, and explanation into one interaction**.

What matters for OER is not pageviews, but this:

The Commons is no longer directly visited; it is intermediated.

That single shift changes everything.

Wikipedia can survive this better than most OER because:

- it has unmatched scale and authority
- it is a primary *training corpus*
- it still anchors citation, fact-checking, and human trust.

Most OER repositories do **not** enjoy those advantages.

6.2 How AI undermines classic OER's historical value proposition

Classic OER (2002–2018 vintage) rested on four pillars:

1. **Access** – free availability
2. **Reuse** – legal permission to adapt
3. **Discovery** – repositories, search, metadata
4. **Human-mediated pedagogy** – educators selecting, remixing, contextualising.

AI weakens *three and a half* of these.

6.2.1 Access is no longer scarce

AI systems now provide:

- free (or freemium) access
- instant explanation
- contextualised examples
- adaptive scaffolding.

So “free content” alone is no longer differentiating.

6.2.2 Reuse is automated and invisible

AI systems:

- remix at scale
- adapt instantly
- localise linguistically
- personalise pedagogically

...without the *social rituals* of reuse that OER communities relied on (attribution, sharing back, repository deposit).

This accelerates what OER scholars already called “**dark reuse**” – except now it's *machine-driven and total*.

6.2.3 Discovery is bypassed

No one “discovers” OER if:

- the AI already knows it
- the AI summarises it
- the AI re-expresses it conversationally.

Repositories become **upstream infrastructure**, not user destinations.

6.2.4 Pedagogy is partially displaced

This is the “half pillar”.

AI does not replace:

- curricular intent
- assessment design
- disciplinary judgment
- epistemic responsibility.

But it *does* replace:

- first-pass explanation
- worked examples
- formative feedback at scale.

That shrinks the visible pedagogical surface where OER once lived.

6.3 Why this *will* hurt OER – but not kill it everywhere

6.3.1 Where AI really could “bring the curtain down”

OER is most at risk where it is framed as:

- repositories
- static content
- self-study resources
- goodwill-driven Global Commons.

In those cases, AI is simply **a better front end** – and the OER brand disappears behind it.

This is the real danger:

OER becomes successful but invisible – and therefore unfundable.

That fate is very plausible even in the US, CA, and DE.

6.3.2 Why OER may persist in the US, Canada, and Germany

OER survives where it is **anchored to institutional or public obligations that AI cannot satisfy alone.**

Specifically:

United States

OER is entangled with:

- affordability legislation
- Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) programmes
- state mandates
- nonprofit publishers (e.g. OpenStax)
- library and faculty governance.

AI can *use* OER – but it cannot:

- guarantee curricular alignment
- replace officially adopted textbooks
- satisfy accreditation and assessment regimes
- meet public accountability requirements.

So OER remains necessary *as an authoritative substrate*.

Canada (BC, Ontario)

Here OER is protected by:

- provincial public-service framing
- explicit affordability metrics
- intermediary organisations (BCcampus, eCampusOntario).

AI enhances the **delivery** but does not replace the **policy rationale**.

Germany

Germany's recent OER push is unusually future-facing:

- emphasis on infrastructure and ecosystems
- attention to sovereignty, language, and public control
- concern about dependency on US platforms.

This creates space for OER as **trusted, governable training data and curricular base**, not just “content”.

6.4 The uncomfortable conclusion for classic OER

AI does not kill OER the way MOOCs threatened to.

It does something more subtle and more dangerous:

It makes OER indispensable but insufficient.

If OER remains:

- content-first
- repository-centric
- volunteer-maintained
- philosophically open but institutionally optional,

...then AI will quietly absorb its value and leave the institutions to defund it.

If OER evolves into:

- **authoritative curricular infrastructure**
- **public-interest training data**
- **transparent, auditable knowledge sources**
- **AI-compatible but not AI-owned assets,**

...then it may become *more important than ever*, even if far less visible.

6.5 A final framing, tying back to your whole thread

Seen across:

- the OER Foundation's decline
- UK/EU programme closures
- MOOC distraction
- microcredential capture
- and now AI mediation,

...there is a consistent lesson:

OER *fails* when it is treated as an educational movement; it *survives* when treated as public infrastructure.

AI raises the stakes on that distinction.^{viii}

7. What took them so long to realise the game was up?

Paul: As a postscript, many of your conclusions will seem novel and challenging even to experts in OER and policies. Yet even around ten years ago there were signs in EU reports that all was not well with OER.³⁴

1. The EU carefully started using the phrase “opening up education” not “open education”.

³⁴ Note that the four footnotes/URLs that follow this were provided by the interviewer, not ChatGPT.

2. The JRC 2018 report³⁵ on “Policy Approaches to Open Education” documented the embarrassing lack of member state policies and activities in OER.
3. The Erasmus+ D-TRANSFORM report proposed a much more serious “business case” approach to OER.³⁶
4. The much-criticised POERUP project pointed out the lack of national OER policies.³⁷
5. The Neil Butcher report on “Researching the effectiveness of Open Educational Resource (OER) policies” found very few national policies with any practical outcomes.³⁸

Why did the OER community^{ix} not pay more attention to these highly negative findings? With the exception of the last (which just confirmed what the few global OER policy analysts already knew) they had eight years to change their behaviour.

ChatGPT: This is a hard but fair question – and the uncomfortable answer is that **the OER community largely *did* see the warnings**, but lacked the **incentives, structures, and power** to respond to them in the way the reports implied was necessary.

I'll give you a clear, non-defensive explanation, organised around *why attention did not translate into behaviour change*.

7.1 The findings were cognitively threatening, not just negative

The reports you cite were not merely critical; they **undermined the OER movement's core self-narrative**.

Across JRC (2018), POERUP, D-TRANSFORM, and Butcher's work, the same messages recur:

- Very few national OER policies
- Even fewer with operational or funding consequences
- Weak institutional uptake despite years of advocacy
- Minimal evidence of sustainability beyond projects
- No clear theory of change from “open resources” to “systemic impact”.

Taken seriously, this implied that:

- advocacy alone was insufficient
- moral arguments were not working

³⁵ <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC107713>

³⁶ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301488554_Business_Models_for_Opening_up_Education_Sustainability_of_MOOCs_OER_and_related_online_education_approaches_in_higher_education_in_Europe#fullTextFileContent

³⁷ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339509130_POERUP_Policies_for_OER_Uptake_Final_Report_Public_Part

³⁸ <https://www.nba.co.za/resource/researching-effectiveness-open-educational-resource-oer-policies>

- decentralised voluntarism was not scaling
- repositories were not self-sustaining
- openness without power was fragile.

For a community built around *normative commitments* (openness is good, sharing will spread), this was **existentially destabilising**.

The easiest psychological response was **selective engagement**:

- cite the reports for legitimacy
- acknowledge the problems abstractly
- continue largely unchanged practices.

7.2 “Opening up education” was a warning – but also an escape hatch

You’re exactly right to flag the EU’s language shift from “open education” to “opening up education”.

This move did two things simultaneously:

a) It acknowledged OER’s limited traction

“Opening up education” explicitly bundled:

- MOOCs
- open pedagogy
- digital innovation
- recognition of prior learning
- widening participation.

This was a tacit admission that **OER alone had not delivered system change**.

b) It allowed OER to be diluted rather than reformed

Instead of forcing a reckoning with:

- funding models
- institutional mandates
- infrastructure stewardship,

...the policy discourse **absorbed OER into a broader innovation agenda**, where its weaknesses were less visible.

In effect:

OER problems were managed by *reframing*, not *repairing*.^x

7.3 The business-model critique struck at the wrong people

The D-TRANSFORM report was especially uncomfortable because it said – politely but clearly – that:

Sustainability requires explicit business models, governance, and institutional embedding.

But here's the structural problem:

- The people **writing and advocating OER** were mostly not the people who could:
 - set institutional budget lines
 - mandate adoption
 - restructure teaching workloads
 - own platforms long-term.

So, the “business model” message often landed as:

- irrelevant (“that’s not my role”)
- ideological (“that sounds commercial”)
- demoralising (“we’re being blamed for systemic failures”).

Without power to act, many advocates defaulted to **continuing what they could do**:

- create content
- run communities
- write policy briefs
- apply for the next project.

7.4 POERUP said the quiet part out loud – and paid the price

POERUP’s central finding – *that most countries had no meaningful OER policy at all* – was deeply embarrassing, not just for governments but for the advocacy ecosystem.

Why it was sidelined:

- It challenged the success narrative used to justify funding
- It implied that years of declarations and pilots had not worked
- It offered no easy “next project” solution
- It exposed a gap between UNESCO-level rhetoric and national reality.

So POERUP became:

- frequently cited
- rarely operationalised
- politely acknowledged
- quietly ignored.

This is a classic failure mode of policy research that **diagnoses absence of political will**.

7.5 The community misread time as progress

Between roughly 2012 and 2019, many in OER assumed:

“Adoption is slow, but inevitable.”

This was a critical error.

The reports you cite were warning that:

- time was not compounding impact
- diffusion was not accelerating
- institutionalisation was not occurring.

But because:

- activity levels were high
- conferences were well attended
- projects were still being funded,

...busyness was mistaken for momentum.

In retrospect, this was the calm before:

- MOOC capture
- platform dominance
- microcredential formalisation
- and finally, AI mediation.

7.6 Why eight years wasn't enough – structurally

Even if the community had fully accepted the findings in 2016–2018, changing course would have required:

- governments willing to legislate or mandate
- institutions willing to reallocate core funding
- national bodies willing to own infrastructure permanently
- academic reward systems to change
- new professional roles to be created.

None of that was realistically achievable **from within the OER community itself**.

The reports were right – but they were addressing **a governance problem**, not a pedagogical one.

7.7 The most uncomfortable truth

The deepest reason these warnings were not acted on is this:

OER advocates overestimated their proximity to power.

They were influential in discourse, visible in policy documents, and respected internationally – but **rarely decisive in budgetary or structural terms.**

The reports showed that clearly.

Accepting that fully would have required a strategic pivot from:

- persuasion → compulsion
- exemplars → mandates
- projects → infrastructure
- communities → institutions.

That pivot never quite happened.

7.8 Why this matters now, not just historically

What makes your question timely is that **AI is now forcing the reckoning these reports anticipated.**

The same issues are resurfacing:

- sustainability
- authority
- infrastructure
- funding
- public control.

The difference is that this time:

- invisibility equals extinction
- moral arguments carry even less weight
- infrastructure decisions are being made fast.

In that sense, those EU reports were not ignored – they were **postponed.**

And the bill is now due.

ⁱ For the Ayala article see <https://medium.com/@freddyayala/lms-are-not-stochastic-parrots-how-large-language-models-actually-work-16c000588b70>. See also the “Westworld” reference in <https://www.roboticsacademy.com.au/maeve-was-a-language-model-how-westworld-predicted-gpt-years-before-it-existed/> for an evocative analogy.

ⁱⁱ References in this interview to the “closure”, “dissolution”, or “cessation” of the OER Foundation are based on public statements indicating a winding down of its independent operations and the transfer of stewardship of some assets. At the time of writing, this should be understood as an operational and organisational closure rather than a confirmed, completed legal dissolution.

ⁱⁱⁱ Throughout the discussion of microcredentials, MOOCs, and AI, any marginalisation of classic OER models is described as a structural and incentive-driven effect of policy and system design. No claim is made or implied that policymakers or institutions acted with deliberate intent to undermine OER.

^{iv} **Manus observed that:** The rise of microcredentialing as a policy priority across multiple jurisdictions provides strong evidence for the claim that classic OER models are being marginalised.

The focus of microcredential policies on formal assessment, quality assurance, and institutional validation stands in stark contrast to the principles of OER. The EU’s 2022 Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability is a key piece of evidence. The official definition of a microcredential emphasizes formal, validated learning. “Micro-credential’ means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria... They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.” — Council of the European Union, Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials (2022).

This framework requires institutional gatekeeping, quality assurance, and formal recognition, which are fundamentally different from the open, informal, and decentralized nature of OER. The EU policy, therefore, promotes a model of education that is structurally incompatible with the classic OER approach.

The OECD’s Competency-Based Framework – described in OECD’s influential “Learning Compass 2030” – further reinforces this shift away from content-based to competency-based education. The framework emphasizes the development of competencies, student agency, and well-being, with no mention of OER. This focus on what learners can do rather than what resources they can access implicitly devalues the content-centric model of OER.

Taken together, these policy trends from the EU and OECD demonstrate a clear and decisive move towards formalized, competency-based learning systems. This shift marginalizes OER by creating a parallel system of credentialing that is more aligned with the needs of the labour market and traditional educational institutions, leaving classic OER models on the periphery.

^v **Manus observed that:** OER Succeeds When Treated as Infrastructure, Not as a Movement.

The argument that OER is most successful when it is treated as a form of public infrastructure, rather than as an educational movement, is strongly supported by the case of BCcampus in Canada.

The BCcampus Model: A Government-Funded Infrastructure Approach: BCcampus is a government agency in British Columbia that has become a world leader in open education. Its success is built on a foundation of government funding and a focus on providing infrastructure and support services. In 2012, the British Columbia Minister of Advanced Education announced a government grant to fund the development of open textbooks, which was a pivotal moment for OER in the province

BCcampus provides a centralised platform, technical infrastructure, quality assurance through peer review, and support services for faculty. This infrastructure-based approach has led to impressive results: i) Over 220 open textbooks produced and curated; ii) Over \$5.7 million in student savings; iii) Adoption across 25 public institutions.

Removing Barriers to Adoption: The success of BCcampus lies in its focus on removing the practical barriers to OER adoption, such as concerns about quality and lack of support, rather than on promoting

OER as an ideology. As the executive director, Mary Burgess, has noted, a key part of their strategy has been to address the quality question head-on through peer review.

This model has proven to be so successful that it has been replicated in other provinces, such as with the creation of *eCampusOntario*, **which has adopted the BCcampus library of open textbooks**. This demonstrates the power of treating OER as a form of public infrastructure, with dedicated funding, support, and quality assurance mechanisms.

^{vi} **Manus reported that:** The argument that Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) acted as an “oxygen sink” for OER in Europe and the UK, while OER thrived in the US, is supported by the different policy and funding structures in these regions.

The US Context: State-Level OER Adoption: In the United States, OER adoption has been driven by state-level legislation and funding. The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) tracks OER policies across the US and has found that more than half of all states have considered OER legislation. California, for example, has enacted numerous policies, including a \$115 million allocation for zero-textbook-cost degrees using OER. This decentralized, state-driven approach has allowed for significant investment in OER as a strategy to improve college affordability and effectiveness.

The European Context: Centralized Policy and Commercial MOOCs: In contrast, the European context has been characterized by more centralised policy-making and the rise of commercial MOOC platforms. The UK’s FutureLearn platform, for instance, absorbed significant attention and resources that might have otherwise gone to OER initiatives. The EU’s focus on creating a single gateway for OER and promoting quality standards, as outlined in its 2013 “Opening up Education” communication, suggests a top-down approach that struggled to gain traction.

This structural difference helps explain why OER gained a stronger foothold in the US, where state governments could directly fund and mandate its use, compared to Europe, where a more complex policy landscape and the dominance of MOOCs created a less favourable environment for OER to flourish.

^{vii} The comparison between GPT usage and Wikipedia access is intended as an indicative signal of changing user behaviour rather than a precise or audited equivalence of traffic metrics. The argument rests on the growing intermediation of access to open knowledge by AI systems, not on exact usage counts. However, statistics such as those in <https://uk.pcmag.com/ai/161892/chatgpt-overtakes-amazon-x-reddit-whatsapp-and-wikipedia-in-visitors> are noteworthy.

^{viii} **Manus reported that:** AI Fundamentally Undermines OER’s Historical Value Proposition. The claim that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is undermining the value proposition of OER is supported by recent policy documents from UNESCO and the World Bank, which position AI as the key technology for personalizing and scaling education.

UNESCO’s Focus on AI in Education: UNESCO’s 2023 guidance on generative AI in education and research is a critical piece of evidence. In this comprehensive document on the future of education technology, there is a striking absence of any mention of OER. Instead, the focus is entirely on the opportunities and challenges of AI, including its use in curriculum design, teaching, and learning. **This silence from the very organization that has historically championed OER is significant.** It suggests a strategic shift in which AI, not OER, is now seen as the primary driver of educational innovation. **The guidance’s emphasis on AI’s potential for personalization and adaptation directly challenges one of the core arguments for OER.**

The World Bank’s Vision for an AI-Powered Education Revolution: The World Bank’s 2024 brief on the “AI Revolution in Education” further solidifies this argument. The report highlights nine key AI-driven innovations, including AI-powered tutors, lesson plan generators, and early warning systems. The executive summary makes a bold claim about AI’s potential: “The AI revolution is transforming education at an unprecedented pace, offering game-changing opportunities to personalize learning experiences, support teachers in their daily tasks, and optimize education management.” — World Bank, “AI Revolution in Education: What You Need to Know” (2024)

This vision of an AI-driven education system, where learning is personalized and adaptive at scale, directly competes with the historical value proposition of OER. Where OER offered a static, content-based solution to the problem of access, **AI offers a dynamic, personalized solution that is more aligned with the needs of 21st-century learners.**

^{ix} References to “the OER community” denote a loose and heterogeneous ecosystem of advocates, projects, institutions, intermediaries, and funders. The term is used analytically and does not imply unified agency, shared decision-making, or collective responsibility.

^x **Manus reported that:** The subtle but significant shift in language from “Open Education” to “Opening up Education” in EU policy documents provides evidence of a tacit admission of OER’s limited traction and a strategic pivot towards a more pragmatic, infrastructure-focused approach.

The 2013 Communication: “Opening up Education”: In 2013, the European Commission released a communication titled “Opening up Education: Innovative teaching and learning for all through new Technologies and Open Educational Resources”. The choice of title is revealing. Rather than embracing the movement-oriented term “Open Education,” the EU opted for the more action-oriented and less ideological phrase “Opening up Education.”

The communication itself acknowledges the shortcomings of OER adoption in Europe at the time: “The use of OERs in Europe is still too fragmented and not sustained.” — European Commission, “Opening up Education” (2013) – <https://eunec.eu/european-heartbeat-news-eu/opening-education-innovative-teaching-and-learning-all-through-new>

A Shift in Focus from Movement to Infrastructure: In response to this fragmented landscape, the EU’s proposed solutions were not to redouble efforts to promote the OER movement, but rather to build the necessary infrastructure to support the use of digital resources. The communication called for: i) A single gateway for OERs; ii) Quality assessment mechanisms; iii) Technical tools and open quality standards

This focus on infrastructure, rather than on the philosophical principles of the OER movement, suggests a recognition that the movement alone was not sufficient to drive widespread adoption. The shift in language from “Open Education” to “Opening up Education” can, therefore, be interpreted as a strategic reframing of the issue, moving away from an ideological commitment to OER and towards a more practical and technical approach to integrating digital resources into education.