



JISC Final Report

Language Open Resources Online (LORO)

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Languages Open Resources Online (LORO)

Final Report

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Contents

Acknowledgements.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
Background.....	6
Languages at The Open University.....	6
The need for a repository.....	6
The search for a solution.....	6
Aims and objectives.....	7
Methodology.....	8
Implementation.....	8
Outputs and results.....	10
Outcomes.....	15
Conclusions.....	16
Implications.....	16
Recommendations.....	16
References.....	17
Appendix A.....	18
Appendix B.....	19

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Executive Summary

The main aim of the LORO project was to set up a teaching and learning repository for the Department of Languages (DoL) at The Open University (OU) so that all tutorial materials made available to tutors by DoL could be placed in a space that was easily accessible and searchable, and to which tutors could also add their own resources. It was also felt that the high quality tutorial materials developed at the OU were underused by being placed in course pages that were only accessible to tutors delivering each course.

We had been following the JISC-funded work of the Faroes and L2O teams at the University of Southampton, which culminated with the Language Box, a proof of concept teaching and learning repository piloted with language teachers. We were convinced that our department would provide an ideal test case for the use of such a repository, one that required minimal metadata and was based on the Web 2.0 principles of flexibility and user control. We worked closely with the OneShare team and Eprints developers to customise the Eprints software so that it would meet the requirements of our setting. The deadlines were tight as DoL was changing its online synchronous platform to Elluminate and all the tutorial materials we provide for tutors had to be re-released in the new format. We believed that this was a golden opportunity to provide these essential resources through the LORO repository, hence forcing all users to make use of it in order to obtain them. A great deal of effort was invested in planning and scheduling the technical development, populating the repository, training and supporting users in order to meet key course deadlines, and the resulting staged implementation model was very successful in promoting a cyclical re-evaluation of the tool and support provided for users.

For the technical development, we involved all stakeholders in testing and feeding back to the developers. After an initial face to face demo this process was repeated several times with feedback being provided through usability questionnaires and error reporting cycles. Tutors were involved at all stages and were employed throughout the project as researchers, materials uploaders, technical testers and also as trainers and supporters of other users. They were also initially surveyed on their attitudes towards and expectations of a departmental repository, and the results of the survey and the follow up focus groups showed that there was a strong willingness to share materials and to be able to have access to other people's materials, in spite of there being very little awareness of what repositories could offer in that respect.

Strong institutional backing for the development and implementation of LORO has been key to the success of the project. DoL has backed the full integration of LORO into Elluminate training and support systems for tutors, and into the course development and maintenance procedures of the department. All tutors are now familiar with LORO and new tutors get basic training on how to use LORO as part of their induction. Course administrators have been trained in the use of LORO as part of their course maintenance duties, and course directors have been briefed so that they can support tutors in their course.

At the end of 15 months, we have LORO (<http://loro.open.ac.uk>), a working repository used by 320+ tutors, 55 academics and 23 academic-related and support staff. It contains nearly 1000 resources across 7 languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Welsh and Chinese), and can be browsed by course, language, level or tag. LORO is integrated with the university's log in system, automatically providing accounts for all university users, whilst any external users can also create an account and deposit their materials. Additionally, Open University account holders can decide to share their own resources only within the Open University community or more widely with all users. Some areas of LORO still need improving (RSS and searching, for example), but most of it will be addressed through the upgrade to Eprints 3.2 and the work that the University of Southampton and the Eprints team continue to do on the teaching and learning repository Eprints software.

The key achievements of the LORO project are: setting up a repository that is fully embedded with the departmental procedures for course development and delivery; making available over 300 hours of languages tutorial materials as Open Educational Resources; and contributing to refining the educational repository software which will now become part of the Eprints open access offering. Additionally, LORO has started a significant culture change in the way in which materials are sourced, produced and distributed or shared.

Background

Languages at the Open University

The Department of Languages (DoL) in the Faculty of Education and Language Studies (FELS) at The Open University (OU) has been delivering part-time language courses since 1995. It currently offers courses in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Welsh and Chinese to nearly 8000 part-time students, using a 'supported distance learning' model of course delivery which includes high quality printed, audiovisual and online materials plus the help and support of a nominated tutor. Courses and materials are written by *lecturers* (or academics), based in Milton Keynes, who also direct and supervise the delivery of the courses in their role as *course chairs* (or course directors). The administrative part of course development and delivery is done by *course managers*. *Associate Lecturers* (or *tutors* as they will be referred to in this report), are geographically disperse and work from home on a part-time basis. They are contracted to look after one or more groups of students, marking their work and providing support by email, phone or at tutorials. Tutors are supported and managed by a dedicated *staff tutor* for languages in each of the 13 Regions and Nations in which the OU is divided.

Tutorial support is offered synchronously (in face to face, telephone or online tutorials) and asynchronously (through email and the use of forums and other VLE tools). Online synchronous tutoring in DoL was introduced in 2003 and used an audio-graphic conferencing system, Lyceum, developed by the Knowledge Media Institute (KMi) at the OU. Tutors could choose whether they tutored a course with face to face or online tutorials. However, in 2009 the University decided to move all online synchronous tuition to Elluminate¹, a commercial audio-graphic conferencing system, and to support all its language courses through a blended tuition model that included face to face and online synchronous and asynchronous tuition. A full retraining programme for all language tutors was put in place to support them in this move to compulsory online tutoring.

The need for a repository

Since online tutoring was introduced in 2003, DoL has been providing a core set of online tutorial materials for each course in order to support tutors with the use of the new technology whilst ensuring quality in online tuition for students. Initially tutorial materials for each course were provided through the Moodle course page as ready-made tutorials, and were only accessible to those tutors teaching a particular online course. This meant that only online tutors had access to the online tutorial materials, and that they only had access to what was provided for their course. However, online tutors soon became more proficient and willing to adapt what was provided and create their own online materials, whilst tutors who did not teach online were keen to have access to online tutorial materials so that they could adapt them for use in their face to face tutorials.

To address this, the department decided to disaggregate ready made tutorials into individual activities to give tutors more flexibility to mix and match activities to suit their groups, and to make these available to all tutors who requested them. It became obvious that a better system was needed, one that would allow all materials to be placed in a single space where all tutors had access to everything and could also share, if they wanted, their own materials with everybody else.

The search for a solution

DoL had been exploring for some time the benefits that would derive from using a digital repository for the management of language teaching and learning materials. A repository that allowed efficient content management and enabled OU languages tutors to share their own materials within DoL but could also be open to the wider languages community would have substantial benefits not only for the institution but for the whole community of languages professionals in UK education and abroad. Initial explorations into the suitability of different locally available systems (OpenLearn, Moodle database and Documentum) confirmed our perception that what was needed was not available within existing structures, so the possibility of setting up a teaching and learning repository had to be explored.

¹ www.illuminate.com

DoL had been following the progress of JISC-funded work carried out by the Faroes team at the University of Southampton, and had been involved in the testing and refining of the Language Box, a lightweight languages repository which Southampton had built as a proof of concept. Straightforward design, functionality and ease-of-use made this repository an ideal choice for DoL as part-time language teachers needed a tool that was easily accessible and that could be incorporate into their everyday practice. A potential collaboration between University of Southampton (as part of their benefits realisation project OneShare²) and DoL at the OU was identified, and plans were drawn to customise the software behind Language Box to meet the specific requirements of DoL. With part funding from JISC Digital Repositories Start Up and Enhancement Programme, this project was set up so that the University of Southampton could provide technical expertise and their extensive experience of repository development and implementation, whilst DoL provided a real case study to try out and enhance the educational repository software.

Timing was crucial to the success of the project. The decision to move from Lyceum to Elluminate as the new audio-graphic conferencing tool for all DoL courses from 2009 meant that all materials for online tutoring that DoL provided to tutors had to be rewritten to suit the Elluminate platform. Delivering the reformatted tutorial materials through the new repository would ensure that all potential users were made aware of its existence and had some experience of using it.

Aims and Objectives

The LORO project aimed to provide an integrated digital repository (LORO) for the Department of Languages at the Open University to allow course developers to store and deliver tutorial materials to language tutors and to enable language tutors to share their own materials. This has been achieved fully.

The key objectives of the project were:

1. To have a pilot repository that could be used to deliver new tutorial resources to beginners tutors by November 2009 (could not have all the functionalities of the final version of the repository, but should allow tutors to access resources easily).
2. To have in place a final version of the repository by February 2010 (to allow tutors to access resources and to upload their own resources to store or share with others).
3. To prepare the LORO repository so that it was interoperable with Language Box (the technical development aspect and the actual system to allow LORO resources to be shared with Language Box was part of the OneShare JISC-funded project led by University of Southampton).
4. To produce dissemination materials such as case studies, reports, conference papers, etc. and to disseminate project outcomes through the project website and the JISC network.
5. To engage Associate Lecturers in dissemination activities, making the most of their connections with other FE and HE educational institutions.
6. To support users appropriately (particularly tutors) through the cultural change that would result from the use of a repository.

Most of the key objectives have been achieved, and the main milestones in the implementation of the repository were met. However, due to delays in the integration of LORO with the OU servers and user log in systems, there was not sufficient time left to start work on objective 5. Also, with the decision to make LORO an open repository, objective 3 became of secondary importance, although the OneShare project is still addressing some of it within their own project. It has also become clear throughout the lifespan of the project that a much simpler solution to the issue of interoperability might be provided by an RSS harvester of the kind piloted by the Xpert³ project at the University of Nottingham.

² <http://oneshare.ecs.soton.ac.uk/>

³ <http://nottingham.ac.uk/xpert>

Methodology

At the heart of our approach to this project was a willingness to take the concept of user engagement further, not just consulting stakeholders but actively involving them as much as possible, particularly tutors, at all stages of the project. A substantial amount of resources had been specifically earmarked to enable us to employ tutors in different roles, from researchers to supporters or trainers.

Another key aspect of the approach taken was strong institutional buy-in that enabled us to implement every stage of the project within existing departmental systems and processes for tutor training and course delivery.

The technical development undertaken by Eprints developers at the University of Southampton was based on Agile development principles. The creation of an early prototype of LORO and a continued testing and feedback cycle to identify problems and devise improvements to the tool worked very well to deliver a product that satisfied user requirements. Changes to requirements were accommodated throughout the development process and there was a great deal of flexibility on both sides to ensure that the product delivered met the needs of users. However, one drawback of this system was that it was difficult to create support materials for users, and several versions of training materials were needed at different stages of the development, which were quite time-consuming to produce.

Contact with other projects, particularly the two sister projects to LORO, Humbox⁴ and the Worcester Learning Box⁵ (WLB), was very important throughout the project. There was some useful exchange of ideas, of which some were adopted (user accounts tied in to institutional authentication from WLB, social networking from Humbox and rights declaration on upload from LORO) and others discarded by the different projects. The issue of interoperability with Language Box and Humbox led to some discussions between OneShare, LLAS and DoL to ensure that it was kept firmly on the agenda of all projects.

Data was collected throughout the project to enable us to evaluate the success of the implementation of LORO. The initial environmental assessment exercise included an online survey (n=129) and follow-up focus groups (n=33) and the results were compiled in a report⁶. A short usage questionnaire was carried out in March 2010, and a final end of project survey was circulated in July 2010. This revisited some of the themes of the June 2009 survey to see how well LORO had delivered against the concerns and expectations that tutors had expressed in the initial survey. Full survey results are available in Appendix A.

Statistics on usage of LORO have been collected since March 2010 through Google Analytics and these, together with the data from the March and July 2010 surveys provide a fairly good picture of how LORO is being received by OU tutors and other users outside of the OU.

Implementation

The initial stage of the project consisted of gathering all necessary information to ensure that the many implications of the implementation of the repository were understood. This involved the environmental assessment survey carried out in June 2009 and followed by focus groups in July 2009 to find out about our tutors, their attitudes towards sharing and their awareness and expectations of a repository tool. This information was fed into the planning process and informed the approach to support, training and communication in relation to the implementation of LORO.

The technical development was carried out by Eprints software developers at the University of Southampton and coordinated by the OneShare team. They came to DoL to demonstrate the software in early March 2009 so when the outcome of the bid was announced and we found out that the project had been successful in securing the funding we were ready to go with some ideas of how to adapt the existing software. This was done in the first couple of months of the project and a demo of the first prototype of LORO was delivered to members of the project team and steering committee, tutors,

⁴ www.humbox.ac.uk

⁵ <http://www.worc.ac.uk/learningbox/>

⁶ http://www.open.ac.uk/education-and-languages/loro/p3_1.shtml

academics and support staff in DoL in early July 2009. At this face to face meeting a group of 20 participants tested this first version of LORO and provided feedback directly to the developers.

From there, the implementation of LORO followed four distinct phases:

1. Phase 1 (April - October 2009): Technical development of the tool and population with Beginners' tutorial materials (6 courses) to meet the deadline for the start of Beginners' courses in November 2009.

The first working version of LORO was ready by early September 2009. A briefing for all faculty members took place in early October 2009 and training on how to access tutorial materials placed in LORO was cascaded by course directors and the training team to beginners' tutors. All subsequent queries were directed to the LORO project team. Six tutors, trained and supported by members of the project team, were employed to upload all the materials for each course and provide feedback on usability, functionality, bugs, etc. whilst doing this. This led to an intensive period of adjustments to ensure that LORO would be reliable enough to deliver and meet this first early deadline.

At this stage LORO was hosted by Eprints and openly accessible, although it was planned that by January 2010 it would be migrated to the OU servers and placed in the intranet so that only OU staff could have access to its contents.

2. Phase 2 (November 2009 - January 2010): Refining appearance and functionality following extended testing by Beginners' tutors, and population with tutorial materials for all other courses to meet the start date of all other courses in February 2010.

There were remarkably few queries or complaints from beginners' tutors after they started using the system in November 2009. Training and support had been delivered by course directors as part of the compulsory Elluminate training provided by the Department. Some tutors were finding the move to online tutoring on Elluminate challenging and LORO was not seen as a great source of concern by most users. Specific questions about downloading materials from LORO were often directed to course directors and course managers who would pass on the queries to the LORO team. These were always quickly resolved.

It was felt that a better system of training and supporting tutors with Elluminate and LORO was required and the whole system was redesigned to include: a compulsory training course for all tutors new to Elluminate which included information and practice of using LORO to download teaching materials; a dedicated team of tutors whose job was to train other tutors on the use of Elluminate and LORO; a dedicated workspace for training and support for Elluminate and LORO, with a Q&A forum and a troubleshooting wiki as well as many other resources on using Elluminate and LORO.

Nine tutors were employed to upload the materials for courses starting in February 2010. Again, they were briefed, trained and supported by members of the project team. All tutorial materials created by the OU were uploaded to a single account, Open University Languages. This was designed to enable us to separate what was made available by the institution from what each tutor might deposit later on.

One of the main problems during this stage of the project was the difficulties encountered by the developer to work remotely to install LORO inside an OU server and migrate the content from loro.eprints.ac.uk to loro.open.ac.uk. Since course start deadlines did not allow any delays, it was decided that leaving LORO in the Eprints server for the February 2010 course start date was the more sensible option, since November 2009 tutors had encountered remarkably few problems accessing the content there.

3. Phase 3 (January - March 2010): Work on migration to the OU servers and integration with OU log in systems before promoting the use of the individual accounts for uploading of tutors' own resources.

The decision to stage the introduction of LORO into separate phases was partly due to the very tight deadlines that course starting dates forced on us, and partly to the difficulties encountered in migrating LORO from the eprints server to the OU server. These were resolved by having the eprints developer working at the OU headquarters in Milton Keynes for a week in March. By integrating

LORO with the OU authentication system, OU staff have automatically been given a LORO account. Encouraging tutors to create an account in LORO before this migration and integration would have resulted in them having two accounts, the one they created and the one the system would provide them with. As the functionalities of each account are slightly different and it would have been very time consuming for the developer to move individual resources from one account to another, it was decided that it would be more sensible to ask tutors to wait until the system was at loro.open.ac.uk before they started making use of their individual accounts to upload their own content.

A further problem we encountered at this stage was that the Open University Languages account that had been created to hold all institutional content could not be accommodated as an OU account within the OU authentication system. The reason for this was that this account had multiple users so there was not a single username associated with it. It was then decided that to overcome this problem the Open University Languages account would have to remain a guest account and be operated from outside the intranet. This led to some more thinking about the original idea of placing LORO within the intranet, and after some discussion with the steering committee in early February 2010, it was decided that LORO could remain completely open, even though it would offer OU staff a separate log in, and the possibility of sharing content with OU staff only if they so desired.

Once these decisions had been made and the migration and integration work had been completed, LORO was ready for tutors to use their own accounts.

4. Phase 4 (April-June 2010): Encouraging and training interested users in how to upload their own resources to LORO.

The philosophy that informed the LORO project from the start was one of providing a service and allowing users to engage with it as much or as little as they wanted. Accepting that patterns of participation and engagement are known to be unequal⁷ amongst members of social communities where users are expected to contribute content, LORO put no pressure on its users to contribute content.

When it was announced that individual accounts were ready to be used, tutors were offered briefing sessions in May and June 2010 to introduce them to the basics of sharing content through LORO (licenses, tagging, third party materials and copyright, etc.). Although a token payment was offered to the first 30 participants, demand for the course greatly exceeded this number, with 45 participants signing up for the sessions. A recording was made available after the first session for tutors to access at their own convenience. The University of Nottingham also offered a free repeat of their one-day workshop "Leveraging open content to enhance your teaching" just for OU tutors on 29th June 2010 (with LORO funding tutors' travel to the venue). This was attended by nine tutors and one member of the project team. Support for those who wanted to try uploading to LORO was provided by a nominated tutor (who was often the person employed to upload the tutorial materials for that course, and therefore quite knowledgeable about uploading to LORO) through the tutor forum of each course website.

The timing of this last phase of the project has been less than ideal with the summer break looming and little time for engagement activities to be fully promoted and taken up. September is an intensive month for OU tutors (end of course exams taking place end of September and October) and many of the planned engagement activities have now been postponed until after the summer.

Outputs and Results

The two **main deliverables** identified in the project plan were the repository itself and dissemination materials. We have delivered:

a) LORO, an open repository populated with nearly 1000 language teaching resources (300+ hours of languages open educational resources) for seven languages (see <http://loro.open.ac.uk> or see screenshots in Appendix B).

⁷ see www.90-9-1.com and http://www.useit.com/alertbox/participation_inequality.html

b) External dissemination materials including conference submissions: "LORO: Languages Open Resources Online", Open University annual Learning and Technology conference: Learning in an Open World, 21-23 June 2010, <http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2012>; "LORO (Languages Open Resources Online) Developing an online repository for tutorial resources at the Open University", LLAS/CILT Languages in Higher Education Conference, 1-2 July 2010, London; and "LORO: a repository for sharing language learning and teaching materials", EUROCALL 2010, 8-11 September 2010, University of Bordeaux.

c) Internal dissemination materials (available through the LORO website⁸) including: workshops, seminars and presentations to different OU groups (OU eLearning community, regional OU events for tutors, course development and delivery teams at DoL); training materials for tutors and course managers; and departmental workspace for LORO and Elluminate support and training.

The **critical success factors** identified in the project plan were:

1. New tutorial materials for Elluminate are delivered through the LORO repository to all tutors from November 2009.

The key deadlines were met and all tutors were able to access the new Elluminate tutorial materials through LORO, both for courses starting in November 2009 and February 2010.

2. The repository is well received by users and feedback on functionality, usability and metadata structure is positive.

A short survey on LORO (n=173 tutors, response rate 55%) carried out in March 2010 indicated that 87% of tutors⁹ had used LORO to download materials for their course, whilst 33% had used it to browse and download materials for other courses, languages or levels.

A survey of use of and attitudes towards LORO amongst tutors carried out in July 2010¹⁰ (n= 53, response rate 17%) indicated that 96% of respondents had downloaded resources from LORO.

Although only a fifth of respondents (21.6%) had uploaded their own materials to LORO, amongst those who hadn't uploaded any resources, 78.4% indicated that they intended to do so in the future. The most frequently cited reasons for not having uploaded resources to the repository were lack of time and concerns about copyright clearance.

Regarding users' expectations and concerns, tables 1, 2 and 3 below show a comparison between data collected in June 2009 and July 2010.

In the survey conducted in June 2009 language tutors were asked what they would like a languages repository to do for them. The July 2010 survey asked tutors how well they thought that LORO was meeting each of the requirements expressed a year earlier (see Table 1 below). Data show that LORO is exceeding tutors' expectations, with the vast majority agreeing that LORO allows them very well or quite well to access materials produced by course teams (90%), to view materials from other languages and levels (87%), and to find materials produced by other tutors (79%). However, only 58% of surveyed tutors think that LORO successfully allows them to store and manage their own resources, a figure which is not surprising given that not many tutors have yet explored this aspect of the repository.

Table 1 Comparison of desirable and actual functionalities of the repository (2009 – 2010)

⁸ http://www.open.ac.uk/education-and-languages/loro/p6_1.shtml

⁹ Around 10% of DoL tutors had no need to access LORO to get their course tutorial materials, as a small number of courses started using Elluminate in February 2009, so those tutors would have already obtained their tutorial materials through their course websites before the start of this project.

¹⁰ this survey will be reissued in September to try and obtain more data.

	What would you like a languages repository to do for you? (June 2009) % (n=129)	How well is LORO allowing you to do the following (July 2010) % (n=53)
Give me access to materials as sources for ideas or inspiration	59	81
Allow me to adapt materials I found	53	64
Allow me to find materials produced by other ALs	51	79
Allow me to store and manage my own materials	49	58
Allow me to access materials produced by course teams	36	90
Give me access to a wider pool of materials (stuff from other cultures)	25	74
Allow me to view materials from other languages and levels	22	87

In the 2009 survey tutors were asked about those aspects that would encourage them to use or discourage them from using a languages repository. The 2010 data show that LORO is positively addressing those concerns, with results showing a large majority of respondents agreeing or somewhat agreeing that LORO is a user friendly online system that is easily accessible and quick to use (88%), and an effective way of storing, reviewing and linking to or referencing their own materials (78%).

Table 2 Comparison of aspects that would encourage users from using a repository

	Which of the following would encourage you to use a repository? (June 2009) % (n=129)	Agree or somewhat agree with these statements in relation to LORO (July 2010) % (n=53)
A user friendly online system that is easily accessible and quick to use	94	88
Contributing to the creation of a large, frequently used collection of materials	66	80
An effective way of storing, reviewing and linking to or referencing my materials	55	78
Being identified clearly as the creator	38	77
Being able to publish and take down my own materials	35	77

The most common issues that tutors thought would discourage them from using a repository have not materialised in LORO (see table 3 below), and whilst 93% of respondents in June 2009 felt that a complicated, hard to use or slow system would put them off, only 10% of respondents in July 2010 feel this is the case with LORO. Worries about other people appropriating resources without acknowledging the author or misusing them have also become a lot less prominent once users are familiar with LORO.

Table 3 Comparison of aspects that would discourage users from using a repository

	Which of the following would discourage you from making your materials available to	Agree or somewhat agree with these statements in relation to LORO (July 2010)
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	others? (June 2009) % (n=129)	% (n=53)
A complicated, hard to use or slow system	93	10
People appropriating my stuff without acknowledgment	54	18
People misusing my stuff, e.g. adapting inappropriately	50	13

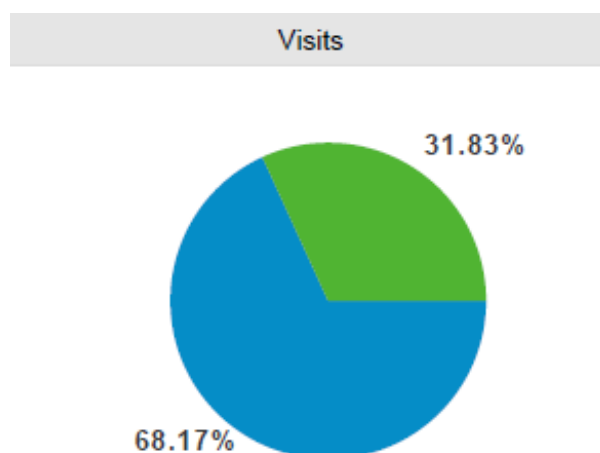
3. Successful integration of the repository within the OU systems.

LORO is hosted at the OU and integrated with the OU user authentication system, providing individual accounts to all OU staff (as well as the possibility of creating accounts for external users). It holds all tutorial resources provided by DoL for each course (with new courses required to place their sets of resources in LORO as part of the course production system). Course managers are responsible for the course resources placed in LORO as part of their course maintenance responsibilities. There is a training programme for new tutors which includes information on what LORO is and how to use it, and a departmental workspace for LORO and Elluminate support and training, resourced by the department.

4. Users engage with the repository to store, manage, access and share teaching resources.

In the five months (from the beginning of March 2010 to the end of June 2010) that access to the repository has been monitored, LORO has received a total of 3,186 visits from 1,009 unique users. Overall data show that 31.83% of these were new visitors and 68.17% returning visitors (see figure 1).

Fig.1 Percentage of New vs. Returning Visitors



A monthly breakdown of site usage (see Table 4) indicates that the highest number of new visits was registered in March, as the courses that started in February 2010 began to have their first online tutorials and tutors needed to obtain the new Elluminate teaching materials. The highest number of visits was registered during May, as the repository was finally open to OU tutors with all its functionalities at the end of April. The highest percentage of returning visitors corresponds to the month of June.

Table 4. Visitors Monthly Overview March 2010 – June 2010

	visits	unique visitors	pageviews	avg pageviews	time on site	new visits	returning visits

March	659	346	7,636	11.59	00:09:09	52.35%	47.65%
April	734	283	9,620	13.11	00:10:15	26.02%	73.98%
May	977	433	9,095	9.31	00:08:07	28.66%	71.34%
June	807	378	8,563	10.61	00:08:51	23.42%	76.58%

These figures seem to indicate that LORO has been well received and that it continues to attract interest. In relation to this, it is significant that traffic to the site has been recorded not only from the UK and Ireland, where most of OU tutors are based, but also from other 26 countries or territories in the world.

The July 2010 survey suggests that language tutors are not yet using the repository to its full potential: 62.9% of respondents have not created a profile, 85.3% have not visited other people's profiles, 88.6% have not bookmarked a resource, and only 2.9% have left a note or commented on a resource.

When tutors were asked about their attitudes towards sharing, the great majority of the answers were positive, although a handful of respondents in the June 2009 survey were adverse to sharing ("Why would I work for others?") and a small number were worried about sharing with people who would not reciprocate or acknowledge their ownership of the materials. In the July 2010 survey there was again a similar proportion of 'not keen' or negative responses, including comments on time and remuneration ("Lack of time is a concern. Obviously if it is paid then it is different") and quality and reciprocity ("I'm quite protective about my materials! I'm also quite critical of other people's resources, very rarely use existing resources without adaptations. I'm not particularly keen about letting anyone use mine, unless I know them.")

There is also anecdotal evidence of negative attitudes towards sharing resources, for example:

a) a comment by a tutor on being told that all spaces for which a small token payment would be made to attendees had been allocated but that he was welcome to attend the briefing session anyway or listen to the recording afterwards: "makes me suspect that LORO is a way of getting effort and materials from ALs on the cheap".

b) a lively debate on sharing that took place in one tutor forum where a number of tutors felt that it would only be fair for them to share their own materials through an OU website if they were paid to do this. In spite of clear explanations from the course LORO supporter regarding the fact that the materials they might upload to LORO would appear under their own name and not under the OU's name, the feeling of several tutors was that sharing materials was an extra job and they should be paid for it. One of the tutors made his views plain: "I'm not a fan of sharing. I prefer private property."

However, there is plenty of evidence of positive attitudes towards sharing of content.

"I am quite happy that the work I put in will be hopefully of use to others and not wasted, lingering in the attic".

"Sharing good practice is great and it enhances teacher development greatly. Plus I guess it is a compliment that other people think your resources are good."

"I would be happy to do so if the resources were suitable - no point in constantly reinventing the wheel!"

“I have no problem in others using my resources, I feel quite happy about it, as it provides me with feedback (about the quality of my work)”

Outcomes

The main changes that the project has enabled are:

- All OU tutorial resources for all languages and levels to be accessible to all users at the OU.
- Tutors can share their own resources with the whole community of OU language professionals (and with the wider languages community of language professionals).
- Course developers have easier access to resources and the ability to reuse and adapt existing content thus creating time savings for lecturers.

The project has also started a culture change in the way that language tutors work at the OU, as exemplified by the following quote:

“LORO has indeed given us tutors a platform in which we can develop and grow as a community of practitioners that goes well beyond the language or level you teach, or the region you work in. Maybe we are not doing it yet, but the bones are there to start communicating with other tutors, independently of whether you like sharing or not. (...) I feel that LORO has opened up the boundaries for all tutors to engage with each other by choice (not because the OU organises a staff development day, for instance), 24/7 in a space where regional limits do not exist.”

It is also fair to say that LORO has acted as a catalyst within the department, fostering incipient changes in attitudes towards content and working practices. The review of the provision of Elluminate training for tutors and the resourcing of a permanent training and support space for Elluminate and LORO users have been indirect benefits of the project. The decision to leave LORO as an open repository, a notion that was unacceptable at the start of the project because of concerns about copyright and quality, resulted from increased awareness and understanding of repositories and open educational resources, and the role they could play in enhancing quality of teaching and learning.

For our collaborators in Southampton, LORO has been an invaluable opportunity to see how the new teaching and learning repository platform they have developed is being used by a real teaching community. LORO is not a pilot or an experiment. It has been fully integrated in a large department and will continue to be part of the working practices of DoL for the foreseeable future. It serves a community of over 300 users whose experiences and feedback will help the developers refine their product so that it can be made available to the wider community.

Dissemination of LORO is only just starting but there is already substantial interest from within the UK HE community and beyond. Links are being forged with other HE institutions (UCL, University of Nottingham, University of Brighton) and there is interest in what LORO can offer as a source of materials and a space to enable sharing. The French Institute in Madrid is already using French Elluminate materials from LORO, and we are in discussions with Cercles, the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education, about a possible collaboration. Great interest has been shown by the Teacher Education Special Interest Groups of both EUROCALL¹¹, the European Association for Computer- Assisted Language Learning, and CALICO¹², the American Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium. LARC¹³, the US Language Acquisition Resource Centre based at the University of San Diego, has expressed an interest in working with us on the possibility of linking LORO to their repository.

Last, but not least, through the LORO project DoL has made available to the wider community over 300 hours of open educational resources for language teaching, including resources for lesser taught languages such as Welsh and Chinese.

¹¹ www.eurocall-languages.org

¹² www.calico.org

¹³ <http://larc.sdsu.edu/>

Conclusions

The success of this project is largely due to the excellent timing in the introduction of LORO (coinciding with the introduction of Elluminate), in-depth knowledge of user requirements and expectations, and a strong vision for the kind of product that was needed, together with enough flexibility on all sides to adapt the plan as our awareness and understanding increased and the possibilities of LORO were fully comprehended. The exploratory work carried out in the eighteen months previous to the project start greatly assisted the team in forming a feasible plan for the introduction of LORO.

Implications

There is great potential to build upon the OER collection that LORO has become by encouraging other institutions and individuals to make use of this facility, both as consumers and contributors of content. We will be engaging in this kind of user engagement activities in future as a way of further developing LORO, and have already secured some funding to support these activities.

Having users outside of the UK means that LORO must consider accessibility in terms of language barriers. Plans are underway to translate the LORO interface so that it is possible for speakers of languages other than English to access the content.

The model created for LORO is easy to replicate but until Eprints Services develops its capacity to support and maintain the teaching and learning repository installation, it will be difficult to set up other instantiations of LORO. This might take some time as the software is still being improved and developed.

Recommendations

In a small scale project such as this, it is crucial that there is a clear vision of what needs to be accomplished and a shared understanding of how to deliver it by all stakeholders, so communication and engagement are key.

User engagement can be taken further by thinking laterally about what each stakeholder can bring to the project. Besides their known roles as tutors, some of our users were also researchers or trainers, and we put their skills to good use by employing them to work for the project.

Project Acronym: LORO
Version: 2
Contact: Anna Comas-Quinn
Date: 30 July 2010

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University of Southampton
<http://oneshare.ecs.soton.ac.uk/>

Humbox,
Subject Centre for Language, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS)
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Appendix A

Survey data:

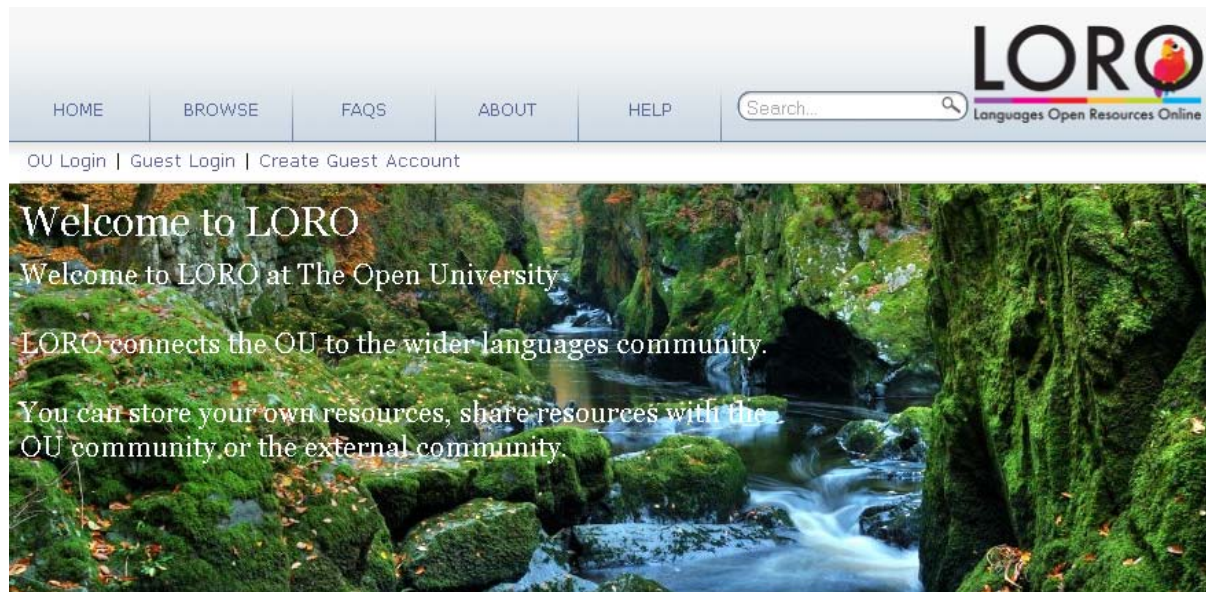
Results for LORO tutor current practices June 2009 available at
http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=NqCwE9AaUBYB4wq1wc_2ba6bv_2bfyn13s2Fnnba_2bbeFaFs_3d

Results for LORO usage survey March 2010 available at
http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=DrhtrVdshLsJO4yoDXLVt4s8oTZ9RCy09BajQyIX92o_3d

Results for LORO tutor current practices July 2010 available at
http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=zMAUvzyZ0b6dl6pj_2bORZ7mtXoZBif5AhidCfRIUrRHQ_3d


Appendix B

LORO Home page



L192 - Beginners' French	L193 - Beginners' German
L194 - Beginners' Spanish	L195 - Beginners' Italian
L196 - Beginners' Welsh	L197 - Beginners' Chinese
L120 - Intermediate French	L130 - Intermediate German
L140 - Intermediate Spanish	L185 - English for Academic Purposes
L211 - Upper Intermediate French	L203 - Upper Intermediate German
L204 - Upper Intermediate Spanish	L310 - Advanced French
L313 - Advanced German	L314 - Advanced Spanish
LB160 - Professional Communication Skills for Business Studies	LB720 - English Communication Skills for Global Managers

Resources for a particular course (Welsh beginners)

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Number of items: **83**.


	L196Uned10_Sesiwn1_Holidays (Resource) Asking questions about someone's holiday; talking about holidays in the past and future tense.	Added On: 03 Apr 2010 19:58 Added By: Open University Languages Tags: Past, Future, Places, Holiday Activities, Weather, Elluminate Language: Welsh Course Code: L196 Unit: Uned 10
OU tutorial material		
	L196Uned10_Sesiwn2_Next week (Resource) Asking and answering questions in the future tense; reporting findings in the 3rd person.	Added On: 03 Apr 2010 20:01 Added By: Open University Languages Tags: Future, Ble?, Elluminate Language: Welsh Course Code: L196 Unit: Uned 10
OU tutorial material		
	L196Uned10_Sesiwn3_The future (Resource) Asking and answering questions in the future tense; reporting findings in the 3rd person.	Added On: 03 Apr 2010 20:06 Added By: Open University Languages Tags: Future, Heno, Yfory, Wythnos Yma, Elluminate Language: Welsh Course Code: L196 Unit: Uned 10
OU tutorial material		
	L196Uned10_Sesiwn4_Negotiating (Resource) Using the short form of the future tense; reporting findings in the 3rd person.	Added On: 03 Apr 2010 20:10 Added By: Open University Languages Tags: Gwna I, Os Gwnei Di, Daily Household Tasks, Elluminate Language: Welsh Course Code: L196 Unit: Uned 10
OU tutorial material		

Individual resources


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Languages Open Resources Online

L314L1A05Música (Resource)




Música1

 **OU tutorial material**

Description


Revise the topic of hispanic music, create an oral presentation from a written text

Resource Metadata


From	Open University Languages
Added	07 Jan 2010 18:06
Tags	Music Vocabulary, Geographical Knowledge, Paraphrasing
Language	Spanish
Course Code	L314
Unit	Libro 1: Raíces
Attribution	Open University Languages
Downloads	0
Copyright	

Toolbox


⇒ Download this Resource as a zip



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- ▶ English (26)
- ▶ French (228)
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- ▶ Spanish (222)
- ▶ Unspecified (7)
- ▶ Welsh (83)

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