



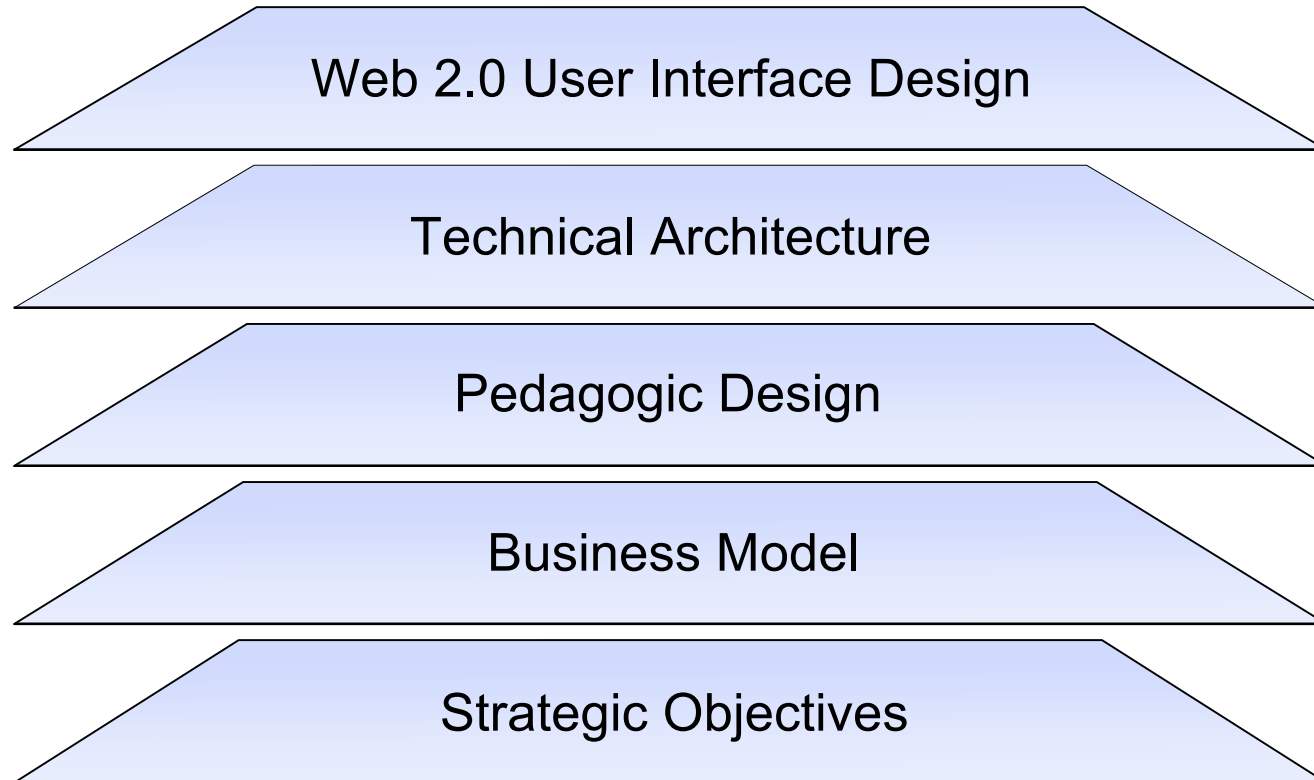
The Open University

# Towards a Social:Learn / OpenLearn Sustainability Model

Presented by Hardin Tibbs  
Hewlett Foundation, Menlo Park, CA  
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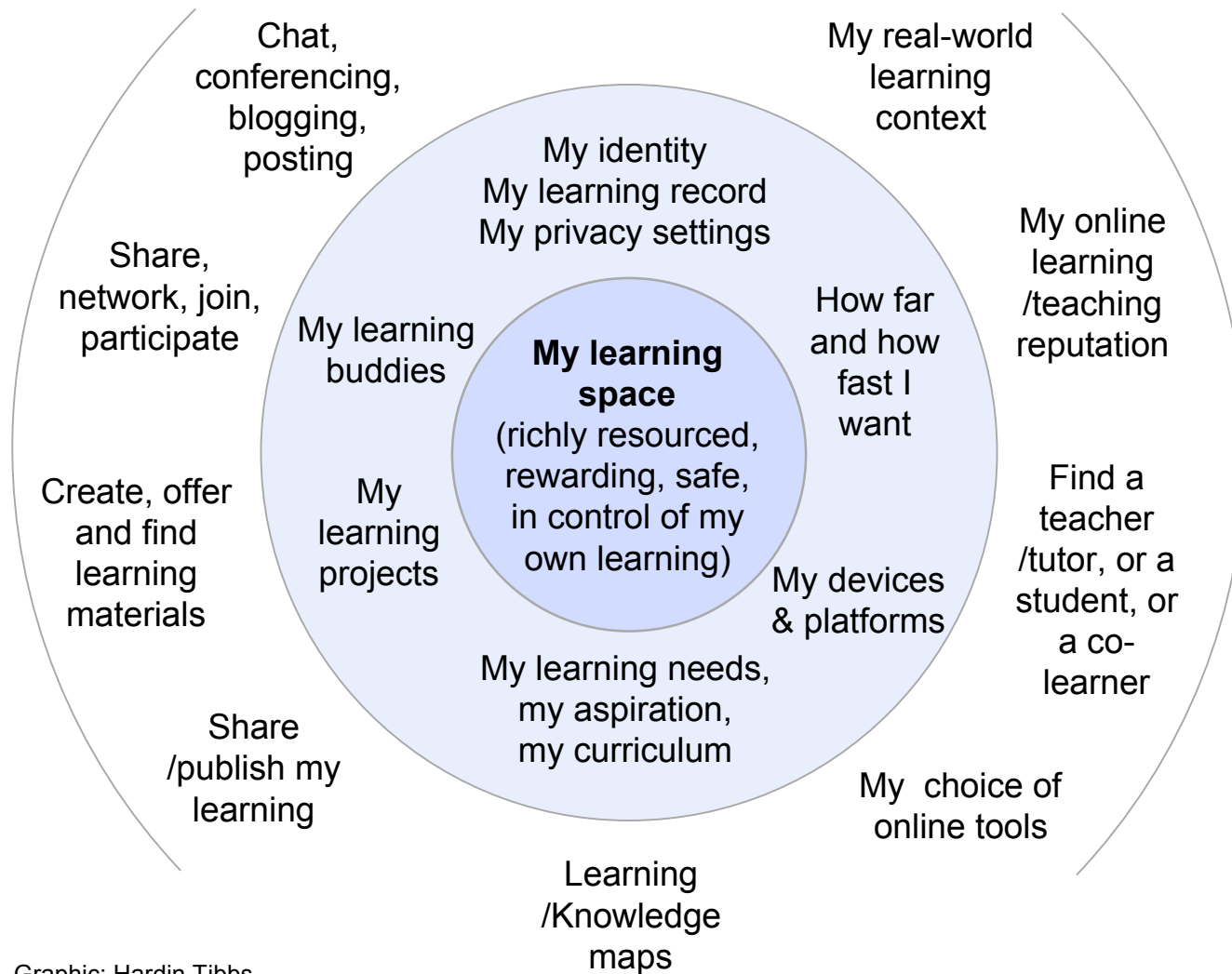


## Social:Learn design layers



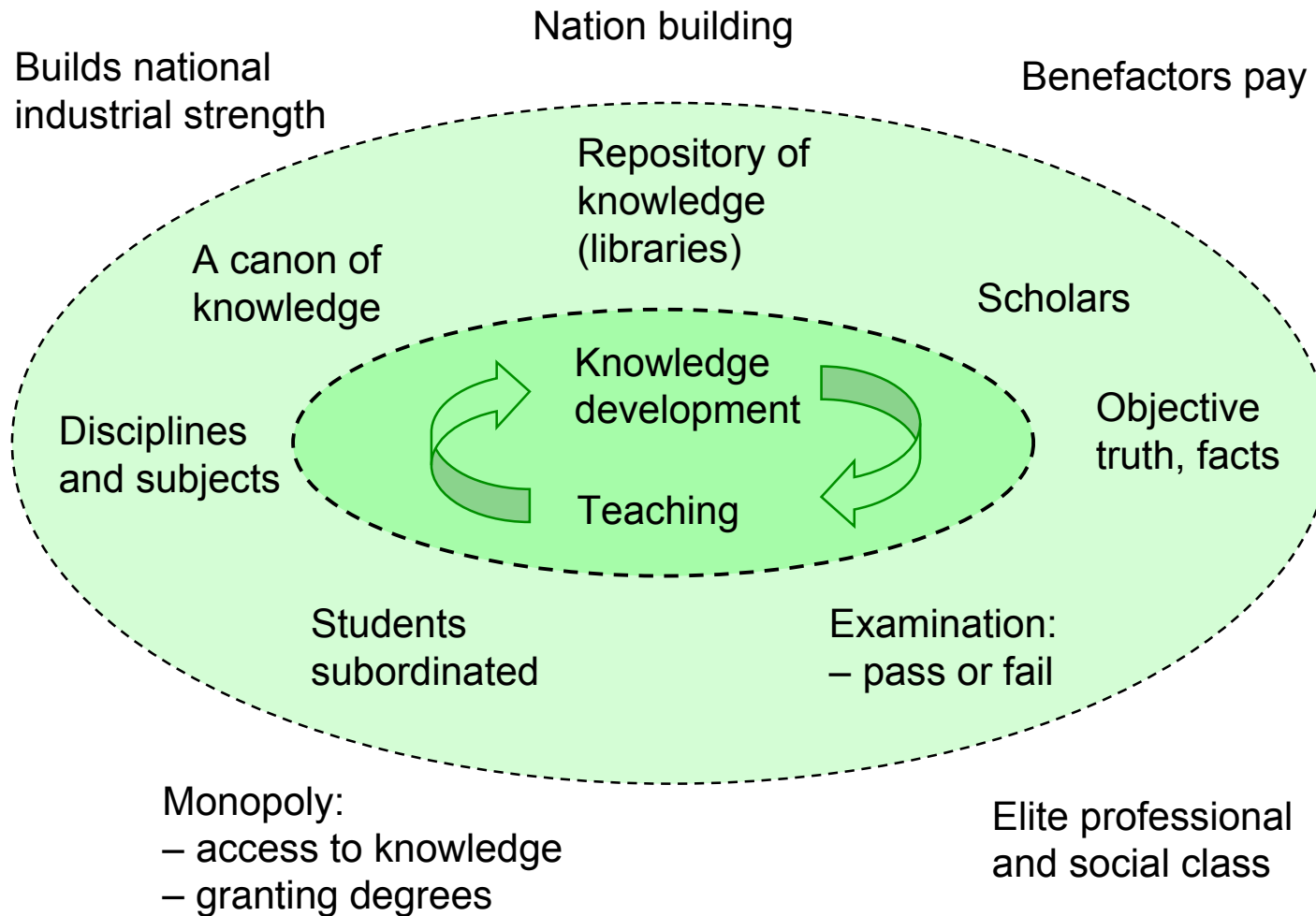


# Social:Learn concept & vision



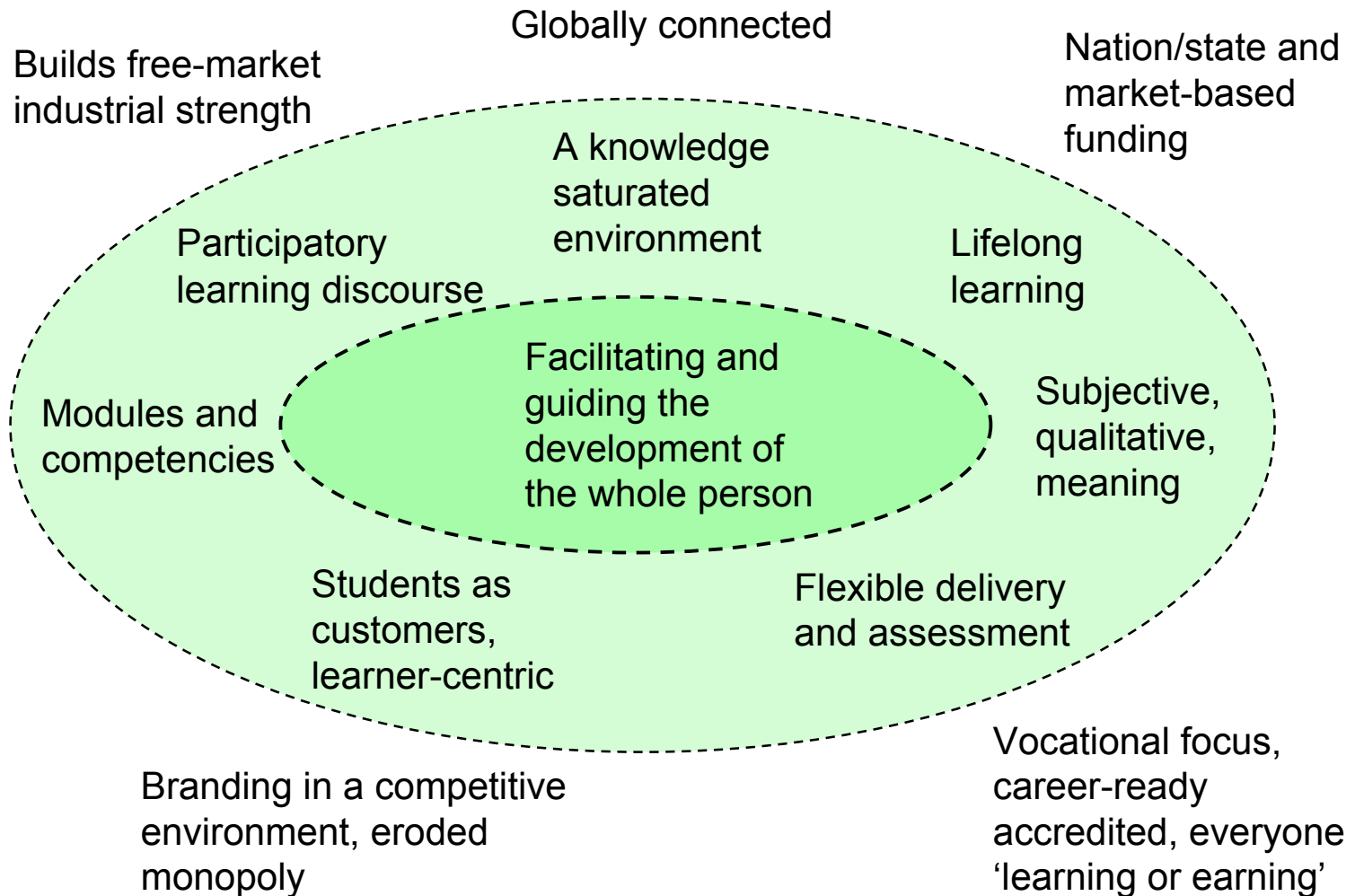


# The original industrial-era university





# The emerging learning model





## The existing OU “Supported Open Learning” (SOL) model

The OU is an innovative distance learning university founded in 1970

It offers a methodology (pedagogy and technology combined) to provide HE at scale and at an affordable price

It operates primarily in the UK, its home market, and to some extent worldwide

- *In the UK, the OU offers HE direct to individual students via SOL (with some students overseas)*
- *Internationally, the OU offers its methodology in partnership with other HE providers operating in local markets, often FT*

In undergraduate markets, course materials are typically predetermined and highly structured

In CPD markets, course content tends to be less predetermined, and peer group-based action learning is emphasized



## OU values are about...

Being open entry at UG level

Going to the student

Personal support of the student for a high quality learning experience

Using technology

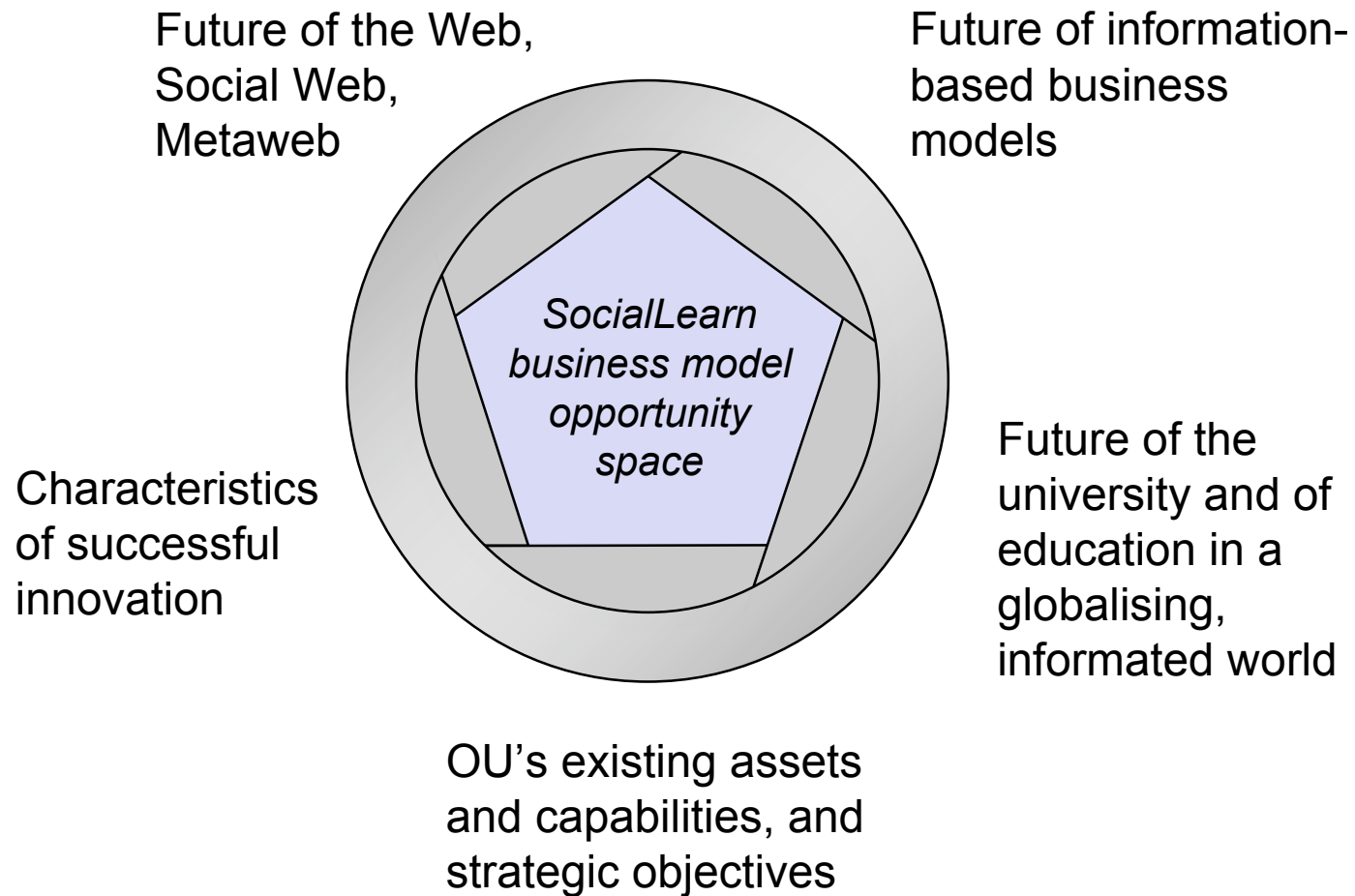
High quality teaching materials

Being at the leading edge of HE delivery

Enabling independent critical thinkers



# Factors that shape the Social:Learn model





## Economics of networked information

The ability to replicate information products at zero marginal cost

The ability to monetize “long tail” inventories

Metcalfé’s Law – network usefulness expands as square of users

Users as co-developers

Collective intelligence and experience may have more value than proprietary knowledge

Value for users created by aggregating data about their own collective behaviour

Services related to information delivery may have more value than information content

Loss of trade-off between richness and reach



## Key components of Social:Learn

1) Rich user toolset based on Web 2.0 social software (interoperable with other tools, applications and content):

- **Learner identity management:** *personal portfolio, privacy model, archive, diary, immediate registration and enrollment, etc.*
- **Social networking tools:** *relationship model, communication, messaging, community-building, shared diaries*
- **Learning management tools:** *learning portfolio management, learning narrative creation, mapping of learning (e.g. Cohere)*

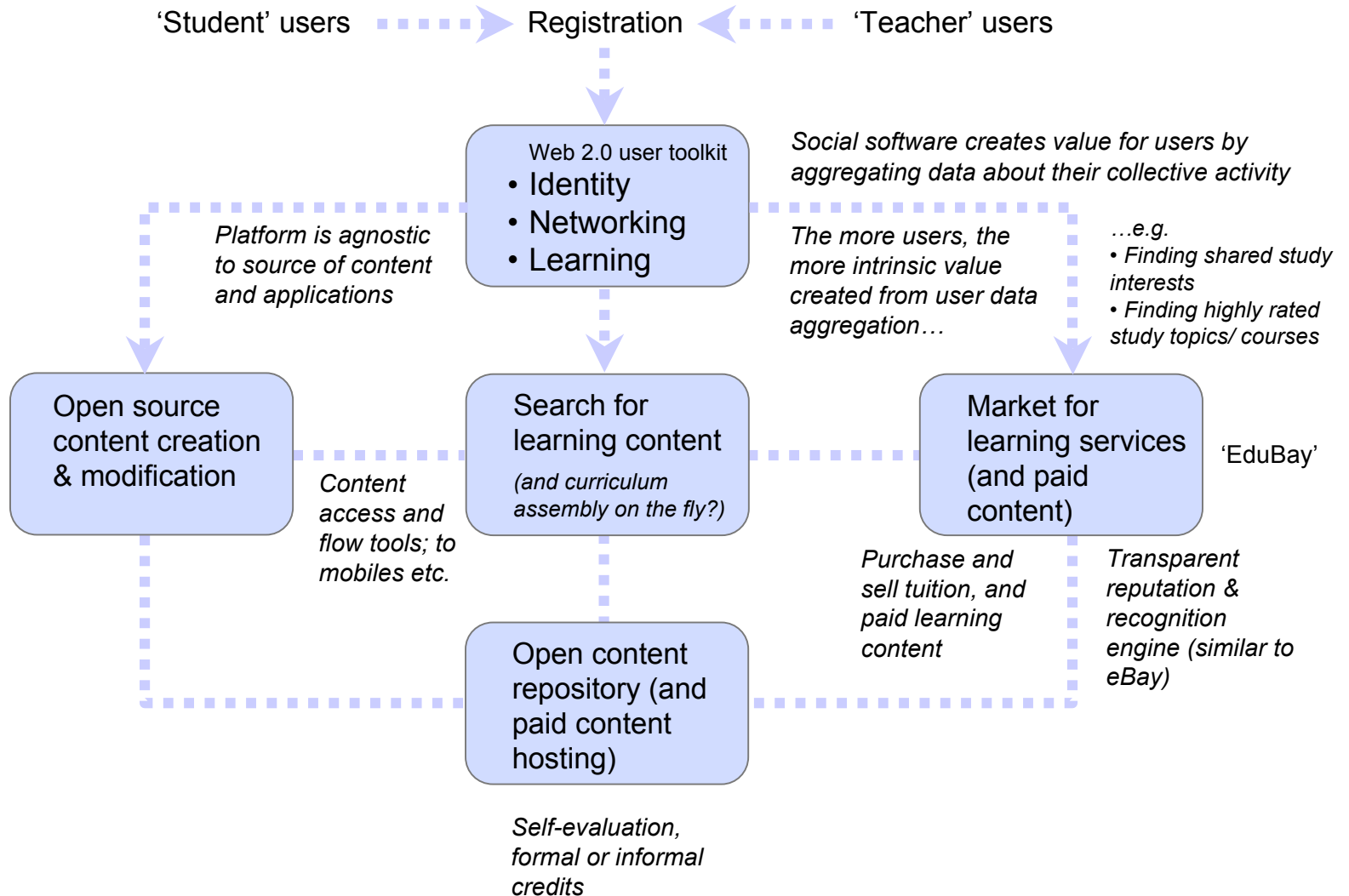
2) Content creation: Creating and modifying open source educational material, resulting in original and modified versions, mash-ups, etc.; the same tools can be used to originate commercial content

3) Content search: Educational content search, customized curriculum assembly on the fly (associated advertising revenue)

4) Learning exchange: eBay-like exchange for teachers and learners, and paid content, with a reputation engine (sales commission revenue)

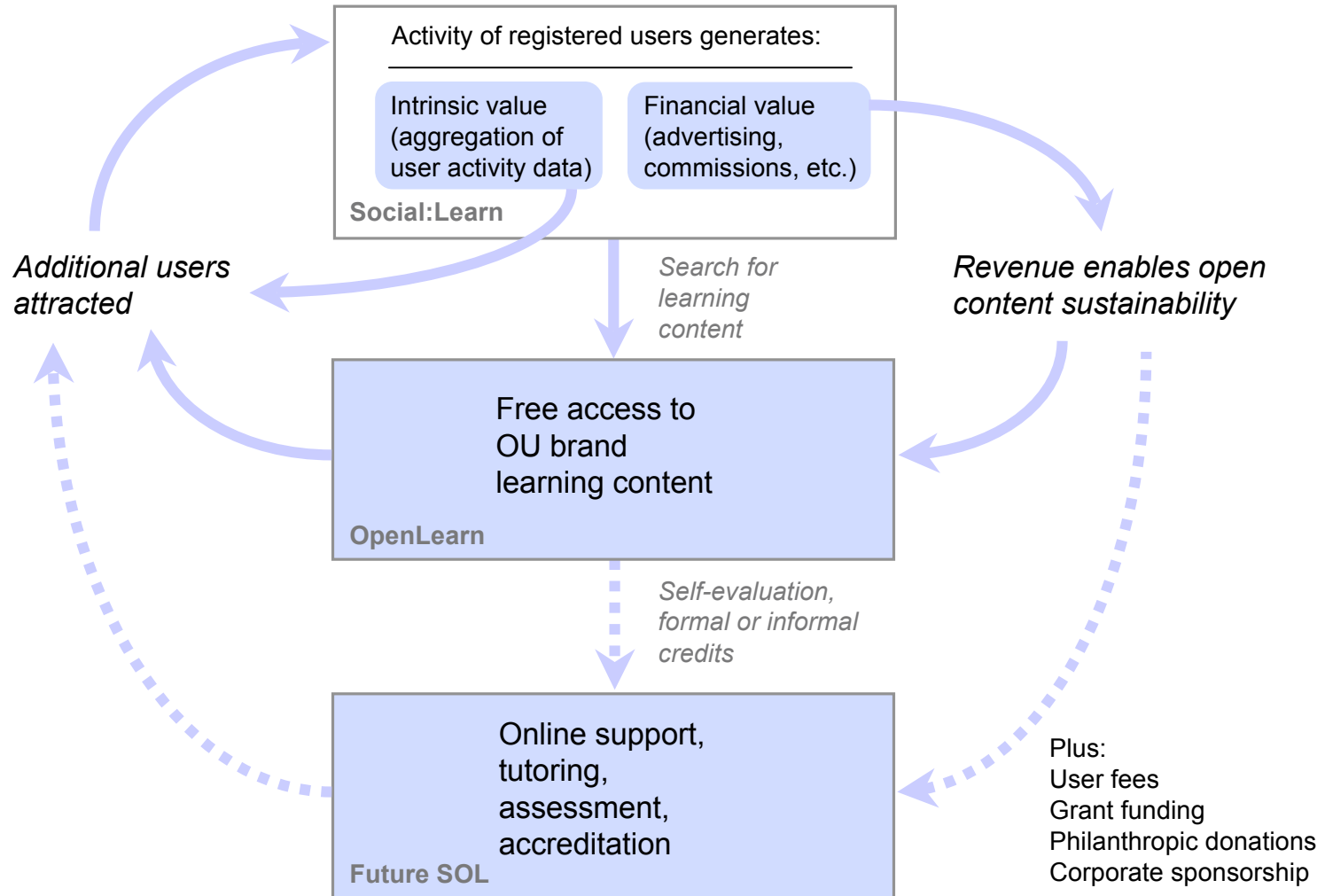


# Key components of Social:Learn





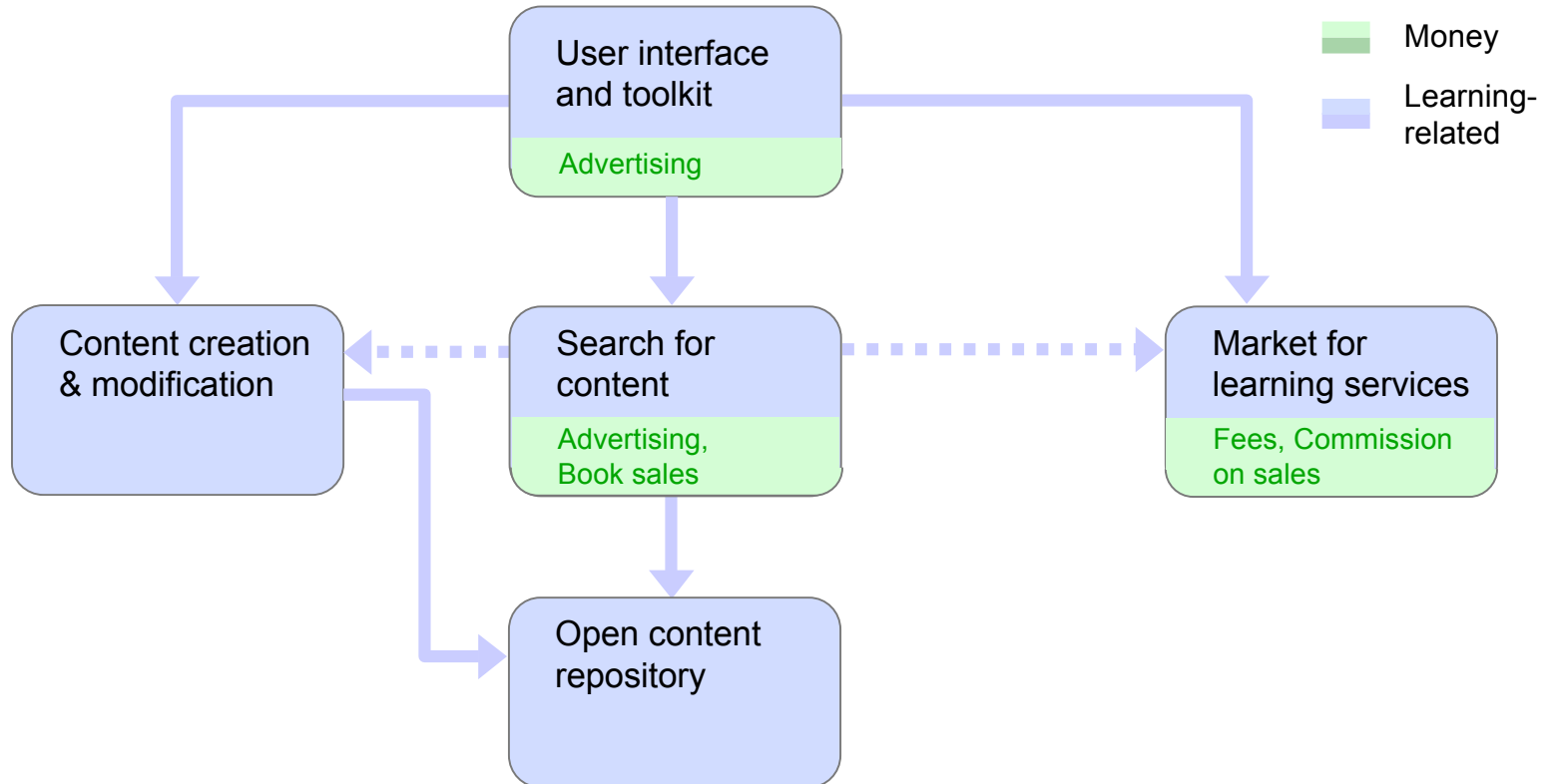
# Sustainability concept: synergy between social interface and open content





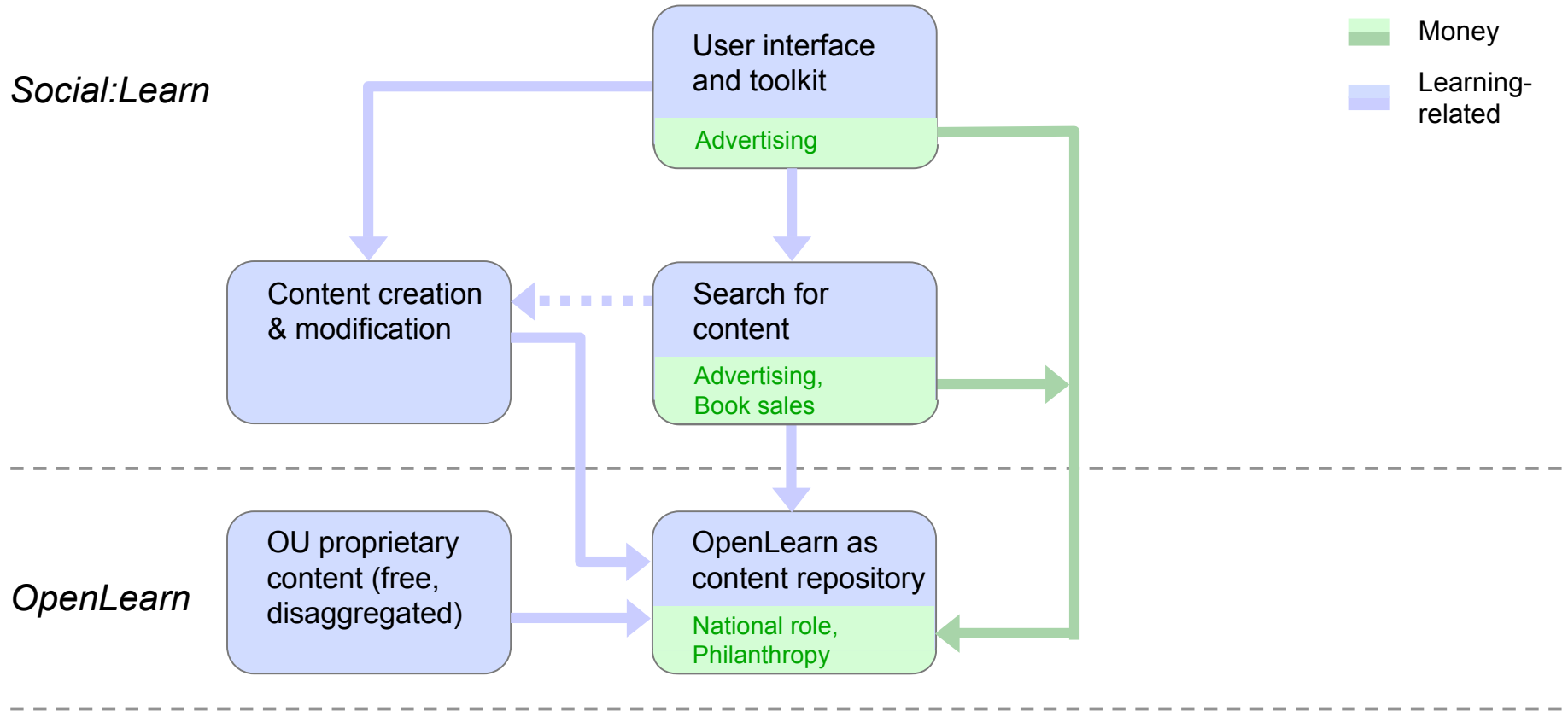
# Scope 1: Independent Social:Learn

*Social:Learn*





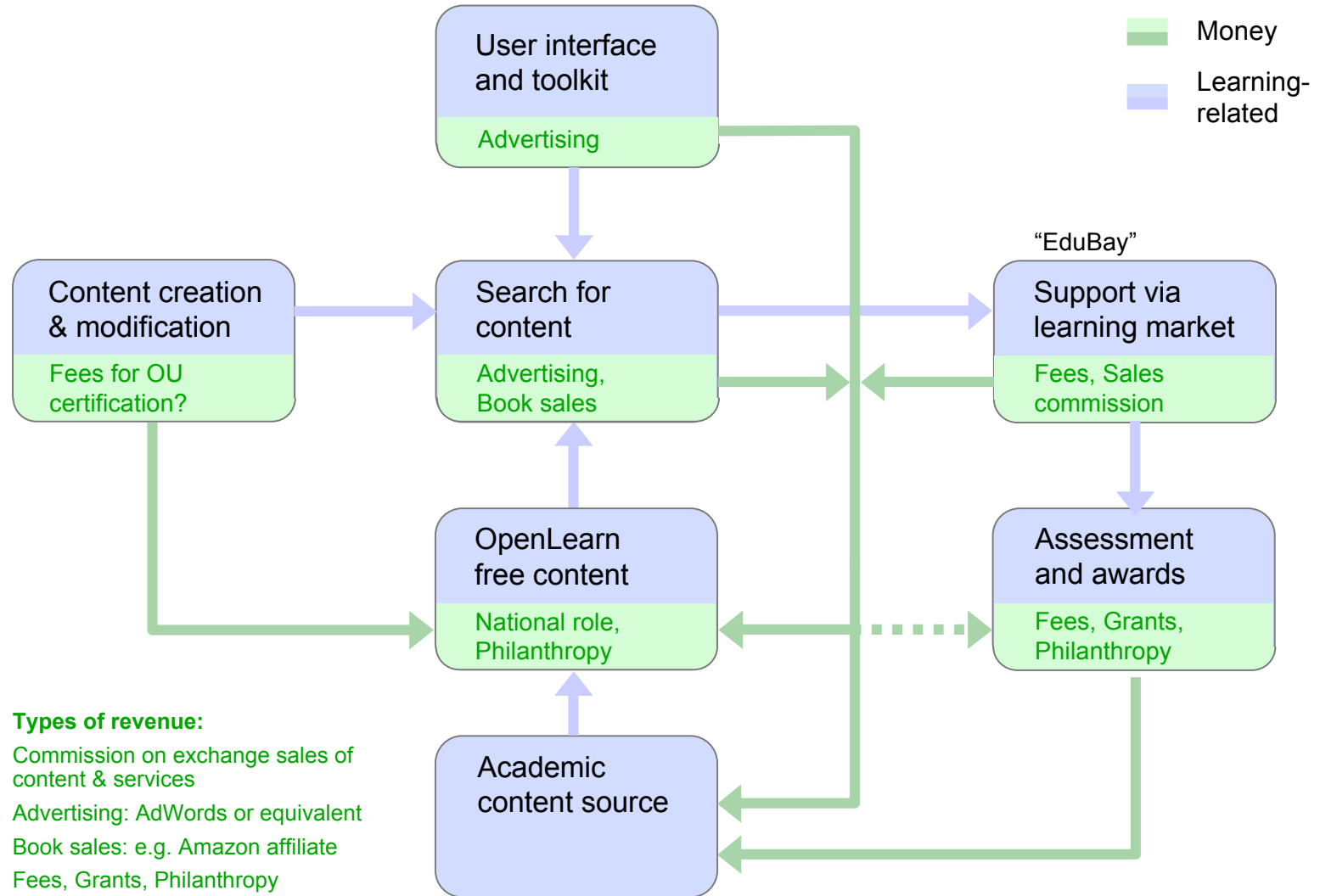
# Scope 2: Social:Learn + OpenLearn





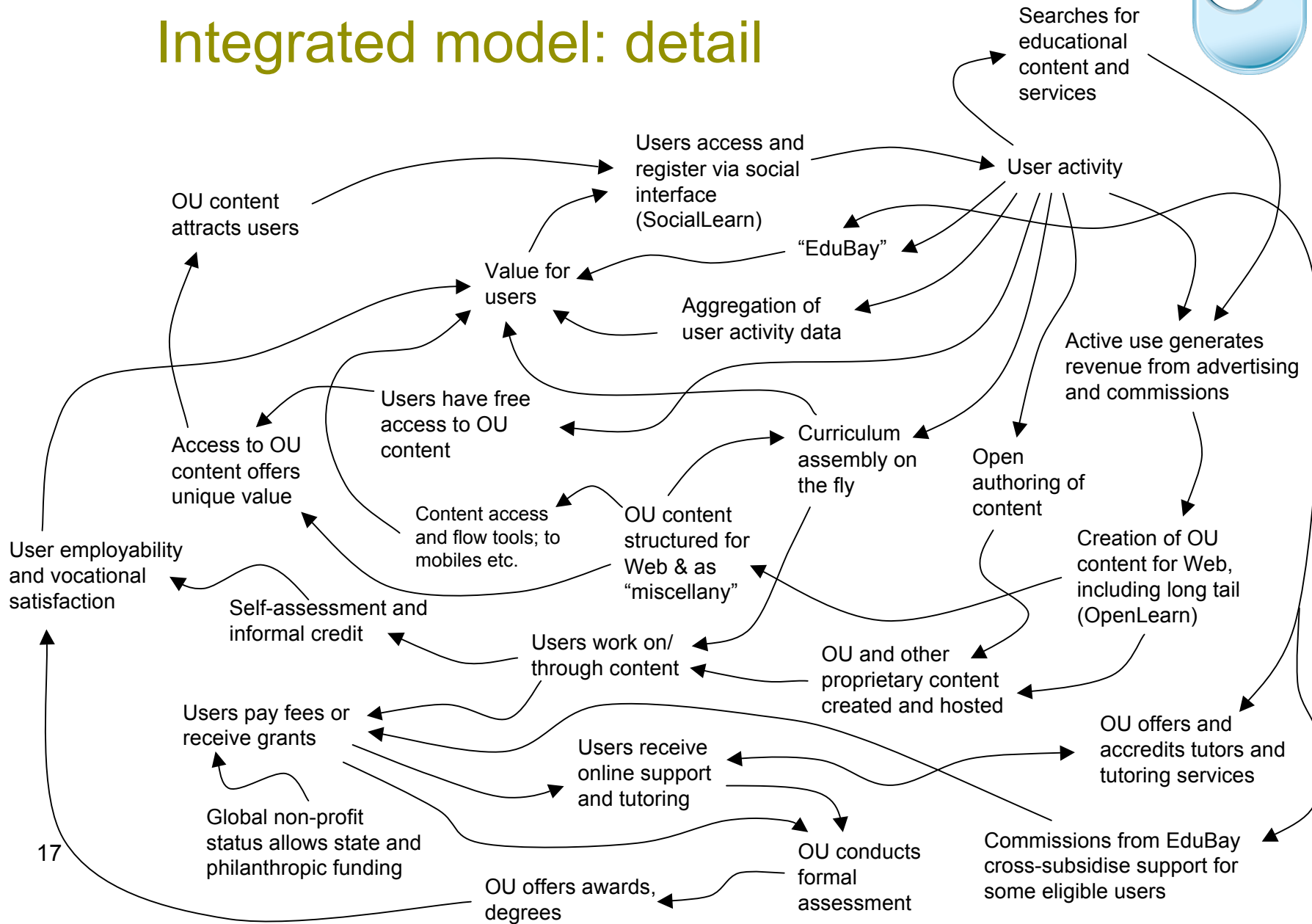


# Future OU: integrated model





# Integrated model: detail





## Summary

Three possible levels of scope for Social:Learn have been explored:

- Scope 1: Independent Social:Learn
- Scope 2: Social:Learn + OpenLearn
- Scope 3: Social:Learn + OpenLearn & Future SOL

The three levels of scope are best seen as stages of development rather than as independent options.

If Level 1, Social:Learn operates alone, it would miss the business synergy possible by linking it with OpenLearn.

If Level 3, Social:Learn plus OpenLearn and SOL, were to be attempted immediately it would expose SOL to risk while the source of transformation is still under development and unproven.

The logical immediate choice is therefore Level 2 Scope, Social:Learn plus OpenLearn, with the intention that once this combination is able to demonstrate viability, the process of integration with SOL would begin.



# Slides

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