

CHAPTER I

The Victory of Openness

It made me think that everything was about to arrive - the moment when you know all and everything is decided forever.

—Jack Kerouac

Introduction

Openness is everywhere in education at the moment: in late 2011 a free course in artificial intelligence had over 160,000 learners enrolled (Leckart 2012); in 2012 in the UK the Government followed other national bodies in the US and Canada by announcing a policy mandating that all articles resulting from publicly funded research should be made freely available in open access publications (Finch Group 2012); downloads from Apple's iTunes U site, which gives away free educational content, passed 1 billion in 2013 (Robertson 2013); British Columbia announced a policy in 2012 to provide open, free textbooks for the 40 most popular courses (Gilmore 2012); the G8 leaders signed a treaty on open data in June 2013, stating that all government data will be released openly by default (UK Cabinet Office 2013). Outside of these headline figures there are fundamental shifts in practices: academics are

creating and releasing their own content using tools such as Slideshare and YouTube; researchers are releasing results earlier and using open, crowdsourcing approaches; every day millions of people make use of free, open online tools and resources to learn and share.

In fact, openness is now such a part of everyday life that it seems unworthy of comment. This wasn't always the case, nor did it appear inevitable or predictable. At the end of the '90s, as the dot-com boom was gaining pace, there was plenty of scepticism around business models (much of it justified after the collapse) and similarly with the web 2.0 bubble ten years later. And while many of the business models were unsustainable, the traditional models of paying for content have also been shown not to map across to the new digital domain. 'Giving stuff away' is no longer an approach to be mocked.

Nowhere has openness played such a central role as in education. Many of the pioneers of open movements have come from universities. The core functions of academics are all subject to radical change under an open model; from the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that are challenging teaching to pre-publication repositories that undermine the traditional publishing and review model of researchers, openness affects all aspects of higher education.

Openness has a long history in higher education. Its foundations lie in one of altruism and the belief that education is a public good. It has undergone many interpretations and adaptations, moving from a model which had open entry to study as its primary focus to one that emphasises openly available content and resources. This change has largely been a result of the digital and network revolution. Changes in other sectors, most notably the open source model of software production and values associated

with the internet of free access, and open approaches have influenced (and been influenced by) practitioners in higher education. The past decade or so has seen the growth of a global open education movement, with significant funding from bodies such as the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and research councils. Active campaigners in universities have sought to establish programmes that will release content – including data, teaching resources and publications – openly; others have adopted open practices through social media and blogs. This has been combined with related work on open licences, most notably that of Creative Commons, which allow easy reuse and adaptation of content, advocacy at policy level for nation- or state-wide adoption of open content and sharing of resources, and improved technology and infrastructure that make this openness both easy and inexpensive.

One might therefore expect this to be a time of celebration for the advocates of openness. Having fought so long for their message to be heard, they are now being actively courted by senior management for their experience and views on various open strategies. Open approaches are featured in the mainstream media. Millions of people are enhancing their learning through open resources and open courses. Put bluntly, it looks as though openness has won. And yet you would be hard pushed to find any signs of celebration amongst those original advocates. They are despondent about the reinterpretation of openness to mean ‘free’ or ‘online’ without some of the reuse liberties they had envisaged. Concerns are expressed about the commercial interests that are now using openness as a marketing tool. Doubts are raised regarding the benefits of some open models for developing nations or learners who require support. At this very moment of victory it seems that the narrative around openness is being usurped by others, and the consequences of this may not be very open at all.

In 2012 Gardner Campbell gave a keynote presentation at the Open Education conference (Campbell 2012) in which he outlined these concerns and frustrations. ‘What we are seeing,’ he said, ‘are developments in the higher education landscape that seem to meet every one of the criteria we have set forth for open education – increased access, decreased cost, things that will allow more people than ever on a planetary scale, one billion individual learners at a time ... Isn’t that what we meant?’ But as he explored different successes of openness his refrain was that of T. S. Eliot: that’s not what I meant at all.

Why should this be the case? Can we dismiss it as just sour grapes? Are the advocates of openness merely exhibiting chagrin that others are now claiming openness? Is it just a semantic argument over interpretation that has little interest beyond a few academics? Or is it something more fundamental, regarding the direction of openness and the ways it is implemented? It is this central tension in openness, that of victory and simultaneous anxiety, that this book seeks to explore.

Higher Education and Openness

The focus of this book is primarily on higher education. The justification for this focus is that it is the area where the battle for open is perhaps most keenly contested. However, open education can be viewed as only one component of a broader open movement. There is an active open data community, which seeks to make data – particularly governmental and corporation data – openly available. Organisations such as the Open Knowledge Foundation see access to data as fundamental in accountability and engagement across a range of social functions, including politics, retail, energy, health, etc. This places openness as activism,

of which education is only one aspect. As the Open Knowledge Foundation states, ‘We want to see open knowledge being a mainstream concept, and as natural and important to our everyday lives and organisations as green is today’ (OKFN n.d).

The focus on education allows the battle for open to be explored in detail across four examples, although many of these intersect with the wider open movement, such as open access to published articles and the release of research data. Unlike some sectors which have had openness rather foisted upon them as a result of the digital revolution – for example, the music industry and the arrival of sharing services such as Napster – higher education has sought to develop open practices in a range of areas.

It is this scope that makes it such a vibrant area of study, encompassing publishing, teaching, technology, individual practices, broadcast and engagement. There is much that is relevant for other sectors here also, where one or more of these topics will be applicable, but rarely the entire range. It is frequently stated that higher education can learn lessons from other sectors that have been impacted by the digital revolution, such as newspapers, but the opposite may be true with regards to openness; other sectors can learn much from what is played out in the openness debate in higher education.

What are the key areas of interest, then, with regards to openness and higher education? Each of these will be explored in a chapter of their own, but the main developments are summarised below.

Teaching

The advent of MOOCs has garnered a lot of attention recently. Originally developed as an experimental method of exploring the possibilities of networked learning, MOOCs became the subject

of media and commercial interest following the large numbers attracted to Sebastian Thrun's Artificial Intelligence MOOC. Since then the major commercial player to emerge is Coursera, with two rounds of venture capital funding and over 4 million learners registered on its 400 courses (Coursera 2013a).

The idea behind MOOCs is simple: make online courses open to anyone and remove the costly human support factor. Whether this model is financially sustainable is still open to question as it is in the early stages. But there has been no shortage of media attention and discussion, with some observers arguing that MOOCs are the internet's effect on higher education.

MOOCs are just one aspect of how openness is influencing the teaching function of higher education, however. Before MOOCs there was (and still is) the successful Open Educational Resources (OER) movement. It began in 2001 when the Hewlett foundation funded MIT to start the OpenCourseWare site, which released lecture material freely. Since then, the OER movement has spread globally. There are now major initiatives in all continents, and OER has formed part of the central strategy for many education programmes, including UNESCO, the Shuttleworth Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett foundation and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The distinction between MOOCs and OERs may be blurring somewhat – for example, if a set of OER resources are packaged into a course structure, does that make them a MOOC? Similarly, if a MOOC is made available after the course has finished, is it then an OER? Related to OERs is the move to establish open textbooks, with the cost of textbooks particularly in the US becoming a prohibitive factor in higher education participation. Open textbooks seek to replace these publisher-owned versions of standard, introductory texts with free, open online versions that have been created by groups

or single authors. This is having significant impact; for example, the open textbook initiative OpenStax aims to provide free online and low-cost print textbooks to 10 million students, and currently has over 200 colleges signed up, with projected savings to students of US\$90 million over the next five years (OpenStax 2013).

Research

Open access publishing has been growing steadily in acceptance as not only a valid, but rather the best model of disseminating research publications. Instead of academics publishing in proprietary journals, access to which is then purchased by libraries or on article basis by individuals, open access makes publications freely accessible to all. There are different models for achieving this: the so-called Green route, whereby the author places the article on their own site or the institutions repository; the Gold route, where the publisher charges a fee to make the article openly available; and the Platinum route, where the journal operates for free.

Open access publishing is perhaps the most recognisable aspect of how scholarly activity is adapting to the opportunities afforded by digital and networked technology. Other practices form what is termed open scholarship and include sharing individual resources such as presentations, podcasts and bibliographies; social media engagement through blogs, twitter and other routes; and generally more open practices, such as pre-publishing book chapters, open reviews and open research methods. The latter can include the use of approaches such as crowdsourcing and social media analysis, which rely on openness to succeed. Open scholarship is also providing new avenues for public engagement as academics create online identities that previously would have necessitated a broadcast intermediary to establish.

One aspect of open scholarship is that of open data, making the data from research projects publicly available (where it is not sensitive). As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the G8 have signed an agreement that this should be the default position on governmental data, and many research funders impose similar constraints. For many subjects, such as climate change, this allows for larger data sets to be created and meta-studies to be conducted, improving the overall quality of the analysis. In other subjects too it provides the possibility of comparisons, analysis and interpretations that are unpredictable and may be outside of the original domain.

Open Policy

Much of the work around open licensing, particularly that of Creative Commons, has been initiated in or influenced by higher education. Licensing is, in the eyes of many, one of the true tests of openness, as the ability to take and reuse an artefact is what differentiates open from merely free. Licences are the main route through which broader policy based initiatives can be realised. By adopting a position on licences, governments, charities, research funders, publishers and technology companies create a context whereby openness follows. The promotion of openness then as an approach, both practical and ethical, has been a growing strand of the open movement based in higher education.

This brief overview should attest that openness lies at the heart of much of the change in higher education, and that there is a significant amount of research and activity in this area. One aim of this book is to highlight and even celebrate this activity. It is an exciting time to be involved in higher education; there are opportunities for changing practice in nearly all aspects, and openness

is the key to many of these. Succeeding in this, however, requires firstly engaging with the changes, and secondly taking ownership of the changes and not allowing them to be dictated by external forces, either through vacillation or a short-term desire to simplify matters. Below we shall consider analogy with the green movement, which demonstrates that the value of openness will not be lost on others.

Why Openness Matters

In the preceding sections I hope I have started to convince you that openness has been largely victorious as an approach. By victorious I do not necessarily mean that all academics and students have it at the forefront of their minds, but one aspect of open education or another touches upon the practice of both learners and academics, be it students using open resources to supplement their learning, or academics publishing open access journals. There is undoubtedly still a lot more that open education needs to do before it affects all aspects of practice, but the current period marks the moment when open education stopped being a peripheral, specialist interest and began to occupy a place in the mainstream of academic practice. If you are still unconvinced, then this will be explored further in chapters 3 to 7. I now want to set out an argument regarding its significance and why you should care about the arguments around openness. There are two main reasons that openness in education matters: opportunities and function.

Under ‘opportunities’ there are many sub-categories that can be listed, but I will focus on just one example here, as other opportunities are explored throughout the book. One significant opportunity that openness affords is in the area of pedagogy. In *The Digital Scholar* (Weller 2011) I set out how digital resources

and the internet are causing a shift from a pedagogy of scarcity to one of abundance. Many of our existing teaching models (the lecture is a good example) are based around the starting assumption of access to knowledge being scarce (hence we gather lots of people in a room to hear an expert speak). Abundant online content changes this assumption. A pedagogy of abundance focuses on content, however, which is an important, but not sole element in the overall approach. Perhaps it is better to talk of a pedagogy of openness. Open pedagogy makes use of open content, such as open educational resources, videos, podcasts, etc., but also places an emphasis on the network and the learner's connections within this. In analysing the pedagogy of MOOCs (although open pedagogy is not confined to MOOCs), Paul Stacey (2013) makes the following recommendations:

- Be as open as possible. Go beyond open enrolments and use open pedagogies that leverage the entire web, not just the specific content in the MOOC platform. As part of your open pedagogy strategy use OER and openly license your resources using Creative Commons licenses in a way that allows reuse, revision, remix, and redistribution. Make your MOOC platform open source software. Publish the learning analytics data you collect as open data using a CC0 license.
- Use tried and proven modern online learning pedagogies, not campus classroom based didactic learning pedagogies which we know are ill-suited to online learning.
- Use peer-to-peer pedagogies over self-study. We know this improves learning outcomes. The cost of enabling a network of peers is the same as that of networking content – essentially zero.

- Use social learning, including blogs, chat, discussion forums, wikis, and group assignments.
- Leverage massive participation – have all students contribute something that adds to or improves the course overall.

Examples of open pedagogy would include Jim Groom's DS106, an open course which encourages learners to create daily artefacts, suggest assignments, establish their own space online and be part of a community that extends beyond the course both geographically and temporally. Dave Cormier starts his educational technology course every year by asking students to create a contract stating 'that each of you decide how much work you would like to do for what grade. Individual assignments are given a "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" assessment upon completion' (Cormier 2013). Courses such as Octel (<http://octel.alt.ac.uk>) have learners create their own blogs, and this is used for all their solutions. The course then automatically aggregates all of these contributions into one central blog. All of this is conducted in the open.

This is not to suggest that any of these examples should be the default or adopted by others. They are suited to particular contexts and topics. The point is a more general one, in that openness is a philosophical cornerstone in these courses. It is present in the technology adopted, in the resources referenced, in the activities students undertake and in the teaching approaches taken. All of this is made possible by openness in several other areas: resources need to be made openly available, technology needs to be free to use, students need to be prepared to work in the open and universities need to accept these new models of operating. I would suggest that we are only just at the beginning of exploring models of teaching and learning that have this open mindset. It is

notable that many of these early experimenters in open pedagogy are people associated with the open education movement. One could argue that they have been infected by the open mindset and seek to explore its possibilities whenever they can.

It is this opportunity to explore that is important for higher education if it is to innovate and make best use of the possibilities that openness offers. A prerequisite for this is engagement with open education, whether it is in terms of technology, resources or pedagogy. One of the dangers of outsourcing openness, for example, by relying on third-party vendors to provide MOOC platforms or relying on publishers to provide open content, is that the scope for experimentation becomes limited. The pre-packaged solution becomes not just the accepted method, but the *only* method which is recognised.

We are already seeing some of this; for example, Georgia Tech announced a collaboration with MOOC company Udacity to offer an online Master's degree. As Christopher Newfield (2103) notes in an analysis of the contract, Udacity has an exclusive relationship, so Georgia Tech cannot offer its own content elsewhere. Udacity can, however, offer that content to other learners outside of the program. Newfield argues that, as they seek to recoup costs, 'the big savings, ironically, come by squeezing innovation – payments to course creators flatten out – and by leveraging overhead'.

Even if we accept a less cynical view of this arrangement, the model of companies such as Udacity, Coursera and Pearson is to create a global brand by becoming one of only a handful of providers. Diversity in the market is not in their interest, and so the model of how to create MOOCs or deliver online resources becomes restricted, whether by contractual arrangements or simply by the presence of pre-packaged solutions which negate further exploration.

This same message regarding the possibility for experimentation can be repeated for nearly all other university functions: research, public engagement or the creation of resources. In each area the possibilities of combining open elements and making use of the digital networked environment allow for new opportunities, but in order to be fully realised these require active engagement and innovation by higher education institutions and academics, rather than external provision.

This brings us onto the second reason why openness matters, namely the function, or role, of the university. Universities can be seen as a bundle of different functions: research, teaching, public engagement, policy guidance and incubators for ideas and businesses. In times of financial downturn, every aspect of society is examined for its contribution versus its cost, and the higher education sector is no exception. Increasingly, the narrative is one of a straightforward investment transaction – students pay a certain fee, and in return they receive an education that will allow them to earn more money later in life (e.g. Buchanan 2013).

While this is certainly a defensible and logical perspective for many to take, it ignores or downplays other contributions. Open approaches to the dissemination of research, sharing of teaching resources and online access to conferences and seminars helps to reinforce the broader role of the university. There is nothing particularly new in this; my own institution, The Open University (OU), is well regarded in the UK even by those who have never studied there, largely as a result of their collaboration with the BBC in making educational programmes. These can be seen as early forms of open educational resources. However, the OU's relationship with the national broadcaster puts it in a privileged position. Open approaches allow all institutions to adopt some of this approach, often at relatively low cost. For example, the

University of Glamorgan (now University of South Wales) set up its own iTunesU site in 2010 at relatively low cost and generated over 1 million downloads in the first 18 months (Richards 2010).

Increasingly, then, we can see that openness helps shape the identity not just of a particular university, but of higher education in general and its relationship to society.

I will end with one small example, which pulls together many of the strands of openness. Katy Jordan is a PhD student at the OU focusing on academic networks on sites such as Academia.edu. She has studied a number of MOOCs on her own initiative to supplement the formal research training offered at the University. One of these was an infographics MOOC offered by the University of Texas. For her final visualisation project on this open course she decided to plot MOOC completion rates on an interactive graph, and blogged her results (Jordan 2013). This was picked up by a prominent blogger, who wrote about it being the first real attempt to collect and compile completion data for MOOCs (Hill 2013), and he also tweeted it.

MOOC completion rates are a subject of much interest, and so Katy's post went viral, and became the de-facto piece to link to on completion rates, which almost every MOOC piece references. It led to further funding through the MOOC Research Initiative and publications. All on the back of a blog post.

This small example illustrates how openness in different forms spreads out and has unexpected impact. The course needed to be open for Katy to take it; she was at liberty to share her results and did so as part of her general, open practice. The infographic and blog relies on open software and draws on openly available data that people have shared about MOOC completions, and the format of her work means others can interrogate that data and suggest new data points. The open network then spreads

the message because it is open access and can be linked to and read by all.

It's hard to predict or trigger these events, but a closed approach anywhere along the chain would have prevented it. It is in the replication of small examples like this across higher education that the real value of openness lies.

Is It a Battle?

Having hopefully gone some way to convincing you of the victory of openness and why the future direction of openness is significant, I now want to set out why I have used the term 'battle' and view it is a time of conflict. I know some readers will be uncomfortable with such militaristic language, but its use is deliberate in highlighting some of the significant factors about openness.

Firstly, there is a real conflict at the heart of the direction openness takes. We'll explore this more throughout this book, but for many of the proponents of openness its key attribute is about freedom – for individuals to access content, to reuse it in ways they see fit, to develop new methods of working and to take advantage of the opportunities the digital, networked world offers. The more commercial interpretation of openness may see it as an initial tactic to gain users on a proprietary platform, or as a means of accessing government funding. Some see the new providers as entirely usurping existing providers in higher education, such as when Sebastian Thrun predicts there will be only ten global providers of education in the future (and he hopes his company, Udacity, is one of them) (*The Economist* 2012)

This is not a polite debate about definitions then; there will be very real consequences for education and society in general about who wins in the battle for openness. This highlights the second

factor in choosing the term, namely that, like in real battles, things of value are being fought over. The average cumulative expenditure per student in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries for tertiary studies is US\$57,774 (OECD 2013), and the global education market has been estimated to be worth US\$5–6 trillion (Shapiro 2013). In academic publishing Reed Elsevier reported revenue of over £6 billion in 2012, of which over 2 billion was for the Science, Technical and Medical publishing field (Reed Elsevier 2012) while Springer reported sales of €875 million in 2011 (Springer 2011). These are big markets, and the demand for education is not going to disappear, so they represent highly desirable ones in times of global recession.

My third, and final, justification for using the term ‘battle’, is that, as well as the very considerable spoils that may go to the victor, the phrase about the victors writing history is also pertinent. There is a battle for narrative taking place which circles around the issues of openness. An example of this is explored in Chapter 6, where we look at the recurrent ‘education is broken’ meme and the related Silicon Valley narrative for education. These both seek to place higher education as a simple content industry, akin to the music business, and therefore can provide a simple, technological solution to this supposedly broken system. These narratives are often accepted unchallenged and deliberately ignore higher education’s role in many of the changes that have occurred (positioning it as external forces fixing higher education) or simplifying the functions of higher education.

The term ‘battle’ then seems appropriate to convey these three themes of conflict, value and narrative. After the initial victory of openness, we are now entering the key stage in the longer-term battle around openness. And this is not simply about whether we use one piece of technology or another; openness is at the very

heart of higher education in the 21st century. In its most positive interpretation, it is the means by which higher education becomes more relevant to society by opening up its knowledge and access to its services. It provides the means by which higher education adapts to the changed context of the digital world. At its most pessimistic, openness is the route by which commerce fundamentally undermines the higher education system to the point where it is weakened beyond repair. I hope to make the case through this book that the battle for open can be viewed more significantly as a battle for the future of education.

Lessons from Elsewhere

We can begin to see why the celebrations regarding the victory of openness are muted by way of two brief analogies. The first is that of nearly all revolutions and their immediate aftermath. The French Revolution of 1789 saw an undeniable positive movement to overthrow injustices imposed by a monarchy. In the subsequent decade there were numerous struggles between factions, a dictatorship and the Reign of Terror, culminating in the rise of Napoleon. Although the long-term results of the revolution were positive, during the decade and more after the 1789 commencement, it must have felt very different for the average French citizen. During the rule of Robespierre and the Jacobins it may not have been clear whether it was in fact better under the old regime. One hears similar observations after more recent revolutions – for instance, Russians proclaiming that life was better under Stalin or East Germans that they preferred the communist regime (Bonstein 2009). A more recent example is the Arab Spring, which after two years has left many countries facing division, worsening economic performance and continued violent struggle.

Many of the participants in a post-revolutionary state would be unified by one thought: *this isn't what victory should feel like*. The interests of various groups can come into the uncertainty revolution creates, the old power structures do not disappear quietly, the pressures of everyday concerns lead to infighting amongst previous allies, and so on. It is messy, complex and all very human.

One interpretation of these national revolutions is that these post-revolutionary struggles are the inevitable growing pains of a democracy but the general direction is towards greater freedom. Viewed from an historical perspective they can seem entirely predictable given the sudden nature of change. And this also provides a second, more general lesson – it is after the initial victory, in these periods of change, that the real shape of the long-term goal is determined.

A second analogy is provided by the green movement. Once seen as peripheral and only of concern to hippies, the broad green message has moved into central society. Products are advertised as being green, recycling is widely practised, alternative energy sources are part of a national energy plan and all major political parties are urged to have green policies. The environmental impact of any major planning decision is now high on the agenda, even if it isn't always the priority. From the perspective of the 1950s, this looks like radical progress, a victory of the green message. And yet for many in the green movement, it doesn't feel like victory at all. The ongoing global struggle to put into place meaningful agreements on carbon emissions and the complex politics involved in getting agreement on global, long-term interests from local, short-term politicians have made the green message a victim of its own success. It has penetrated so successfully into the mainstream that it is now a marketable quality. This is necessary to have an impact at the individual level, for example in consideration of purchasing

choices regarding cars, light-bulbs, food, clothing, travel, etc. But it has also been co-opted by companies who see it as a means of marketing a product. For example, many green activists in the 1970s would not have predicted that nuclear power would find renewed interest by promoting its green (carbon dioxide free) credentials. Regardless of what you feel about nuclear power, we can probably assume that raising its profile was not high on the list of hoped-for outcomes for many green activists.

In 2010, assets in the US where environmental performance was a major component were valued at US\$30.7 trillion, compared with US\$639 billion in 1995 (Delmas & Burbano 2011). Being green is definitely part of big business. This leads to companies labelling products as green on a rather spurious basis. Like 'fat-free' or 'diet' in food labelling, 'eco-friendly', 'natural' or 'green' are labels that often hide other sins or are dubious in their claim. This is termed greenwashing, for example, the Airbus A380 reportedly has 17% less carbon emissions than a Boeing 747, which is to be welcomed, but advertises promoting it as an environmentally friendly option would seem to be stretching the definition somewhat. Similarly BP's series of 'green' adverts aimed at promoting a 'beyond petroleum' message provide a good example of how the green message can be adopted by companies who would seem to be fundamentally at odds with it.

Environmental marketing agency Terra Choice, identified '7 sins of greenwashing' (Terra Choice 2010), analogies of which we will see in the open world, so it's worth listing them here:

- 1) Sin of the Hidden Trade-off – whereby an unreasonably narrow set of attributes is used to claim greenness, without attention to other important environmental issues.

- 2) Sin of No Proof – when an environmental claim cannot be substantiated by easily accessible supporting information.
- 3) Sin of Vagueness – making poorly defined or broad claims so that their real meaning is likely to be misunderstood by the consumer.
- 4) Sin of Irrelevance – a claim that is truthful but is unimportant or unhelpful.
- 5) Sin of Lesser of Two Evils – making claims that may be true within the product category, but that risk distracting the consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole.
- 6) Sin of Fibbing – making wholly false claims.
- 7) Sin of Worshipping False Labels – when a product, through either words or images, gives the impression of third-party endorsement where no such endorsement actually exists.

In the IT world the similarities between greenwashing and claims to openness have led to the term ‘openwashing’ being used. Klint Finley explains (2011):

The old ‘open vs. proprietary’ debate is over and open won. As IT infrastructure moves to the cloud, openness is not just a priority for source code but for standards and APIs as well. Almost every vendor in the IT market now wants to position its products as ‘open.’ Vendors that don’t have an open source product instead emphasize having a product that uses ‘open standards’ or has an ‘open API.’

As companies adopt open credentials in education we are seeing the term applied in that sphere too, with similar cynicism (Wiley 2011a). Like ‘green,’ there are a series of positive connotations

associated with the term ‘open’ – after all, who would argue for being closed? The commercial co-option of green then provides us with a third lesson to be applied to the open movement: the definition of the term will be turned to commercial advantage. We will see this openwashing in later examples in the book, particularly with regards to MOOCs.

These two analogies provide us with three lessons then that will be seen repeatedly as different areas of open education are examined. My interpretation of what these analogies offer us is as follows:

- 1) Victory is more complex than first envisaged.
- 2) The future direction is shaped by the more prosaic struggles that come after initial victory.
- 3) Once a term gains mainstream acceptance it will be used for commercial advantage.

If we consider these with regards to open education, then it’s hard not to conclude that openness has prevailed. The victory may not be absolute, but the trend is in that direction – it seems unlikely that we will return to closed systems in academia anymore than we will return to Encyclopaedia Britannica salesmen knocking on doors. Whether it’s open access publishing, open data, MOOCs, OERs, open source or open scholarship, the openness message has been accepted as a valid approach (which is not to say it should be the only approach).

Time to rejoice, one might think, but, of course, as the first lesson shows us, it’s never that simple. When it was simply open vs. closed there was a clear distinction: Openness was good, closed was bad. As the victory bells sound, though, it doesn’t take much examination to reveal that it has become a more complex picture. This is the nature of victory.

So it is with openness – we shouldn't view this as an opportunity missed or romanticise some brief period when there was a brief openness Camelot, now despoiled. The general direction is positive, but with this comes increased complexity. The second lesson highlights this: we replace open vs. closed with a set of more complex, nuanced debates, which may seem rather specialised. For example:

- different approaches to MOOC pedagogy, so called xMOOCs vs. cMOOCs (we will address these in chapter 5)
- different licences, such as the more open Creative Commons CC-BY licence vs. the CC-NC one which restricts commercial use
- different routes to open access, the Gold vs. Green debate
- different technology options, for example centralised MOOC platforms vs. a distributed mix of third-party services

It is from these smaller debates that the larger picture is formed, and it is the construction of this larger picture that the remainder of this book will seek to perform.

Conclusions

The nature of the victory of openness and subsequent struggle can be illustrated with an example where the battle around openness is perhaps most advanced, namely, open access publishing. This is explored in more detail in Chapter 3, but a shortened version here can be used to illustrate the broader argument of this chapter.

The conventional model of academic publishing has usually seen academics providing, reviewing and often editing papers for free, which are published by commercial publishers and access to

which is sold to libraries in bundles. Much of the funding for the research that informs these articles and the time spent on producing them comes from public funds, so over the last decade there has been a demand to make them publicly accessible. This has now become the mandate for many research funders, and many governments have adopted open access policies at a national level which stipulate that the findings of publicly funded research are made publicly available. This has extended to data from research projects as well as publications. Open access publishing is now the norm for many academics, and not just those who might be deemed early adopters; a survey by Wiley of its authors found that 59% had published in open access journals (Warne, 2013).

In the UK the 2012 Finch report (Finch Group 2012) recommended that ‘a clear policy direction should be set towards support for publication in open access or hybrid journals, funded by APCs, as the main vehicle for the publication of research, especially when it is publicly funded’. APCs are Article Process Charges; this is often termed the Gold route to open access, whereby authors (or more often the research funders) pay the publishers for an article to be made open access. This is in contrast with the Green route, where it is self-archived, or the Platinum route, which are journals where there is no APC charge.

In this we can see the initial triumph of openness. Open access has moved from the periphery to the mainstream and become the recommended route for publishing research articles. But at the same time, the conflicts around implementation are also evident, as is the thwarting of the original open ambitions.

The Finch report has been criticised for seeking to protect the interests of commercial publishers, while not encouraging alternative methods such as Green or Platinum open access (Harnad 2012). In addition, the pay-to-publish model has seen the rise

of a number of dubious open access journals, which seek to use openwashing as a means to make profit while ignoring the quality of articles. Bohannon (2013) reports on a fake article that was accepted by 157 open access journals. This would indicate that the pay-to-publish model creates a different stress on the filter to publish.

The tensions in the open access publishing world are representative of those in all aspects of openness in education: Incumbents have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo; there are considerable sums of money involved; the open approach allows new entrants to the market; the open label becomes a marketing tool; and there are tensions in maintaining the best aspects of existing practice as we transition to new ones. Driving it all is a conviction that the open model is the best approach, both in terms of access and innovation. The Public Library of Science (PLOS), for instance, has not only interpreted open access to mean free access to content, but also used the open approach to rethink the process of peer review and the type of articles they publish, such as the PLOS Currents, which provide rapid peer-review around focused topics (<http://currents.plos.org/>)

About This Book

This book is aimed primarily at those working in higher education who have an interest in open education. It does not assume specialist knowledge of open education or educational technology. The aim of the book is to set out the manner in which openness has been successful as an approach, but more significantly to reveal the tensions in each area. By the end of the book I hope to have convinced you that the future direction of openness is relevant to all those in higher education.

Chapter 2 explores the nature of openness in education in more detail and, in particular, the significant influences that have shaped it. The next five chapters then examine the higher education response to openness in four key areas, namely open access publishing, open educational resources, MOOCs and open scholarship. As the battle for narrative is best exemplified by MOOCs, Chapter 6 takes a brief detour to consider this. In each of these chapters the aims of the book will be examined further. Firstly, the story of success of openness in that area will be set out. This book is as much a celebration of the open education movement as it is a critique of the current tensions. Then the key areas of tension, the battlegrounds, are discussed. Lastly, future directions proposed. In this manner I hope to reiterate the themes of the victory of openness, its significance and the tensions that have been highlighted in this chapter. Chapter 8 takes a more critical appraisal of the issues around openness, and Chapter 9 proposes resilience as an alternative narrative for considering change in higher education. Finally, in Chapter 10, some means of framing the future direction of open education are proposed.