

HEA/JISC Open Educational Resources case study: OER and internationalisation

A piece of the OER engagement jigsaw: a case study of publishing open research and teaching content on iTunesU

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Case study: iTunes and You project, Higher Education Academy, 2013

Outline

This case study describes a project called 'iTunes and You,' in which we have taken existing open educational materials published for research and teaching by humanities staff at the University of Southampton, and worked with the university marketing department to repackage them as learning modules in the form of iTunesU course packages. This is a new way of presenting content through the university's iTunesU site and offers a model of engagement for academics to showcase and package their research and teaching work in appealing ways to a broad, global audience.

iTunesU is often seen as exclusively for high-quality video or audio recordings and it can be an intimidating place for researchers and teachers to consider when wishing to publish their work openly. The University of Southampton's iTunesU site is not widely used by staff and there has been a lack of guidance and information on how the site can be accessed, what kinds of materials can be published, or why staff may wish to publish their work via this route. The iTunes and You project has clarified and demystified the process for staff and provided clear guidance material to assist staff in understanding how to publish their work in this way. In addition, the project has created an exemplar model of how nuggets of related research and teaching materials can be packaged as mini, bite-sized modules of learning and published with coherence through the iTunesU site (and other OER-sharing platforms).

A key aspect of the project has been to demonstrate that materials created for one particular discipline and educational context (Spanish language, migration studies) has wide applicability across the humanities and to a range of audiences in different parts of the world. OERs used for this project have been published by Southampton as part of the JISC-funded OpenLIVES project. The material consists of oral testimonies collected from Spanish migrants, and includes images, learning objects, and various teaching materials. Materials are in Spanish and English.

In this case study, we describe the activities and outputs of the project and outline our principal lessons learnt in the use of iTunes for open practice and presenting OERs.

1 Case study

iTunesU was established in 2007 as part of the Apple iTunes digital content store. It offers universities, colleges and other educational institutions the opportunity to present video and audio content online for a global community to download for free, or for a charge. When a new institutional iTunesU site is created, Apple mandates that a minimum amount of content should be displayed and that it should be of high quality (have high production values). As a result of this, iTunesU has become a place of showcase and promotion, rather than of open content-sharing, as such, and some institutions record a huge impact through sharing content on the site (e.g. by 2011, the OU had reported 40 million downloads of their iTunes content – *BBC website* http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-15150319).

A recent innovation on the iTunes site has been the ability to share other kinds of content, aside from audio and video recordings (i.e. text handouts and other files). This allows for the possibility for various types of supporting content to be published alongside audio or visual learning materials, to assist in forming coherent courses around particular topics. A large number of institutions are publishing courses of materials in this way, and iTunesU remains a website which primarily supports the sharing of audio and video files. Such files can be played directly through the site and do not need to be downloaded. The material on the site is designed to promote and showcase the institutions that have created it, and it was in this light that the University of Southampton created its own iTunesU presence in 2011.



Figure 1: Screenshot of iTunesU home page featuring new course ©Apple Inc

At the University of Southampton, much of the work in the area of OERs had been with institutional or community repositories. The School of Electronics and Computer Science created the open, institutional EdShare repository for teaching and learning materials

(<u>http://www.edshare.soton.ac.uk/</u>) and the same software is behind several community sites, including the HumBox (<u>www.humbox.ac.uk</u>), the LanguageBox (<u>www.languagebox.ac.uk</u>), the SwapBox (<u>www.swapbox.ac.uk</u>) and LORO (<u>www.loro.open.ac.uk</u>). The 'iTunes and You' project team had been closely involved with the development of many of these sites and were keenly aware that many Southampton staff had to yet engage with OERs despite a great deal of local activity by enthusiastic individuals.

This situation is a familiar one, as noted in a report commissioned by the JISC into the impact and use of OERs, which indicated that engagement with OERs was not widespread but that enthusiastic OER-evangelists were working in a large number of UK institutions. The same report indicated that academics were engaging with OERs at different levels and in different ways, from simple browsing and re-use, to expert OER-creators and publishers, and that such varied means of engagement should be supported by senior managers to ensure sustainability (Masterman and Wild, 2011).

The project team sought to work with iTunes as part of Southampton's toolkit of engagement with OER, thus attempting to offer staff greater information, support and encouragement when they are seeking to find new ways to engage with open practice, or considering it for the first time.

2 Aims and objectives

The aims of the project were to promote OERs and open practice through iTunesU to an international audience of researchers, students and members of the public, as well as a local university (Southampton-based) audience. We aimed to facilitate and encourage engagement with iTunesU and offer simple models for users to emulate.

Our objectives were:

• To repackage a range of existing OERs (research data and teaching material) into iTunes course modules

- To work with the university marketing department to understand better how academics can engage with iTunesU
- To produce a simple, pedagogical guide as an OER for other academics to use in understanding how to package research data and teaching resources for iTunesU
- To initiate a process within Southampton, which can be an exemplar for other academics to engage with open practice and open showcasing of both research and teaching work via iTunes
- To initiate monitoring of impact of Southampton OERs in the global community

3 Methodology

The first part of the project involved establishing a benchmark for current iTunesU activity within the University of Southampton. This involved conducting a detailed review of the existing Southampton iTunesU site, a review of other university sites for comparison (both within and outside the UK), and a general review of how material could be (and is) presented through iTunes. The project team made early contact with the university's marketing team to establish existing processes for accessing iTunes, getting materials put onto the site and to ascertain the nature of gatekeeping criteria for resources. This involved further meetings with key individuals responsible for the site. The university's iTunesU site is managed by the marketing and communications team, which indicates how the university primarily sees iTunes activity: as promotional.

Once initial contacts had been made with the individuals who control the university's iTunes site, the project team began to work through the OpenLIVES OER materials to select and package appropriate resources for this project. This involved a broad review of all existing materials and then the creation of a standard model which would give our iTunes packages coherence. In fact, we developed two models: one for research materials and one for research-based educational content. Each model contained the same basic structure:

- i) Research materials: collection entitled 'Incredible People, Incredible Lives' and consists of an audio extract, transcript, synopsis, ethnographic notes, video, pedagogical handout
- ii) Research-based educational content: collection on the topic of research skills consisting of a video, a related audio extract, synopsis, transcript, pedagogical handout

The decision to arrange our materials into two collections was also influenced by the way in which resources are displayed on the university's iTunesU site. Material on the site has been organized into broad groupings which contain multiple files. We followed this structure in order to maintain overall consistency on the site, although it was not how we had originally intended to display the materials. We had hoped to create more modules with fewer files, arranged around discrete topics, as this would enhance 'shareability' of the resources. In the event, this has not been possible, and each topic is subsumed within a broader heading e.g. 'research skills for oral history' including topics 'interviewing anonymous people,' 'interviewing historically important people' etc. The need to display materials in this way also altered how we perceived the guidance handout accompanying the materials; in that we realized it would need to contain a larger amount of contextual information than anticipated (iTunes has limited capacity for large amounts of metadata). We also had to carefully consider file names, as this would be the primary way to communicate the content of files to users.

Once we had decided on these models, we selected material to be packaged in this way. We also made contact with the academics within Modern Languages who had created the materials to explain our ideas and ask their advice on how resources might be put together. We also contacted the university library, which houses an archive of related Spanish émigré materials, for permission to

use one of their images to illustrate our collection. This was a useful link to make, as it broadened awareness of our project aims across the institution.

Once the project team had created two exemplar modules, we met with the university marketing team again to trial the materials in iTunes and talk through quality, branding and any technical issues. The marketing team was keen for us to use university branding on all iTunesU files, despite a general lack of consistency in this area to date. When these issues were resolved and materials had been edited accordingly, all of the material was deposited on iTunes.

Depositing materials on Southampton's iTunesU site involves uploading them to a local instance of the teaching and learning repository EdShare. Materials are then linked to iTunesU. There is approximately 24 hours delay in materials appearing on iTunes once they have been approved. Moderation is currently undertaken by staff within the marketing team. There was a small delay in depositing our materials, as the local version of EdShare had been custom designed to only allow audio and video files to be deposited (at the time of the creation of the university's iTunes site, it was anticipated that only such files would be deposited). Our modules featured pdf files too, and so local technicians were required to adjust the EdShare site (which they did very quickly).

4 Promotion and evaluation of the project

Contacts were fostered with key stakeholders within the university at an early stage in order to lay foundations for future dissemination of project outputs. Stakeholders included senior staff in the Faculty of Humanities, senior staff in the central technology unit the 'Centre for Innovation in Technology and Education'(CITE), the local and central marketing team, and the library. However, project delays mean that most of the promotion and evaluation of the model and materials will take place beyond the life of the project and as part of the university's wider engagement with open access and OERs. The library, marketing and CITE teams will assist in dissemination. Findings will feed into the case study produced for this project and early stakeholder contact is likely to result in a high impact for project outputs and findings later in the year (see below).

At the outset of the project, we had hoped to be able to monitor download and other access statistics for our materials as soon as they were available on iTunes. However, the university's relationship with Apple had lapsed, and so it became necessary to reestablish this in order to receive such data. This reconnection has not happened by the final point of the project, but will take place in due course.

Completion of the project, in general, was severely delayed due to internal difficulties associated with management of the iTunes site: key staff had left the university and, due to a recruitment freeze, had not been replaced. Although, this situation is being remedied, it meant that the project team faced a much larger task than expected and essentially had to reactivate interest, knowledge and activity around the iTunesU site from scratch, including discovery of administrator rights and permissions. The process was frustratingly slow, but has ultimately been rewarding, interesting and beneficial for the university's engagement with iTunesU and open practice. Our project has put iTunesU back 'on the radar' and a range of technical and management issues have been worked on and resolved through the agency of the project. Active management of the site will now become a core aspect of the new staff member's role. Our work on the project will offer this new staff member support and guidance in promoting and helping staff to use the site.

5 Outputs of the project:

• **2 iTunesU course collections:** 'Incredible people, incredible stories' and 'Research skills for oral history'. Each collection comprises 4 discrete topics around a central theme, and each topic features at least 6 files, with a total of approximately 60 files. Each 'bite-sized' module consists of an audio recording, video extract (in some cases), transcript, synopsis, researcher

notes, and educational guidance notes. Each module illustrates how research material can be used in teaching and gives useful open educational materials to researchers and teachers.

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Figure 2: (Screenshot) Part of collection 1 'Incredible People, incredible stories' ©Apple Inc.

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Figure 3: (screenshot) Part of collection 2 'Research skills for oral history' ©Apple Inc.

- Guidance for local staff on how and why to engage with their institutional iTunesU site. This includes practical, technical advice alongside information on how to engage with open practice using the iTunes model (see Appendix 1).
- A generic model for all academic staff on how to package discrete research and teaching materials together in bite-sized forms for learning via iTunes.
- Project blog <u>http://itunesandyou.wordpress.com</u> and website <u>https://www.llas.ac.uk/projects/6680</u>

6 Learning from OER

- Sustained staff engagement with OERs and open access requires on-going institutional support. The university's iTunesU site was rarely looked at by staff, and knowledge of how and why to engage with it had been forgotten, and impact data was no longer being collected. This demonstrates the importance of senior-level support to promote engagement with open practice by staff, and the establishment and maintenance of institutional guidance and support mechanisms to enable staff to engage effectively. There was goodwill towards the site amongst all stakeholders that we approached but a lack of internal promotion amongst staff, and a lack of system maintenance to allow engagement to happen.
- Engagement with iTunesU can be effective if part of a 'holistic approach' to publishing open content. Our analysis of iTunesU content and site management revealed that it has advantages and limitations as a site for publishing open content. Its advantages include its reach to an international audience, its high production values (as a website), its value as a promotional site, and its reputation and requirement for high quality materials. It has limitations as a site for publishing open content: there is limited facility for the addition and display of metadata on each file; iTunesU is hidden from principal search engines; use of the site is dependent on installation of Apple iTunes (this is possible at the University of Southampton only on request from our central IT services); non-audio visual resources cannot be previewed online but must be downloaded to your iTunes library; management of the site requires staff dedicated to this purpose; there are perceptions amongst staff that iTunes is for audio and video material only, and that the site is only for hosting material of exceptionally high quality (which puts-off potential depositors). In addition, Apple reserves the right to change the site and its functionality with little or no notice. This mix of advantages and limitations means that iTunesU is perhaps best used as part of a 'holistic' OER approach, which would include promotion and use of other sharing sites, such as public social networking sites like YouTube and Flickr, as well as academic repositories like Jorum or HumBox. The high quality and promotional aspects of iTunes are important ways of raising awareness internationally about UK HE and UK HE resources and staff, and therefore should be part of any 'open access toolkit' in an institution.
- Publishing on iTunesU offers a more supported way of engaging with open practice because users can make use of established university systems to help them navigate their way through issues around publishing open content. For example, most institutions have lecture-recording software widely available (in Southampton's case there is Panopto) which facilitates the easy capture of content suitable for publication on iTunes. Material intended to go on to an iTunesU site is moderated for quality and copyright issues by another university staff member before being shared on the site, which offers reassurance to depositors fearful of infringing copyright, or doubtful over the value of the material (fears which are often noted as barriers to sharing). Within Southampton, depositors upload items that they wish to put forward for iTunes into a bespoke version of the local teaching and learning repository 'EdShare'. This gives depositors control over which items are published and the metadata which is connected to them. They are linked to iTunesU after moderator intervention.

- iTunesU offers the potential for sharing a greater range of resources, in more interesting ways, than is expected. The site is best known and used for publishing video and audio files; however, it is possible to publish other types of files and present materials in topic-based, coherent ways for learners. This needs to be publicised to possible contributors of educational iTunes materials and supported by other university staff. We suggest that giving marketing and communications, or technical support staff, responsibility as the final gatekeepers on quality and content issues is inadequate, and that institutions should include pedagogical input and advice to processes of engagement with iTunesU. This may offer more reassurance to academic staff to use the site to deposit their own work.
- **iTunesU would benefit from more readily accessible web statistics.** The key argument in promoting use of iTunes to staff and senior management is that it has impact demonstrable by web statistics. Our project has been working hard to obtain download and web data from Apple, but to date, has been unable to do so, and so we have been unable to make that argument. If Apple were to create an 'administrator interface' which gave access to download statistics, this would improve its take-up and impact with potential users. The current system is that a monthly email with download stats is sent to the university's Apple contact, and interim data is available on request (a slow process and unclear whether anything more than download data is available). This does not compare favourably with other sharing sites, such as YouTube, who provide instant web data, or Google Analytics, which offers the opportunity for detailed analysis of web traffic.
- **Cross-institutional projects require time and enthusiasm to produce results.** As noted above, this project suffered severe delays due to the need to work with colleagues cross-institution. Although, the delays have been frustrating, it has been satisfying and rewarding to make new contacts and work collaboratively with new and different groups. These contacts will be lasting and impactful, and they required time, enthusiasm and persistence to foster. Promotion of the project has also benefited from talking to a wide range of stakeholders across the university.

7 Impact of the project

7.1 Impact on the institution

- Reactivation of the university's iTunesU site. The project has kick-started interest in the site to life again. The simple fact of the project's existence has forced the site to be reviewed in terms of allocating management responsibilities; provision of guidance and support for users; simplification of processes for potential users, and reestablishment of links with Apple. This reactivation includes a raised awareness amongst key stakeholders of how and why the site may be useful, and clarification of processes for depositing resources in the site. Guidance materials have been produced which will demystify the processes for staff in installing iTunes, using the site, and getting their work deposited there. It is intended that this will foster use of the site on an institution-wide level. This awareness campaign is ongoing.
- **Raised awareness about the place iTunes holds in the open access movement.** The project has generated interest in iTunesU from individuals who are usually involved in community-

or institutionally-based repositories of open content. This is the beginning of a wider campaign of awareness about how iTunes fits with use of other open content sites.

• **Promotion of university research and teaching to a global audience.** The publication of coherent packages of research and teaching material serves to promote the work of the university and advertise the activities which researchers and students engage in when studying here. The university has not engaged with this kind of promotion before (marketing of educational content) and the project's outcomes are being watched by the central marketing team with interest.

7.2 Impact on wider UK HE and international community

- Publication of useful educational content modules for the study of a range of subjects. Materials published are of relevance to a range of subjects including Spanish language, migration, politics, economics and social sciences. There are also general materials on research skills for oral history. Resources are in a mix of Spanish and English. Materials can be used for general interest and learning, and in the classroom for teaching. All are licensed with Creative Commons licenses which allow for adaptation.
- Raised awareness of the research and teaching work of the University of Southampton. By making content freely available through iTunes, the university is showcasing the work that goes on in its classrooms and providing content to a wider public. This demonstrates that another leading Russell Group university is engaging with open practice through the iTunes platform.

7.3 Impact on academics

• Promotion of the teaching and research work of humanities academics at Southampton. The academics involved in producing content had not considered sharing their work on iTunes before (they had assumed that only video materials were appropriate and that their work was of insufficient quality), and so the project has been exciting for them. They are keen to continue sharing their work openly and to observe the impact that this has. One staff member who features in our iTunesU content has proudly linked the content to his professional profiles and will use the link to contribute to demonstration of impact.

7.4 Future impact

Inform and influence university strategy towards open practice. This project was timely, as in December 2012, the Vice-Chancellor of the university announced a desire that Southampton should embrace open practice as an institution. This was followed by the announcement that Southampton would be part of FutureLearn (*BBC website* http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-20697392), a UK university collaboration led by the Open University, to design and run a series of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). As a result of these announcements, the university has been animated with discussions about open practice, OERs and open data. Staff are keen to get involved with the new initiative and to learn more about OERs and issues around open practice. The knowledge and experience we have gained during this project will feed directly into these discussions, and the project team have already offered a workshop on open practice and iTunesU as part of the CITE institution-wide seminar series. It is intended that this will be the first of several such events.

The team will also seek further internal funding to promote and extend project work within Southampton.

- Impact on new global audiences. The promotion and evaluation of the project outputs will continue into the future, and we intend to increase the amount of resources published by humanities on iTunes. We will monitor web statistics from Apple and use this to leverage more contributions from Southampton staff. We will also make use of staff who have published work on the site to act as iTunesU champions.
- Sustained, improved, cross-institutional working. The project has been important in establishing contacts between key stakeholders across the university and raising awareness of the use of iTunesU as an avenue for publishing open content. The project team actively plans to build on these contacts to ensure that a coherent policy towards open practice is promoted within Southampton.

8 Conclusions

This case study outlines the experiences of a team attempting to enrich the open educational practice at one particular UK HE institution by encouraging the use of an existing iTunesU site to publish OERs. The project team met with unanticipated difficulties in achieving project aims but the knowledge gained from working through these issues has been greater as a result, and the impact of the project both locally and internationally will be felt in the months after the project officially closes.

Use of iTunesU has advantages and disadvantages for the sharing of open content; however, it is an important tool for publishing a range of different OERs and promoting the excellence of UK HE internationally. Effective use of the site requires active institutional support, encouragement and guidance, and we suggest that it is best used as part of a range of methods of engagement with OERs.

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Appendix 1: Guidance for local staff on engaging with iTunesU

How and why to engage with iTunesU at Southampton

What is iTunesU?

iTunesU is an area within Apple iTunes which allows institutions to create accounts and publish their own, branded educational content. It is a place to showcase excellence in education through the open publication of teaching resources. The University of Southampton has had an iTunesU presence since 2011 and includes a range of content.

Why should I publish on iTunesU?

There are some good reasons why you may want to publish your teaching and research resources on iTunesU:

- Showcase your work to a global audience of potential students, colleagues and employers
- Raise your profile and that of the university by sharing your work
- It is easy to do! (see below)
- Work is approved by a member of university staff before being put online
- iTunesU is a way of providing useful, free, educational content to learners across the globe

How do I start?

iTunesU hosts all kinds of files and you can deposit single files on the site or collections of materials. iTunesU is at its best when handling video or audio content, so it is a good place to publish lectures, for example, but it is also possible to publish handouts or other materials which might accompany that lecture.

Preparation of content:

- 1. Decide what you wish to share a videoed lecture? An audio recording related to your research? You could create new content, or use/adapt existing materials.
- 2. Consider whether there are any accompanying materials which could be shared alongside this, e.g. a handout, activity sheet, reading list
- 3. Think about how you use third party content in the material that you wish to share. Have you correctly attributed it? Do you use images (e.g. in a powerpoint file) which need to be replaced with free content?

Creating content:

- 1. Record your lecture/other content. You can do this easily from any bench PC using Panopto software, which will also record your powerpoint slides too. You can book a camera from iSolutions if you wish to record a video. Contact Serviceline for a tutorial on Panopto.
- 2. Download your recording and edit, if necessary. Ideally, you should add a slide to video material which attributes the university, you as author, and indicates the permissions others' may have to use the file. For example, you may wish to allow others to download and adapt the recording for their own educational purpose, and if so, adding a Creative Commons

licence would be useful. You can read more about licences at:

<u>http://creativecommons.org/licenses/</u>. There are a range of licences which allow you to share your work while protecting your rights as author. This information can be added to the beginning of audio recordings too.

Examples from Southampton's iTunesU site:

A video (with attribution slide and CC licence): <u>http://itun.es/i6JR4zc</u>

An audio recording (with attribution slide and CC licence): <u>http://itun.es/i6JR4zw</u>

3. Text documents should be edited for iTunesU too. Use university branding in the heading of the document and make sure that you have put your own author details somewhere (e.g. in the footer). Save the document as a pdf (you can do this in MS Word by choosing 'save as' and changing the file type from .docx to .pdf). If you wish to give permission for others to adapt your work for educational purposes, then you may wish to add a Creative Commons license in the footer too. You can read more about licences at:

<u>http://creativecommons.org/licenses/</u>. There are a range of licences which allow you to share your work while protecting your rights as author.

Examples from Southampton's iTunesU site:

A text document with university branding: <u>http://itun.es/i6JG3rN</u>

- 4. You will need to include a signed form to indicate that you are the originator of the content, that you are not infringing the rights of any third party and that you give the university permission to put your materials on iTunesU. Download a rights declaration form from: http://www.resource1.soton.ac.uk/cams/film/film_permission_forms.html Currently, there are existing forms relating to audio and video recordings, but not for text documents. Email commssupport@southampton.ac.uk for information on permissions forms for text documents. Email commssupport@southampton.ac.uk for information on permissions forms for text documents. Email commssupport@southampton.ac.uk for information on permissions forms for text documents. Email commssupport@southampton.ac.uk for information on permissions forms for text documents. Email commssupport@southampton.ac.uk for information on permissions forms for text documents. Permissions forms are kept within the iTunesU system but are not visible to the public.
- 5. The final step: email your file(s) to your local marketing officer indicating that you would like your work to be put on iTunesU. Please ensure that you include any permissions forms with your files.

What happens next?

- 1. The marketing team will check your files and advise on branding/presentation issues.
- 2. Your material will be uploaded to the iTunesU site, and will appear within one of the university's collections (related to your faculty or department).
- 3. The marketing team monitor download statistics. If you email them, they will be able to tell you how popular your resource is.
- 4. After you have published content on iTunesU, use social media, email and other methods to promote its existence to the global community.

Some points to note about using iTunesU

- 1. You must install iTunes on your computer in order to see your content. You may need to ask ServiceLine to do this.
- 2. iTunesU is best used for audio and video content.

3. iTunesU materials can only be accessed once users have installed iTunes. To ensure your materials reach the widest audience, you should also consider publishing them on other sharing sites such as <u>YouTube</u>, <u>HumBox</u> or <u>Jorum</u>.