



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning  
(COL)/International Council for Open and Distance  
Learning Chair in Open Educational Resources



CANADA'S OPEN UNIVERSITY



COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

# CHAIRES UNESCO CHAIRS

IN/AU CANADA

## UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning (COL)/International Council for Open and Distance Learning Chair in Open Educational Resources (OER)

### UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning (COL)

#### International Council for Open and Distance Learning-Chair in Open Educational Resources (OER)

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#### Chairholder:

Prof. Rory McGreal

### Description

The UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning (COL)/International Council for Open and Distance Learning Chair in OER at Athabasca University focuses on strengthening networking, building capacity and promoting research related to the international OER movement. The Chair promotes action at the institutional, national and international levels, and it ensures information sharing within the institution and among Canadian institutions, as well as through the international OER Community and Network. The Chair is also engaged with other related UNESCO Chairs, while working closely with international partner organizations, such as the Open Course Ware Consortium and the Open Education Foundation.

The initial international focus builds on the existing OER Community, moving from a Community of Interest to develop a Community of Practice. Outputs and outcomes will include sustaining the international OER Community; mapping OER initiatives worldwide, forming an international OER Network; maintaining a significant online presence; and maintaining a knowledge cloud (OER Knowledge Cloud) for research papers on OER for information sharing and dissemination.

### Objectives

The OER Chair focuses on three specific areas: networking, capacity building, and research.

In the long term, the principal objective of this Chair is to contribute to international development by promoting the development and use of OER through the adaptation/localization of materials for use in both formal and informal learning contexts. This objective supports the Millennium Development Goals.

In the short term, the UNESCO Chair is taking a leadership role in networking, teaching and research related to OER, maintaining the OER Community and linking with other OER initiatives to create an international OER network.

### Activities

- Continue mapping OER initiatives worldwide;
- Promote an international OER Network;
- Develop and support a network of OER researchers;
- Continue training OER cadres in developing countries in the first year (using OER), who will become empowered and capable of instructing others online;
- Maintain the OER Knowledge Cloud ([oerknowledgecloud.org](http://oerknowledgecloud.org)) for researchers on OER issues; and
- Provide consultancy and advisory services.

### TEKRI

The Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute (TEKRI) at Athabasca University is led by the Chairholder, who is the Director. TEKRI consists of a team of researchers conducting investigations into various learning problems focusing on OER interoperability, OER searching, semantic technologies, adaptivity, mobility, multimedia and social networking.

### Networking

The Chair is working closely with the partner OER Chair at the University of the Netherlands and Otago Polytechnic in New Zealand in linking OER initiatives, practitioners and researchers internationally using the existing OER Community and developing an OER Network as a community of practice, which can evolve into a network of networks of OER researchers and practitioners.