

On the Wings of Open Educational Resources: A New Era in Training and Professional Development of Legislative Counsel

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What are open educational resources (OER)?

“any educational resources (including curriculum maps, course materials, textbooks, streaming videos, multimedia applications, podcasts, and any other materials that have been designed for use in teaching and learning) that are openly available for use by educators and students, without an accompanying need to pay royalties or licence fees. ...”

[WikiEducator.org](https://wikieducator.org)

Why OER for legislative counsel?

- Accessible anywhere via the Internet
- Content adaptable for multi-jurisdictional use through delivery of revisable files
- Portable for individual study – readable on a variety of devices
- Free!

OER Project overview

- Revise the distance learning teaching materials while retaining their international relevance
- Convert the copyright in them from traditional exclusive ownership to Creative Commons licensing suitable for OER
- Transform the materials into revisable format files appropriate for OER
- Ensure online accessibility across various platforms and devices
- Involve communities of users for enhancement and sustainability

Project team

- **Revising authors:** John Mark Keyes and Peter J. Pagano
- **Project coordinators:** Dale Dewhurst and Archie Zariski
- **Design and technical professionals:** Stephen Addison, Rodger Graham, Steve Swettenham
- **International advisory panel:** Estelle Appiah, Daniel Greenberg, Sandra Markman, Therese Perera, Peter Quiggin, and Bilika Simamba
- **Commonwealth of Learning:** Madhulika Kaushik

Challenges: legal and technical

- Legal analysis of prior copyright protection for the teaching text and for incorporated and referenced materials authored by others
- Analysis and selection of appropriate Creative Commons open licensing
- Conversion of materials into easily revisable documents with faithful online versions retaining essential formatting and visual presentation
- Testing and selection of suitable online platform for presentation and delivery

Challenges: conceptual

- Audience and Focus of Materials
 - Commonwealth or beyond?
 - Centralised drafting offices?
 - Lawyers or others?
- Diversity of drafting practice
 - Favour some practices over others?
 - Reflect debate about best practices?
 - Engage local differences
 - Constitutional / Organizational?
 - Cultural?
 - Linguistic?

Solutions adopted - legal

- CC-BY Creative Commons license -
 - “ **You are free:**
 - to **Share** – to copy, distribute and transmit the work
 - to **Remix** – to adapt the work
 - to make **commercial use** of the work
 - Under the following conditions: Attribution** – You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).”
- Links to Internet accessible external materials

Solutions adopted - technical

- Open document format (ODF) considered for revisions but presented formatting difficulties
- Materials to be presented online in HTML format – platform likely to be Moodle for Open Courseware (OCW)
- Revisable files to be available online for download
- Online forum or Wiki may be adopted for discussion and enhancement

Solutions adopted - conceptual

- Generally continued approach of the original materials:
 - Maintain emphasis on fundamentals of good drafting
 - Encourage inquiry into local drafting practice
 - Identify areas of debate and development

Professional community involvement

- International advisory panel provided input on the relevance, usability, and wording of the revised materials
- Professional learning designers and technical experts shaped the technical solutions
- Project coordinators analyzed legal issues
- Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel and Joint Associations of Canadian Parliamentary and Legislative Counsel to be invited to participate in ongoing improvement and adaptation

Challenges and the future of the OER

- Protecting the integrity of the content while allowing enhancement and adaptation
- Maintaining the open nature of the materials while preserving evaluation components for use in credentialing
- Finding a suitable platform for presentation of the OER
- Ensuring sustainability - securing the necessary resources to maintain and improve the OER going forward

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Comments and questions?

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