# OER Bookmarking Project

*Final Report - November 2011*

## Background

Newcastle University was awarded a JISC CETIS Technical OER Mini Project in April 2011. This project aimed to develop a simple non-proprietary social bookmaking service, specifically for OERs, to enhance resource discovery across the higher education community. One of the main motivations for developing such a system was to enhance how resources are referenced within Newcastle University's Learning Technologies for Medical Sciences Dynamic Learning Maps system[1].

## Achievements

The main achievement of this project was the development of a simple, lightweight OER-aware bookmarking tool, which we have named "FavOERites"[2].

FavOERites allows an end user to record bookmarks in a central place, storing licence information against the record via an easy to use bookmarklet. The bookmarklet automatically picks up licencing information from a page. Social elements have been included within the application, such as commenting and voting records up or down. End users can create 'playlists', which consist of collections of bookmarks for a particular purpose. Authentication is via OpenID, or via Twitter or Facebook. There is no need to register to use the site.

An extremely powerful open API has been produced that allows end users and other systems to retrieve data about the records, including social/paradata elements. The API also allows this data to be added and edited.

The source code for FavOERites is available to download from GitHub[3], and has been released under the MIT Licence[4].

A live demonstrator is available online at http://oerbookmarking.ncl.ac.uk. You can simply login using an existing OpenID login (e.g. through Google).

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1 https://learning-maps.ncl.ac.uk/

2 Many thanks to Pat Lockley for allowing use of this name

3 https://github.com/favOERites/favOERites

4 http://www.opensource.org/licenses/mit-license.php

## Challenges

Although this project was extremely ambitious, we were able to achieve the majority of what we set out to do. However, there were a few challenges along the way.

It was our original intention to host this as an add-on to Dynamic Learning Maps. This has not been possible to date as the bookmarking tool was developed using Django version 1.3 whereas Dynamic Learning Maps currently uses Django version 1.1. As soon as DLMs is upgraded (planned in the next couple of months) we will incorporate FavOERites into the system. We have released an online demonstrator as a standalone product for comment and evaluation by peers, and will be looking into connecting the two systems together over the forthcoming months.

A similar bookmarking service is available through OER Commons,[5] and this has also been developed using Django. The team discussed at length whether to join with OER Commons to develop their open source system in order to meet our criteria. However, we decided that for the purposes of this mini project it was more appropriate to continue with the development of FavOERites, and explore the possibility of collaborating with OER Commons in the future. After looking at the OER Commons system and code repository, we determined that that OER Commons is a much bigger and more complicated system than we wanted FavOERites to be. One of the key outcomes that we wanted from this project was a lightweight application that can simply be plugged into other systems, such as Dynamic Learning Maps. We did not feel that it would be possible to achieve that by contributing to OER Commons within the timescales and funding set by this project, although we look forward to possible collaborations in the future.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

We have taken the tool developed during the OER hackday in Manchester, extended it and expanded it to better meet our needs and, we hope, some of the needs of the wider OER community. We believe that the current release of FavOERites is an early prototype system and we will be continuing to develop and refine it further because we consider that this has the potential to be an incredibly useful application for the education community. In order to fully achieve its potential, we would make the following recommendations:

- Work closely with OER commons to explore commonality between the two systems and to reduce the overlap between them.
- Look at enhancing the link between FavOERites and DynamicLearning Maps.

[5] https://github.com/ISKME/OER-Commons