Open Education Rising Podcast (www.openeducationrising.net)

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Transcript of Episode 10: Licensing for Collections vs. Remixes

What are licensing issues that you need to manage with your OER Collection or Remixes? Let's find out!

Hello, and welcome to Open Education Rising, a podcast about growing and improving open education. I'm your host, Deepak Shenoy.

An exciting thing about Creative Commons licensing for an educator is the flexibility to combine different open educational resources to best meet students' needs. Many educators build courses by creating collections or remixing OER. I want to talk about practical aspects of Creative Commons licenses that come up with collections and remixes.

I'm building upon material covered in Episode 9, which explained the basics of Creative Commons licenses, including the meanings of the optional conditions. And speaking of licenses, this episode is licensed by Deepak Shenoy under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. And I wanted to give a special thanks to Cable Green for reviewing this script and making some helpful suggestions.

Collections are about aggregating OER, not changing them. An example of a collection in the higher education environment could be course materials in a Learning Management System for your course. You might put files in an LMS, or link to resources hosted elsewhere.

Remixing, by contrast, involves taking two existing things and combining them with each other or adding new content. This could be, for example, rearranging chapters of an open textbook, or mixing chapters of an open textbook with your own material.

Let's look at a case example: putting together an introductory course on economics, that covers both micro- and macroeconomics. Let's say there are two resources you want to use that are found on OpenStax.org. One is called "Microeconomics 2e" and the other is "Macroeconomics 2e."

If you want to simply aggregate these resources, it's relatively straightforward. You could link them to a page in your LMS, for example. On my website, I have an example of a very simple, two-work collection made up of these two books. The link to my example page is in the show notes.

The first thing to note in the example is that I opted to have a small frame which links to the main page for the sources. This is not a requirement. I made this choice because there are multiple formats for the original resources, such as PDF and Kindle. I didn't want to take up space on my server for those, and I had a pretty high degree of confidence that the OpenStax site won't go down temporarily or be taken off the web altogether. However, you might opt to host a copy of a resource—if that resource's license allows for that, of course.

Underneath each frame which links backs to the original textbook on the web, I followed a Creative Commons best practice for attribution, which is known by the acronym TASL, or Title, Author, Source, and License.

- **Title** is just the title of the work, in this case "Microeconomics 2e" and "Macroeconomics 2e," respectively. It is possible you'll find works that don't have a title, though, in which case you could say something categorical like "an image" or "a chart."
- **Author** is who created the work. Well, to be precise, what we are referring to here is the copyright owner. In most cases, that's the author, though not always. For these two economics examples, the main page for each resource says it should be attributed to OpenStax, which is an organization. Works can also be attributed to one or more individuals. In my sample collection page, I decided to hyperlink the text with the author's name back to the rights-holder's web page. While something like OpenStax is findable through search engines, if you're using something by someone who is harder to find, you would be helping others by linking back to the author. They might wish to contact the author because they wanted to better understand the intentions the author had behind the license conditions that were used, for example, or to ask for permission for use that goes beyond what the license currently permits.
- Okay, our third attribution thing is **Source.** Source is the link to the original resource. I linked back to the OpenStax site for each book on my example page. Rather than spelling out the URL, I opted to put in hyperlinks, just so it looks better.
- And the fourth part of TASL is L for License. **License** is the Creative Commons license, which for both of these example works is Attribution 4.0. It's a nice thing to not only state the license, but to hyperlink to the page on Creative Commons that explains the license, so someone who wants more information can easily learn more.

In contrast to creating a collection, remixing can be a more complicated thing from a licensing perspective. Let's say for my course, I wanted to replace some of the case examples in those books with my own examples that my students may find more relevant. Combining the original sources with my new material is a remix. Editing out parts of these books or combining these books with other materials or each other are also examples of remixing. These are all things that in legal terms are called derivatives.

These 2 particular sample texts are pretty simple from a licensing standpoint—they're both attribution licenses without other conditions, which makes them easier to remix. However, not all license types are so easy to mix. Fortunately, there's a chart that shows every possible combination of licenses and shows what's compatible or not. It also includes public domain resources on the chart. Again, a link to this chart will be in the show notes. Though this chart looks complicated, there are three patterns you can see that make it easier to understand.

First, two of the six Creative Commons licenses have no derivatives in them. You can't remix them. The works cannot be altered. So, in the chart you'll see a straight streak of Xs showing it doesn't mix with anything else. Because remixing is so integral to OER, works with no derivatives are not considered OER. So remixing is only in play for the other 4 licenses.

Second, there's a thing to watch out for with ShareAlike. There's one version of ShareAlike by itself, and there's another one that is ShareAlike with Non-Commercial. You can't mix two things if one has one of

those licenses, and the other has the second license. Lets imagine Microeconomics was licensed at as ShareAlike by itself, but Macroeconomics was licensed as ShareAlike with Non-Commercial.   Why wouldn't these work? The content from the Microeconomics book could be used commercially, and the ShareAlike on that work says that future use of that material has to keep that condition. However, the Macroeconomics materials are always Non-Commercial. Mixing the two would cause an incompatibility, because one source always needs to permit commercial use, while the other can never permit it.

A third observation about this chart is that it's also interesting to notice that there's one corner of the chart which has a sea of green checkmarks. This corner is has the two public domain symbols, CC0 and PDM, and the two licenses CC-BY and CC-BY-SA.   They're all compatible with each other. If you're a rights holder whose intention is to make it easy for others to remix, think about either giving up your license by putting your work in the public domain, or licensing it as CC-BY and CC-BY-SA, and will help others remix it more easily.

Best of luck to everyone collecting and remixing OER!

Thank you so much for joining me for this episode of Open Education Rising. If you found this podcast helpful, please let your friends and colleagues know about it. Subscribe to it in your podcast player to be notified of future episodes. You can visit us on the web at OpenEducationRising.net to get episode transcripts.

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This podcast is produced by Savannah Smetlzer. I composed and perform the music. I'm supporting this podcast from my consulting practice, which you can visit at deep-consulting.net.

Until next time, take care!