**‘Going Open’ at the UAL and Coventry**

UAL is currently engaged in a short HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) project with Coventry University School of Art and Design, to join the ‘OpenCourseWare’ ([OCW](http://www.ocwconsortium.org/)) Consortium. This is the international open education association, led by MIT, taking its name from the way MIT chose to share it’s learning resources with the rest of the world via this [website](http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm). This case study provides an overview of the Nottingham experience, indicating the benefits we might expect from joining. Nottingham was one of the first UK universities, along with the Open University (OU), to join the OCW about 5 years ago.

**Potential Benefits**

Both Nottingham and the OU have reported a surprising number of benefits accruing from both being in the OCW, and being actively engaged in the open education community. This includes; improved internal communications (less silos), more external collaborative opportunities, developing policy (IPR and employment) and strategy (foreign markets, quality and efficiency), cultural change (collaborative academic practice), increased international visibility of the Nottingham web site through the OCW technical infrastructure, improvement of internal e-learning processes and digital resource management.

**Drivers**

Operating under the banner [Open Nottingham](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/open/opennottingham.aspx), there have been two practical drivers (i) the need to improve communication with international campus ‘branches’ (China and Malaysia) and continue (ii) to develop the extent and quality of e-learning at Nottingham itself (increasing flexible learning on-campus, and extending the distance learning market). Originally, and still, sponsored by a Pro-Vice Chancellor and the Head of Learning and Teaching, it is also closely integrated into the (large) central university e-learning team. In this way, the Open Nottingham initiative has become a mainstream part of the university and, in this respect, reflects successful open education initiative elsewhere – Top Level Support – Strategic Alignment – Practical Integration.

Strategic drivers identified by Open Nottingham are:

* [Social Responsibility](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/open/strategicdrivers/socialresponsibility.aspx) (fits institutional mission)
* [The Student Experience](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/open/strategicdrivers/thestudentexperience.aspx) (internal processes and access to new materials)
* [Cost Efficiencies](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/open/strategicdrivers/costefficiencies.aspx) (encourages internal culture change and sharing)
* [Promotional Opportunities](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/open/strategicdrivers/promotionalopportunities.aspx) (promotes the university globally)

**Methods**

Nottingham has adopted a twin-track approach that both UAL and Coventry seem to be following:

Technical Innovation: Tools and services to support both open and campus-based education, both homegrown and innovative use of existing freely available technology, including the Web 2.0 infrastructure. This has the considerable bonus of acting as a ‘living laboratory’ to spread confident good practice to the rest of the university -[link](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lEAG2b0Nq5g&list=ECCF91107D71DD8579&index=2).

Educational Innovation: Involvement in open educational activities promotes reflection and critical evaluation at personal, departmental, disciplinary and institutional levels. It acts as a 2-way door to the wider educational community promoting innovation and collaboration. Provides the driver and context for cultural change that can support improvements in quality and efficiency - [link](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/open/strategicdrivers/costefficiencies.aspx)