Open Praxis, vol. 10 issue 2, April–June 2018, pp. 1–5 (ISSN 2304-070X)
2018 Open Education Global Conference Selected Papers

Days of future passed, the history of OEGlobal in titles

Robert Schuwer
Conference Program Chair. *Fontys University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands)*
r.schuwer@fontys.nl

This special issue contains some of the almost 180 accepted contributions of this years' Open Education Global conference (OEGlobal), organized in Delft from 24-26 April 2018. These annual global conferences are organized by the Open Education Consortium (until 2014 named Open Courseware Consortium), together with a local institution. The first edition in this series of conferences was organized in 2005 by the Utah State University in Logan.

Over the years, the conference grew bigger and attracted more and more diverse participants, both from educational sectors (higher and vocational education) and from region. To illustrate: from the 66 contributions in 2005, 9 came from outside the USA. In this years' edition, corresponding authors of proposals originated from 29 countries (measured 31 October 2017). Figure 1 provides a graphical overview. The green areas represent the origin of accepted proposals.

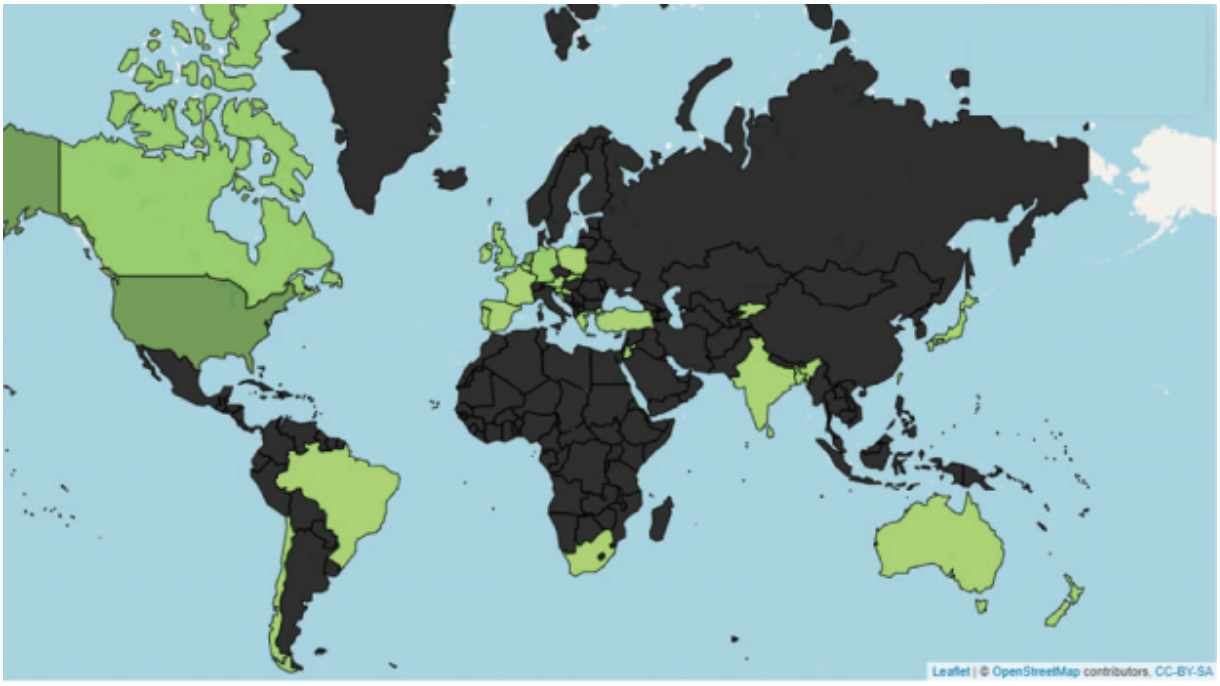

Figure 1: Origin of proposals for OEGlobal 2018

To find out how this conference reflects developments in the world of open education, an analysis is made of the contributions. Table 1 lists the number of contributions per year. In 2016, contributions with a decision "probably accept" (3x) and "no decision" (12x) from the program committee are included in the analysis. In total, 665 contributions are accepted.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5944/openpraxis.10.2.861

Table 1: Number of contributions to OEGlobal per year

	2005	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
# accepted	66	55	58	98	87	113	178
# submissions	(missing)	(missing)	(missing)	(missing)	95	162	216
% accepted					92%	70%	82%

To this end, the data for analysis consists of words from the titles of the contributions, assuming that a title is the shortest, accurate description of its content. The following methodology is applied:

- The years 2005 and 2013 up to and including 2018 are selected. The last six editions can make trends visible. Including the edition from 2005 makes possible comparisons between now and then. The sources for the data are in table 2.
- After a first try, it appeared data cleaning was necessary to avoid synonyms and common singular and plural formulations. The data cleaning consisted of four replacements in the titles:
  - "Open Educational Resources" with "OER"
  - "MOOCs" with "MOOC"
  - "Policies" with "Policy"
  - "Students" with "Student"
- The cleaned titles were subjected to a word count, using the text analysis service TAPoR (http://taporware.ualberta.ca/~taporware/textTools/listword.shtml). Excluded from this word count were common words from the modified Glasgow Stop Words list (http://taporware.ualberta.ca/~taporware/cgi-bin/prototype/glasgowstoplist.txt).
- To avoid contamination caused by case-sensitivity, the tool automatically converts all words to lowercase.
- Each year the Top 15 most mentioned words in the cleaned titles were taken into the analysis.
- When a word was appearing 3 or more times in the Top 15 in the years 2013-2018, these words were also taken into account for the years they did not make the Top 15.

Table 2: Data sources for the analysis of the history of OEGlobal

Year	Source
2005	https://issuu.com/ocwconsortium/docs/2005_fall_proceedings
2013, 2016, 2017	Archives from the Open Education Consortium, not online available
2014	https://conference.oeconsortium.org/2014/proceedings/
2015	https://conference.oeconsortium.org/2015/presentations/
2018	Data from the conference system Easychair (only accessible for admins). Snapshot taken 19 March 2018.

Results

The Top 15 words per year resulted in a list of 51 different words. Four of them (open, oer, education and learning) appeared in the Top 15 of all editions. Table 3 list the 18 words with the total highest frequency, starting from those words that appeared in 3 or more Top 15 overviews in the years 2013-2018. Those occurrences that were not in the Top 15 in a specific year are marked in red.

Table 3: Most frequent mentioned words in titles of contributions to OEGlobal per year

Word count	2005	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
open	23	11	21	43	51	60	109	**318**
oer	8	24	22	47	30	44	57	**232**
education	16	8	15	19	34	29	58	**179**
learning	10	9	5	10	11	17	26	**88**
mooc	0	2	8	14	14	14	17	**69**
educational	4	2	5	4	3	12	18	**48**
online	3	4	6	5	4	9	16	**47**
student	0	6	8	2	4	10	13	**43**
practices	0	0	3	7	5	13	13	**41**
policy	0	5	4	6	1	9	9	**34**
development	0	3	5	4	5	5	10	**32**
higher	0	3	2	5	4	6	11	**31**
use	6	1	0	5	7	7	5	**31**
research	0	2	2	10	5	7	3	**29**
course	0	2	4	5	3	6	8	**28**
university	0	0	5	6	7	7	2	**27**
using	0	1	4	8	3	2	8	**26**
impact	0	1	6	2	1	7	8	**25**

The top 4 could be expected beforehand. The following observations can be made.

- In 2018, 57 contributions mention OER in the title. A further analysis of the contributions from 2018 reveals that 33 contributions with OER in its title are about adoption issues, ranging from institutional to national and cross-national level. 9 contributions are about OER as a means to realize another goal (e.g. deep learning or student success). The remaining 15 contributions address miscellaneous topics with a role for OER. This reflects a steady growth in attention for OER, with more and more attention for adoption.
- The number of contributions regarding MOOCs remains steady, but because of the growth in total number of contributions over the years, the relative number of contributions diminishes.
- Policy, research and impact are ongoing issues in contributions, with fluctuations over the years. These items do count for a small number of contributions.
- The last two editions show a growth in Practices. A further analysis of the titles reveals that in 2017 and 2018 10, respectively 11 contributions with Practice in the title are about Open Educational Practices. In 2018, this topic is also addressed in 5 contributions with “Student” and 6 contributions with “Open pedagogy” in the title. These data reflects a development with more and more attention on the impact of open resources on education and learning.

This last observation is also made visible when comparing the results from 2005 and 2018 (the first and the last editions of this conference). Figure 2 present a word cloud of the Top 15 words from titles

Figure 2: Word clouds of Top 15 words in 2005 and 2018 OEGlobal Conference

of both years (including *ex aequo* frequencies for the 15th position, which explains the higher number of words in both clouds).

The clouds in figure 2 show that among others MOOC, student, impact, policy, pedagogy and practices were no topics in 2005, again reflecting a development with a focus on (institutional) adoption and education instead of focus on resources. On the other hand, topics like community/communities and sustainability (showing in the Top 15 in 2005) are not showing in the Top 15 in 2018, but show up lower in the word list. This reflects that these topics still challenge stakeholders in the open world.

This analysis is looking into the rear-view mirror, creating a picture of how the world of open education has evolved in the last 14 years. Inferring future trends is hard by just looking at the titles. As an example, the topic Learning Analytics is not mentioned in the titles, Artificial intelligence (AI) and Machine learning just once, although both technologies are supposed to play an important role in online education and learning in the near future (Adams et al., 2017). This also shows that analysis of only titles is a quick but superficial way to learn about trends and developments over the years. The methodology is also limited, because choice of themes for a conference and different interpretations of acceptance criteria by a program committee over the years also influence acceptance of contributions. One might expect, however, that choice of themes for an edition of the conference reflects the trends of that specific year and, therefore, would contribute to make the trend visible in the contributions.

One trend I hope that will be visible in the next years is more research and practice in sectors other than higher education. Janssen and Schuwer (2018) describe a study on adoption of OER in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). One of the findings of that study is that, with an exception for Community Colleges in the USA, almost no research is available about OER in TVET. At a global level, the picture is that most efforts for adoption of OER (both in terms of research and implementation) focus on higher education. However, these efforts address only 14.6% of the world's population (World Bank, 2018). We may assume that OER may make even more difference to achieve lower access barriers to quality education in the countries that are not part of the "High Income" countries. But only 9.8% of people are reached in those parts of the world when focusing on higher education.

The theme of the 2nd OER World Congress in Ljubljana in September 2017 (http://www.oercongress.org) was "OER for Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education: From Commitment to Action". However, if this "Action" does not focus much more than previously on sectors other than higher education, with a focus

on other countries than the “High Income” countries, there is a real danger that OER will contribute to increasing the gap between the “Haves” and “Have-nots” instead of bridging this gap. And that is not the intention of the open world: reducing inclusive access to quality education instead of increasing it!

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