

eText Startup Project
Executive Report
April 25, 2018

The original proposal for the [eText Startup Project](#) outlined three high level objectives that were all successfully complete this year:

- Assess the needs of the community in the domain of open text publishing
- Develop a set of flexible, browsable support resources
- Evaluate the potential for an ongoing community of practice in open text publishing

The resulting [Open Textbook Toolkit](#) is now available on the OpenUtoronto website at <http://opentext.onlinelearning.utoronto.ca/>.

Evaluation of community needs: From the outset, the project team adopted a community-based approach to the ongoing activities by facilitating a dynamic dialogue on the topic of open text publishing faced by individuals across Ontario universities and colleges engaged in this process. This group quickly became a valuable Community of Practice acting in advisory capacity throughout the project allowing the project team to tap into existing knowledge of experts from online learning offices as well as librarians at Ontario universities and colleges. Aside from regular meetings facilitated through Blackboard Collaborate, this community was also surveyed in order to collect data to help the project team to identify knowledge gaps and needed support documentation in the area of open text publishing informing the development of a set of flexible, browsable support resources resulting in an FAQ format toolkit.

Development of support resources: To identify knowledge gaps the toolkit should address, an environmental scan was conducted assessing existing resources of similar nature that involved independent research as well as a robust conversation with a new community of interest formed at the onset of this project. The project team developed significant original content based on their expertise and feedback from the Community of Practice. Input was solicited from the community network as to appropriateness of content and structure.

Community Impact: In the process of developing this tool, a clear need for ongoing dynamic dialogue was felt as the community of interest which was formed through this project clearly had more questions than answers, seeking to establish and standardize workflows around faculty and student support in the area of OER, develop a better understanding of how peer institutions undertake these processes and what technology was being used to help authors develop resources. Early in the project it became quite clear that this toolkit was much needed in the community. Capacity, time, cost, technology and resources play a critical part in the establishment of unique institutional workflows and while the open movement is still fairly new to Ontario, those who are interested in authoring an open text rely on significant support from their institution in learning how to create their often first material for the very first time. Library and technology professionals are an important stakeholder group to engage in capacity development initiatives as they are often providing support and advice to the instructor authors. Because this is such a new area for many institutions in the process of establishing their workflows around open education resources and support for faculty and students, many of these logistics still need to be discussed in continued conversations offer valuable opportunities to benchmark and normalize workflows.

Dissemination Activities: The outcomes of this project have been shared across the province and beyond via a range listservs, blogs, webinars and conference activities over the past three months. We will continue to promote and share this resource which is available to others for re-use under the CC-BY licence. For more information contact online.learning@utoronto.ca.