



The Battle for Open: How Openness Won and why it doesn't Feel Like Victory

Martin Weller, Published by Ubiquity Press, 2014

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The author takes open access further by adopting a writing style which is accessible and easy to read and follow. To the reader who is familiar with the discussions promoting open education, the book provides a clear, concise history leading up to the current state of play and the issues that are presently to the fore. If you are a newcomer to the debate, this book would be a good place to start.

Weller starts by defending the book title's premise that openness has won and outlines a range of examples – so many that are part of our daily lives thus making the 'victory' go by unnoticed. We quickly run into issues such as the redefinition of 'openness' and the dangers of commercialisation, which leads to the other term in the book title – 'battle'. Weller outlines the reason for his belief that open education is at a turning point and that there are significant influences steering its development.

In Chapter 2, Weller takes the issue of definition further and discusses whether it might be best not to have too tight a definition at all. Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 7 look in detail at the areas of open access publishing, open educational resources, MOOCs and open scholarship (research) respectively. Open access publishing is probably the area where most would recognise openness as being 'mainstream', and Weller uses the development of open access publishing to highlight the conflicting issues that also beset open access education. Open educational resources are seen as the 'success story' for open education in that the philosophy of openness has been preserved to a greater extent, with commercial interests having a less significant share of the action.

In Chapter 5, Weller deals with MOOCs and the considerable media interest they raised in recent years. According to Weller, MOOCs are the best illustration of the ongoing battle for the direction of open access. The media hype and commercialisation of MOOCs are continued in the following chapter, which outlines the reportage coming from technology companies whose vested interests are clear.

The final three chapters call advocates for open access to education to become active in the battle to ensure that the original principles of 'openness' are not lost and look at ways an educational institution might handle the changes brought about by the open education movement. This is an interesting book, which looks at the issues of open access in education in depth and is thought-provoking and well worth reading.

Biography

Marion MacDonald is an Educational Technologist in Learning and Information Services, University of the Highlands and Islands.

Reference

Weller, M. (2014). *Battle for open: How openness won and why it doesn't feel like victory*. London: Ubiquity Press.
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