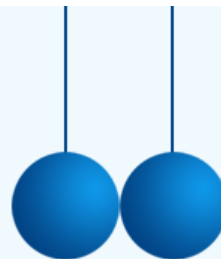


# OPENUCT INITIATIVE

opening scholarship



## OpenUCT Reflections on 2012

The year 2012 marks the first full year of activity for the OpenUCT Initiative and it's been an amazing but challenging year for all of us, and I thought it would be fitting to review the year in terms of our areas of activity and touch upon our successes and growth over this past year and our expectations for the future.

### Communication and advocacy

This year saw a range of workshops, seminars and presentations at various events at local, national and international levels. The topics have included open scholarship, open access publishing, altmetrics and measuring impact, online visibility, copyright law and open licensing. Even open teaching in the form of MOOCs was included. These events were held mostly at UCT but we were given opportunities to engage with the local and international communities events such as the [UNISA ODL International Conference](#), [The Council for Higher Education](#), the [Cape Higher Education Consortium](#), [Open Access Africa, Berlin 10](#), the [OpenCourseWare Consortium Conference](#) and [IDS](#) amongst others. Through these engagements we joined conversations about the pertinent issues in openness in higher education and created conversations between relevant players at institutions so that openness becomes part of the agenda or is pushed as a key activity rather than one at the periphery. The advocacy activities have been the most rewarding as we have definitely seen an increase in responsiveness to open education and open access issues and a grappling with the complexities of the legal issues so critical for openness. We hope to continue and increase our engagement so that we become not only one of the key players in this field, but also a leader in this important area of higher education.

To view the presentations and other outputs from our various activities, please visit the [output page](#) and feel free to browse and download.

### Technical design and Content Curation

We have been fortunate to have an existing OpenContent directory at UCT which presently points to the teaching resources UCT academics wish to share. We made the decision to expand and grow our OpenContent to become both a directory and a repository where all scholarly resources- research, teaching and popular- could be kept and found. This ambitious project has gone through early development stages adapting DSpace and we are planning to go live next year. Towards the end of 2011 a decision was made to partner with the African Climate and Development Initiative at UCT as a pilot in order to ascertain what it would take to open up access to academics' outputs in order to make them accessible to the rest of the world. This process involved gathering information about the publications of a group of hardy volunteer academics and ensuring that we had all the necessary descriptive information about each resource. This descriptive information formed the metadata we needed which would make the resources visible online and allow for improved searchability. Once we had all the metadata in place, I had to complete the complex process of ensuring that we could share each resource legally. This involved consulting Sherpa Romeo but also negotiating with publishers for access to either post prints or publisher editions of journal articles.

Presently, I am in the process of compiling a database that includes the Sherpa Romeo dataset and other legal information that is needed to be able to share resources legally as per the terms and conditions set by the publisher. This database will be made available on the OpenUCT site as soon as it's ready. In 2013 we will continue to work with this group to achieve maximum visibility of their work via the expanded and revised UCT OpenContent website.

### Advice and support

In 2012, we were able to provide 49 small grants to a range of academics from across the faculties at UCT to create or adapt open educational resources for sharing on the UCT OpenContent site. Of these grants, 30 were for new resources and 19 were for adapting resources and the majority of grants went to the Humanities and Health Sciences faculties. These are all worth looking at- the one I have to mention by name is the award winning course [Vulnerability to environmental change](#) which won the course awards for OpenCourseWare Excellence in the category for text and still images.

From my own perspective, a large part of the support concerned legal issues related to intellectual property law, specifically copyright and related rights. Every case has been unique and every case a learning experience for the OpenUCT team. Much of the work involved negotiations with publishers, drafting of licensing agreements and training on open licensing and alternative copyright management solutions for academics and knowledge managers. There was a great deal more of this type of work than we anticipated.

Another aspect of the support we provided was on online presence. Both our director and our intern ran seminars on these issues (insert link to my UNISA video talk and Sarah's Slideshare) and in addition Sarah worked closely with ACDI academics assessing their existing digital footprint and advising how to change and improve this. She produced reports for each academic which were longer than 50 pages in most cases! Sarah will be reflected on this process in a [previous blog post](#).

### Conclusion

All in all, 2012 has been an incredible year for the OpenUCT team in terms of our achievements and engagements with the open community and we hope to only go from strength to strength in our endeavours.

The headline image used in the post is by opensourceway, can be found at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/opensourceway/5320589892/> and is licensed in terms of a CC-BY-SA license.

by Shahaam Shaikh  
CC-BY-SA



### Add comment

Your name

Subject

Comment \*

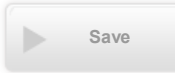

Text format Filtered HTML ▾

[More information about text formats](#) 

Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.

Allowed HTML tags: <a> <em> <strong> <cite> <blockquote> <code> <ul> <ol> <li> <dl> <dt> <dd>

Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

- 
- [Home](#)
  - [About Us](#)
  - [Output](#)
  - [Events](#)
  - [Blog](#)
  - [Support](#)
  - [Contact Us](#)

This site and its contents are licensed in terms of a [Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike](#) license, unless specified otherwise - Open UCT 2012.  
A [Drupal Website](#) by 2Stroke Interactive