Slide 1

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Cheryl Brown: In the second video of week two, we look at how we can use online resources more responsibly.

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Cheryl Brown: We start by exploring strategies to help you improve your searching online in the last video, and what we move to now is to look at the benefits of open educational resources, and the different copyright permissions that are associated with online material.

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Cheryl Brown: These are three fundamental concepts about online resources that you probably are already familiar with. You've probably heard about the concept of paywalls, copyright, and OER (open education resources); but what do they actually mean and how do we know how to recognize them?

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Cheryl Brown: This screenshot shows a fairly typical use of a paywall. It's an example of the World University Rankings website, Times Higher Education. When you go to the website, you get lots of available news stories, interesting ones. Often, I see people sharing links from particular news items from this source but when I click on the link, it asks me to login or register to read the articles. It indicates that if I'm registered but haven't subscribed, I can only access three free articles a month. Paywalls are usually used by newspapers, blogs, and even publishers. They basically require you to pay before you can access the resources. We also see them as examples, in technology enhanced learning, through things like apps and software. When I think of online polling tools, for example, they’re freely available to use, but the free version gives you limited access to particular features. If you want the advanced features, then you need to subscribe and pay to use them. I often see kids using apps on tablets that look very useful - educational apps for maths or reading. The free version has lots of advertising and if you want to remove the advertising, you need to pay. Those are different ways that paywalls control the information that you can see online. What does this mean for equity of access? Well, it's easy if you're a well-funded organization, but if you’re resource constrained, and you're looking for information, then you're disadvantaged by models like this.

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Cheryl Brown: We all know that we can go online and get information for free. But do you realize that just because you can access that information, it doesn't actually mean it's free? It might be free to read, but it's not necessarily free to use because all information on the Internet is copyright unless it has an explicit creative commons license. You're not meant to be able to reuse it. If you're cutting and pasting information, using images from the internet. You really are using copyrighted material. However, it’s worth mentioning that there is this unusual grey-area in between what's copyright and what's free to use. It's called the fair use policy. So fair use and copyright laws provides for the principle that the reproduction of copyrighted works, for certain limited educational purposes, is not a copyright infringement. Which means that materials can be used in a class if it's fit for the purpose of serving the needs of a specific education program. That's why we often see presenters at conferences, and teachers in classes using images from the internet because that is permissible under the Fair Use policy.

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Cheryl Brown: On the other extreme, we have open educational resources. Now these are often teaching, learning and research resources, or they can just be images that people have put up as well, that reside in the public domain. It means they've been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others. You might see graphic artists/photographers sharing images with a Creative Commons license. That means, depending on what the license is, that you are free to use their images in any way that you like.

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Cheryl Brown: So, how do people use OERs? There is this model called the five “r” permissions of open education resources. The first one is you are able to retain that resource? Which means you can use it whenever you like; you can make copies of it. You can reuse it in a wide range of different ways. In some cases, you can even take something that's openly licensed that you find online and put it into something that is commercial (you can make money out of it). You can revise (adapt, modify, and improve) the resource, which is particularly beneficial when you find an excellent resource but need to change it to suit your particular course or context. You can remix it, which means you can get resources from two different places and two different people/organizations and put them together in whichever way you like. Pick the bits that work best for you and combine them. And you can redistribute, which means that whatever you've done with the resource, in terms of revising or remixing, you are allowed to legitimately share it with other people.

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Cheryl Brown: So, when one thinks about OERs like that, one has to wonder why we don't all use OERs because it sounds like such a fabulous opportunity. There definitely are opportunities in terms of OERs. They're accessible, low cost because they were already developed, easy to use in a face to face context or online, you don't have to reinvent the wheel and do something again that somebody else has already done perfectly well, and there's a lot of material out there. But some of the challenges are that they're often too specialist, they're written for a very particular context. It's time consuming to change them. They might be out of date. So, the sustainability of the resource might not be very helpful and sometimes quality might be an issue.

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Cheryl Brown: If you want to read a bit more and explore how to take this further, then you should have a look at the open access article by Dr Mishra. Here, Dr. Mishra is looking at how we remove the barriers to the use of OER. He advocates for there being a better understanding of OERs by policymakers, teachers, students, and the public at large, because the better we understand them, the more we can develop enabling policies and strengthen our commitment to funding and sustaining the use of OERs in teaching and learning. He also says there's a real need, currently, for content development as OERs. For the building of capacity, in terms of how you integrate OERs into teaching and learning. For collaboration and advocating for the use of OERs and developing them. And for evidence on their impact, particularly in relation to how an OER might help increase access to knowledge and improve the efficiency and quality of learning.

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Cheryl Brown: So, after listening to all of that and reading some of those materials. What this leads us to now is, as a teacher, what are some of the strategies you can use for OERs. Well, often one of the problems teachers face is how to find good OERs. This link here from the University of South Africa. Is an open access guide about OERs, and it has a particular section on how to find OERs for your teaching and what, how, and where to start. It's got some simple strategies as well.

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Cheryl Brown: Places like the OER commons are good repositories for OERs so if you develop an OER, you can put a link to it up on a place like the OER commons so that others can find it. You can use this site oercommons.org to search for OERs in your area. There are many other sites that are repositories for OERs that you can use.

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Cheryl Brown: And did you know that even in your Google, or other search engine searching, you can usually search very particularly for that openly licensed material. In Google, for example, if you go to the tools and the right-hand side of your search bar and click Advanced Search. You can scroll down and filter your search results by license.

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00:09:42.840 --> 00:10:17.610

Cheryl Brown: In this example of looking at technology in the classroom and particularly focusing on images, I searched for licenses that allowed us to use the resource for non-commercial reuse with modification. You see, though, that the moment you search for openly licensed images, there are usually a lot fewer to choose from. But as you begin to search, you see that there are particular repositories for images that you can go to, to get openly licensed images.

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00:10:21.540 --> 00:10:55.650

Cheryl Brown: Another idea is the Creative Commons global network. If you go to the Creative Commons website, creativecommons.org, you can have a look for a creative commons chapter or network in your area. You can see by this map that there are quite a lot of Creative Commons chapters across the world. And these are very good places to find information about OERs in your country or region and also to find resources related to open education.

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00:10:58.290 --> 00:11:06.420

Cheryl Brown: So, I hope you found that useful and that you're excited about embarking on your OER journey yourself. Thank you.