

Using the OSIER repository site, 6: advice on tags and metadata

Introduction

This document provides guidance on supplying metadata when preparing or editing a resource. It is aimed at users, who may not have extensive experience, to help them to create resources that others will find easily because the supporting data are comprehensive and meaningful.

OSIER metadata

The term 'metadata' describes the supporting information associated with a resource. This information is supposed to fulfil two main functions – to explain more about the resource to a potential user, and to allow users to discover the resource using various search methods.

OSIER metadata are based on a suite of data fields completed when the resource is created, but may also include other information supplied by the resource owner and later by other users in the form of comments. The basic suite of data is entered in an online form on the same page as the file upload used to build the resource, as shown in Figure 1 overleaf. A full listing of the OSIER metadata fields is given in an appendix to this guide.

If you are familiar with the content and use of the resource that you are creating, completing the metadata is quite a quick process. If you are creating the resource on behalf of someone else, you may find that you need to study the materials carefully in order to complete the form.

Using metadata to search for resources

The OSIER site offers a number of ways to search for resources. In time, OSIER resources will also be linked from other OER repositories, and they will be accompanied by a subset of the OSIER metadata (see the appendix). OSIER search options are:

- You can search for the resource using tags (keywords) typed into the search box on the site homepage
- You can open the advanced search by opening the 'Search' link in the main toolbar – this provides a more sophisticated search using some or all of the resource metadata
- You can browse resources using the links on the site homepage, selecting:
 - The latest resources
 - The most popular (ie most visited) resources
 - Select from the tag cloud
 - Select from the author list
 - Select from the list of tags (keywords)

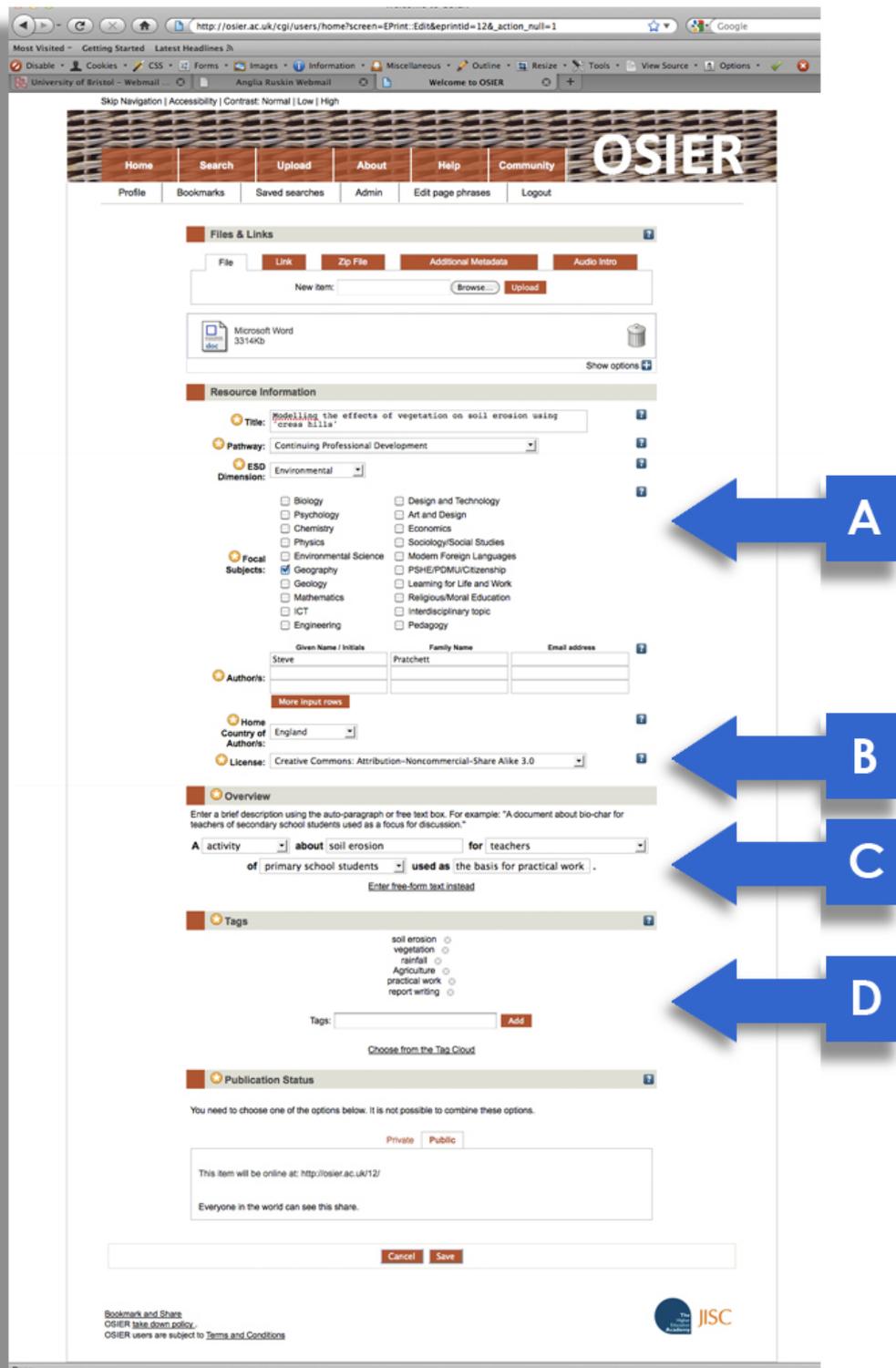


Figure 1. Resource creation page. A: Metadata fields, including title and subject data, B: Author details and Creative Commons licence, C: Overview 'sentence with gaps' (can be replaced with free-text, D: Tags (keywords)

Search efficiency

Obviously, nearly all of the search methods used in OSIER depend to some extent on metadata. Most of the 'specialist' fields such Focal subject are completed by selecting from a list, whilst others allow free text entry. Predefined fields are used where possible to ensure consistency of metadata, as well as reducing workload. The consistent use of metadata in resource creation ensures that search using the same metadata terms will be guaranteed to retrieve resources.

Some other data are free text. The two most important are the Overview and Tags (keywords). Tags are used to search for resources using the simple keyword search, as an element in the advanced search and by use of the tag cloud. Matches to keywords must be exact – the search will only recognize what it is asked to find, not related terms or partial matches.

A survey of the use of keywords was undertaken in early December 2011. This showed that very few keywords were used frequently enough for them to be useful to discover more than a few resources in the OSIER repository.

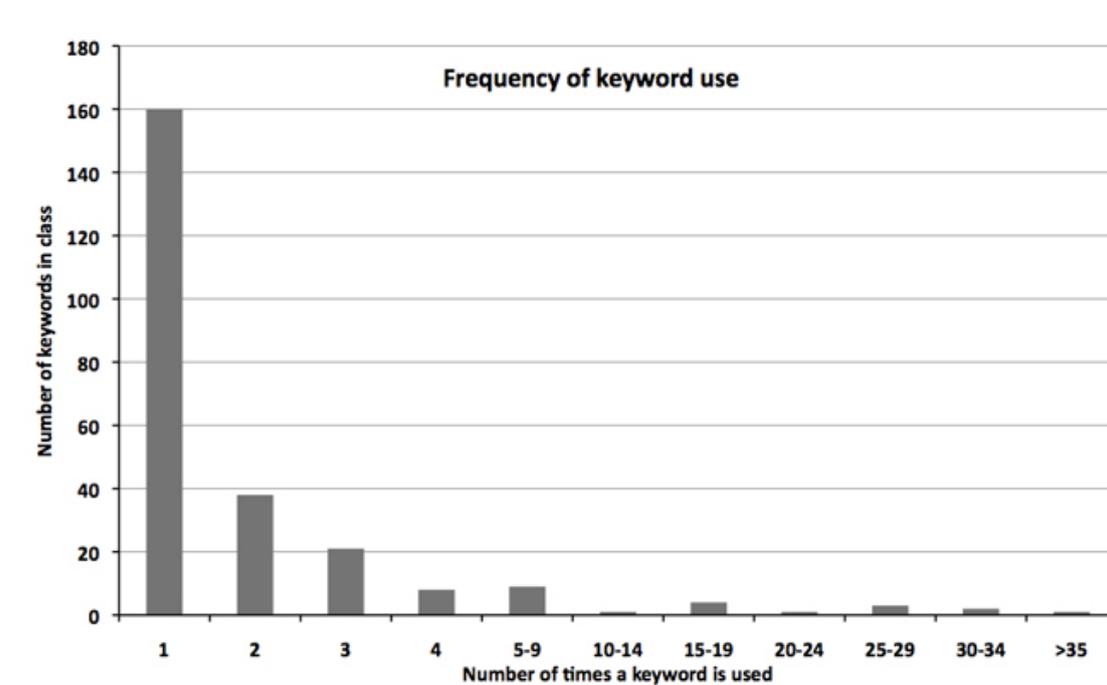


Figure 2. Frequency of keyword use amongst OSIER resources – 95% of resources have less than 5 keywords and 65% have only one

Not only did most OSIER resources in the audit have few keywords (mean 2.7 per resource), but the most frequently used tended to be the least informative within the OSIER context – terms like 'education for sustainable development' would be unlikely to be used as search terms within OSIER although they would be helpful outside the repository.

The implication of this analysis for resource donors is that rich and consistent tagging is helpful to effective searching. The key pointers are:

- Consider the needs of all potential users, so that keywords identify all aspects of a resource that could be of interest
- Use the tag cloud feature to pick up any commonly-used tags that can be applied to your resource
- If in doubt, use alternatives
- If using keyword phrases, also input the separate terms where appropriate (eg 'economics' as well as 'economics education')

Remember that you can enter several keywords (separated by commas) in one go, rather than adding single terms one at a time. You can also edit an existing resource to improve the description and thereby enhance its chance of being retrieved by a search.

Note that keywords are also used for resource collections in OSIER. Whilst it is impractical to consider using all of the keywords from all of the constituent resources, it is clearly important that tagging of the collection represents the resources it contains.

Appendix: The OSIER metadata protocol

The full suite of OSIER metadata is set out in the following table:

Field	Commentary	Mandatory?
Title*	Depositor enters free text	Yes
Pathway	Drop down list, [select from> <i>undergraduate teaching programme, postgraduate teaching programme (Initial Teacher Education), postgraduate teaching programme (Masters other than ITE), Doctoral programme, Continuing Professional Development</i>]	No
ESD Dimension	Drop down list [select from> <i>Environmental, Economic, Social/Cultural, Political, Multi-dimensional</i>]	No
Focal subjects	Curriculum subject(s) for which the resource has been used or designed Check boxes, more than one choice allowed Select from> <i>Mathematics</i> <i>Physical Science</i> <i>Technology/ICT/Engineering</i> <i>Environmental Science</i> <i>Earth Science</i> <i>Bioscience</i> <i>Geography/History</i> <i>Social Science/Psychology</i> <i>Business and Economics</i>	Yes

	<i>Art and Design</i> <i>Performing Arts</i> <i>Language and Literature</i> <i>PSHE/PDMU</i> <i>Citizenship/Global Citizenship</i> <i>Learning for Life and Work</i> <i>Religious/Moral Education</i> <i>Outdoor studies</i> <i>Literacy/Numeracy</i> <i>Interdisciplinary topic</i> <i>Pedagogy</i>	
Author(s)*	First author slot is pre-filled with name of depositor (from profile metadata) but can be edited by depositor	Yes
Home country of author(s)	Pre-filled with home country of depositor (from profile metadata) but can be edited by depositor	Yes
Licence*	Default option is CC-BY-NC-SA Drop down list of alternate CC licenses – one choice	Yes
Overview*	<p>Derived from several individual fields which are presented as a "sentence to be filled in" rather than as a list of fields:</p> <p>Extended description: A [Type of Resource] about [Content] for [User] of [Age Range] used as [Purpose].</p> <p>Example extended description: A [document] about [bio-char] for [teachers] of [secondary school pupils] used as [a focus for discussion].</p> <p>The individual sub-fields are defined as follows:</p> <p>Sub-field: [Type of Resource] drop down list, choices: <i>worksheet, presentation, activity, audio file, video file, graphic file, spreadsheet, reading list, workbook, course guide, interactive file, online quiz</i></p> <p>Sub-field: [Content] free text</p> <p>Sub-field: [User] drop down list, choices: <i>teachers, teacher educators, lecturers, student support professionals</i></p> <p>Sub-field: [Age range] drop down list, choices: <i>primary school students, secondary school students, undergraduate students, postgraduate students, teaching professionals</i></p> <p>Sub-field: [Purpose] free text</p> <p>The depositor has the "fallback" option of entering a free text overview if they cannot describe their resource using the sentence</p>	Yes

	above.	
Tags (keywords)*	Keywords can be entered one at a time or in a string separated by commas. Keywords can be autofilled using predictive entry from existing keywords. Keywords can also be selected from the tag cloud Keywords "OSIER Project" and "UKOER" are added automatically to every resource.	Yes
Publication status	Status can be 'public', in which case the resource is visible to any user (even if they are not registered or not logged in), or 'private', in which case only the resource depositor or site administrator can view the resource. An incomplete resource (ie one without all mandatory data fields or with no associated files) has the status 'in progress' and is private.	Yes

Fields marked with asterisks are mandatory Jorum fields. In addition to the data supplied by the depositor, two other Jorum fields are completed automatically:

Subject Collection: Record is filled automatically with "X", the JACS code for Education

Object Type: This record indicates that the Jorum resource is a link to OSIER resource

This guide has been released as part of the OSIER project, which is promoting the use of resources to support the training of practitioners in Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship within the curricula of all of the home nations of the United Kingdom. You can find out more about the project on the 'About' page of the project repository site.

OSIER is part of the second round of the UK OER (Open Educational Resources) programme, funded by HEFCE and administered by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC).

The resource was written by Julian Priddle and copyright resides with the author. Any images or other materials are original unless stated otherwise. Copyright images may be excluded from the Creative Commons licence described below.

The resource is made freely available under Creative Commons licence BY-NC-SA which allows you to use this material for any purpose as long as you:

- acknowledge the original author
- do not use it for commercial purposes
- publish any derived materials under the same licence conditions

You can find out more about this licence at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0>

December 2011

