

USE THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

DIGITISATION OFFERS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO HIGHER EDUCATION



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Digitisation offers new opportunities for higher education, as is illustrated by the integrated, enhanced and flexible provision of digital educational resources to students. Accessible, affordable, high-quality educational resources are used more effectively and contribute to increased study success.

But here is the crux of the problem. The market doesn't function as it should: publishers only offer digital educational resources on their own platforms, leading to higher costs for educational institutions and students.

In this paper we call on the government to work together with educational institutions, student organisations and market players to develop new demand-driven and affordable models, which should achieve a better balance between commercial interests and the interests of students and institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 USE PUBLIC FUNDS EFFECTIVELY

The development by publishers and other market players of platforms for digital educational resources and the accompanying new business models are increasingly shifting the cost of using digital educational resources from students to educational institutions, which acquire licences at a decentral level. But there is no overview of the total costs for the use of platforms, partly because programmes and faculties acquire licences decentrally, often with confidentiality agreements. This is inhibiting demand aggregation on the part of the institutions.

An important first step is to gain insight into costs and financial flows. This will create clarity as to how much public funding is involved in gaining access to digital educational resources and what benefits can potentially be provided by demand aggregation and collaboration between programmes, faculties and/or institutions. The government can promote efficient use of public funds by encouraging institutions and market players to develop new, affordable models for access to digital educational resources.



2 PROTECT OWNERSHIP OF STUDENT DATA

A party that manages a platform with educational resources also has the user data at its disposal and can use these for its own purposes. Currently the data resides in the platforms of publishers and other commercial providers. But information that can be used to improve education must certainly also be available to those who develop education: the educational institutions, so that they have information on the use of digital educational resources and the control over which resources to include in their curriculum. Meanwhile safeguarding the privacy of students.

To achieve this, conditions need to be met by market players with regard to the ownership and use of student user data. Individual institutions, faculties or programmes can achieve little in this respect. Joint action is required to transform the market into a more demand-driven one, taking the requirements of institutions and of education as the shared point of departure.

3 INVEST IN OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The Dutch government can play a pioneering role when it comes to promoting open educational resources, as it has already done with open access and open science. Open educational resources are available under an open licence, allowing it to be re-used and adapted. Furthermore, an increased availability of open educational resources provides an alternative to educational resources from publishers and thus creates space for negotiation.

4 MAKE DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES ACCESSIBLE IN AN INTEGRATED MANNER

Ideally, educational resources from various providers as well as open educational resources should all be accessible to students in a simple, clear and affordable way. This is currently not the case: institutions and market players use different platforms.

For the student as end user, it is desirable that educational institutions offer educational resources from various providers in an integrated fashion. It is also up to the institutions, the government and market players to investigate how the costs for students and faculties can remain manageable and how their security and privacy remain assured. All this should lead to new forms of collaboration in which the interests of lecturers and students are more in balance with the interests of the market, and students are once again prepared to pay for access to digital educational resources.

Read more:

www.surf.nl/accelerationplan

www.surf.nl/estudybooksproject