

How To Design ODL Resources

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Dividi Et Impera (Divide and Rule)

The first step in the design of an ODL within the EBTN E-Learning environment is to subdivide the resources into small building blocks called units.

The units must then be placed into different topics (the basic components of the ODL). This first stage is very important as it allows a rational organisation of the resources which renders the ODL both more accessible and probably more interesting.

ODL format

To comply with the EBTN ODL format the new ODL must meet some fundamental requirements:

- **Overview:** the author must provide a brief and schematic overview. We suggest the creation of a list which includes the names of the topics together with a very brief description (one/two statements). The first item of the list must include a brief introduction.
- **Topics:** the author must organize the contents into units known as topics (min 6 and max 10) that include one or more sub-units each comprising one web-page.
- **Glossary:** it could be a good idea during the designing phase to consider a Glossary which includes specific and technical terms that occur in the ODL.
- **Questions:** the author must design at least 30 multiple choice questions with only one correct answer out of five possible options. Since our intention is to achieve a high quality standard it is not permissible to accept essays, short answers or any other type of questions.
- **References:** the author may collect and provide a list of valid web-links to be used as references. We suggest creating a list of titles of books, publications and manuals (including author, editor and page number details as appropriate) as a bibliography in order to cover technical themes.
- **Downloads:** These are not mandatory, but it may be very useful, to include documentation which is downloadable from the ODL.

Resources

The term resources may seem obscure, but it represents any documents containing useful information, these could be:

- Microsoft Word documents,
- OpenOffice writer documents,
- PDF documents,
- WordPad documents,
- PowerPoint presentations (you can find the PowerPoint format in a specific HowTo topic)
- Any type of electronic document.



Fig-1 Resource icons

Obviously the term resource can also include, images and audio/ video files. To explain the topics better we suggest providing web links to external public resources. In addition it could be a good idea to provide links to YouTube videos related to the specific topics, Slideshare presentations, Picasa photos and other web resources. These features are optional, but in our opinion the mash-up¹ technique can improve the quality of the learning experience.

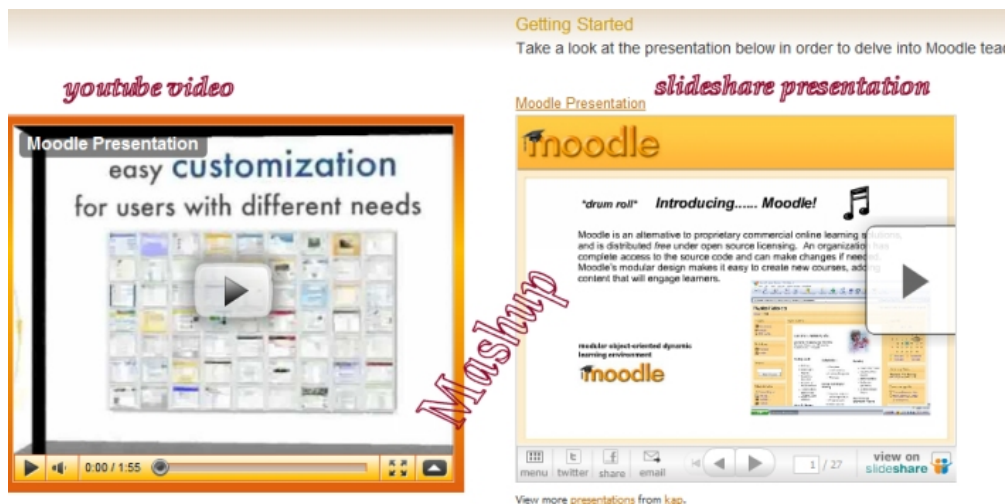


Fig-2 an example of resource obtained as mash-up

Microsoft Word Resources

As many people throughout the world use Microsoft Office to write their documents, we will only refer to the Microsoft Office package in this HowTo (but the information could also be applied to the Open Office package).

¹ In web development, a **mash-up** is a web page or application that uses or combines data or functionality from two or many more external sources to create a new service.

In order to build your ODL first create a new Microsoft Document naming it by using the ODL title. It is good practice when naming resources not to leave blank spaces, substituting them if required with underscore (-) or with hyphen² char (-).

A brief summary should be provided, this is very important as it will be used as the introduction to the course on the main page of the e-learning platform where all the ODLs are listed. You should write 3 -5 lines (there is a maximum space allocated for your ODL on the main page which cannot be exceeded).

After the summary you need to produce an introduction to the ODL in which you could explain, for example, the content of the topics, the objectives, the ODL structure and the expected learning outcomes. Obviously these are only suggestions and you should consider yourself free not to provide all this information.

In this HowTo we intentionally will not give guidelines about the format (font-style, font-size, title, colour, font-family..) because we will clean the format of the text with Block note and only then we will copy the text into the Moodle web-page. If you build your content combining text with images, photos or audio video files we suggest providing a brief description at the bottom of each image/photo and audio/video file to be included in the content. To facilitate the work of the webmaster you have to provide a separate folder³ including all the images that have appropriate size and resolution requirements.

ODL Architecture

Usually the ODL content may be scheduled over a number of weeks or may be delivered in number of topics, the first method assumes delivery of the resources at predefined times while the second supposes a delivery which is time independent. In either case we suggest at the end of a group of topics or after a number of weeks that you hold a chat session in which the teacher and students can meet and discuss issues related to the ODL. During each week/topic or group of topics/weeks you could promote forum activity in order to asynchronously debate current issues and any problems arising.

In order to obtain feedback about the learning curve of the students you can schedule a set of questions at the end of a group of topics or weeks. Usually the number of questions in the intermediate quizzes is ten. We recommend you send multiple choices questions with five possible answers only one of which is the right choice.

At the end of the ODL you must provide a set of questions regarding issues covered in the topics. The number of multiple choice questions must be at least 30. (Please underline the right answer choice).

Finally it could be a good idea to build a well-organised glossary in which the user can find the specific terms used in the ODL.

² The **hyphen** (-) is a punctuation mark used to join words and to separate syllables of a single word.

³ To send more images/files by e-mail in one shot you have to create an archive using WinZip or WinRar.

Topic outline








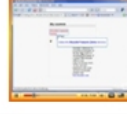





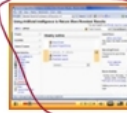




 News forum  add comments		<i>Forum activity</i>	
1		What is Moodle? Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment  Moodle presentation & Getting Started	<i>Resource</i>
2		In this video you can find a brief tutorial: "How you can create a course in moodle".  How to create an online course in Moodle  Intermediate quizzes	
3		This video tutorial will show how to add an assignment  Edit an existing course and add an assignment	
4		This screencast will show the main steps to create a web page in moodle  Create a web page in Moodle	<i>Brief Description</i>
5		How to create and configure a quiz for students  How to create quiz in Moodle	
6		How to use the activity and participation reports in Moodle  Activity and participation reports	<i>Thumbnail</i>
7	 documentation  Final test  Glossary	<i>Downloadable documents</i>	

Fig -3 An example of ODL structure published in the e-learning platform.

PowerPoint Presentations

Often teachers use slide projectors to teach in the classroom in order to make classes more interesting and attractive. Probably the most popular program in the world for building such a presentation is Microsoft PowerPoint, for this reason the ODL can also be provided as a power point presentation.

We will use a specific tool that transforms your presentation into a format compliant with the e-learning platform. This new resource will be usable by students online, only in streaming mode, and is not downloadable. Using such presentations to build ODLs could be a good choice as it may save teachers time and the slides which are published respect the original format, retaining the text, images and animations.

To organise the ODL into topics we recommend sub-dividing the presentation into smaller presentations, for each of which you should provide some additional information such as a brief summary and the salient points of the mini-presentation.

The last slide of your presentation could be the references page in which you suggest suitable web-links, scientific articles, publications and external YouTube videos to the student. In addition to the presentation

it could be a good idea to provide documents to be downloaded directly from the ODL within the e-learning platform.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a presentation titled "ODL BIOETHICS". The browser's address bar shows "Jump to..." and the page title is "Bioethics". The navigation bar includes "Learning", "Bioethics", "Resources", and "Author point life". The presentation interface has a sidebar with a "Thumbnails" view showing a list of slides. The main slide, titled "GENERAL OBJECTIVE", has a black background with green text. The slide content is as follows:

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Bioethics is full of difficult ethical questions for everybody: families, hospitals, governments and society.

The primary objective of this teaching tool is to raise the awareness of young people on bioethical questions, by providing assistance in initiating critical thinking and dispute on these issues among the students in order to encourage increase of autonomy of reflection and active participation in public debate.

This teaching material provides information to clarify some basic scientific and views that is needed for any qualified discussion of Bioethics topics.

The sidebar thumbnails list the following slides:

- GENERAL OBJECTIVE
- WHAT IS BIOETHICS?
- BIOETHICS
- ETHICS
- SCIENCE ASKS

The presentation controls at the bottom show "Slide : 2 OF 58".

Fig-4 Presentation obtained by Power Point available only in streaming and not downloadable