

## Join us in sharing the knowledge

Welcome to the first issue of *OERNZ News*, the newsletter of the Open Education Resource (OER) Portal for New Zealand Schools.

OERNZ is an open project whose aim is to create an online community that will foster the collaborative development and sharing of digital resources in support of the national curriculum. These resources are then freely available for anyone to use and, under licences which give you the permission, to alter, improve and redistribute.

"It's a national repository of free content resources developed by Kiwi teachers for Kiwi teachers," said project founder Dr Wayne Mackintosh. "What OER materials do is provide real freedom to educators because they're stored in file formats using Creative Commons licences that let teachers adapt and modify them to suit the needs of their own teaching style and student context."



These materials can include: lesson plans, online learning materials for your students, professional development tutorials, classroom handouts, etc.

The initiative is being supported by the Ministry of Education and WikiEducator ([wikieducator.org](http://wikieducator.org)), an international wiki project backed by the OER Foundation where teachers can collaborate on creating and reusing educational materials. OERNZ is also working with approved LMS vendors to easily reference and incorporate OER into the preferred learning environment.

"I'm inspired by teachers who are taking up the digital challenge of returning to the core values of education, namely to share knowledge freely. Join us at OERNZ and help share in all our future success."

### HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

There are many ways you can become involved. You can join the OERNZ mailing list (see below) or one of our planning teams. Look out for copies of *OERNZ News* or information in *INTERFACE Magazine*. You can also sign up for one of the free online training sessions or even consider becoming a WikiAmbassador for your school! And when you're ready, why not join us by launching your own free portal page for your school.

### STAYING IN TOUCH COULDN'T BE EASIER

Keep up with the latest news, views and information by joining the OERNZ mailing list on Google Groups (a free service from Google where groups of people can discuss common interests).

**Step 1:** You'll need a Google account (if you don't have one, you just need to provide an email address and come up with a password).

**Step 2:** Go to the OERNZ homepage on WikiEducator (<http://wikieducator.org/OERNZ>) – you will find a link to the group under the discussion list box.

**Step 3:** Go straight to <http://groups.google.com/group/oernz>

**Step 4:** Apply for membership via the link in the right-hand column.

Once you've been accepted as a member, you'll be emailed discussion messages and be able to comment yourself.

### WHAT IS CREATIVE COMMONS?

Creative Commons (CC) is an attempt to establish a fair middle way between traditional copyright and a free-for-all of intellectual property. The organisation has developed innovative ways for copyright holders to grant permissions for using and adapting and redistributing materials. [www.creativecommons.org.nz](http://www.creativecommons.org.nz)

## We need you!

Want to get involved? We're looking to appoint at least one WikiAmbassador at every school in New Zealand. This person will be our point of contact for distributing newsletters and motivating local staff. They'll also promote the OERNZ concept of a community of educators and a platform for free educational resources, collaborative development and national network-building. If you have a passion to widen access to quality education through open networks and free content, get in touch.

For more information:

[http://wikieducator.org/New\\_Zealand\\_Schools\\_OER\\_Portal/Roles](http://wikieducator.org/New_Zealand_Schools_OER_Portal/Roles)

## New Zealand School OER portals

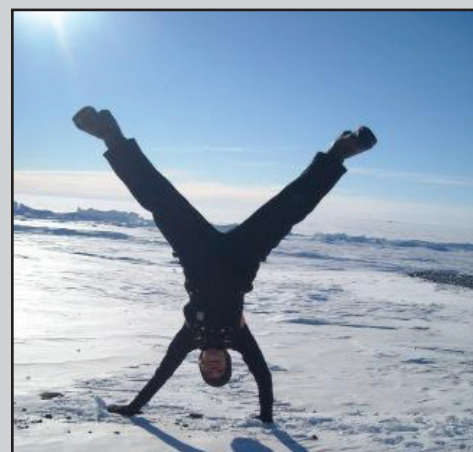
Several schools have already set up their own OER portals. We extend a warm WikiEducator welcome to:

- Warrington School, Otago
- Maranatha Christian School, Wellington
- Diocesan School for Girls, Auckland
- Papanui High School, Christchurch
- Albany Senior High School, North Shore
- St Peter's School, Cambridge
- King's High English Department, Dunedin
- Nayland College, Nelson
- Raumati Beach School, Kapiti Coast

Welcome to our family of Kiwi OER pioneers! To find out more about launching a free OER portal for your school go to

<http://tinyurl.com/oerschool>

## Educating from Antarctica



After winning a fellowship with the Royal Society, Warrington School teacher Trisha Korth headed off to Antarctica to study the coastal organisms living below the frozen sea ice of the Ross Sea. She's now reporting back to students about her work through Exploration ICEBlock on WikiEducator and also posting video logs of her experiences. Check it out at <http://wikieducator.org/Antarctica>

# It's one of the best things we can do for one another

Albany Senior High School was one of the first to set up its own portal page. Here Deputy Principal **Mark Osborne** explains what makes OERNZ the perfect fit for his school.

## WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THE OPEN EDUCATION RESOURCE PORTAL FOR NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS BEING SET UP?

I think this is a great step forward for learning in New Zealand schools. The development of re-mixable, portable content means teachers can be much more flexible and responsive in the way they use teaching and learning materials.

## WHY SHOULD SCHOOLS GET INVOLVED IN OERNZ?

A lot of the value of OERs comes from their flexibility. It's possible for an educator to use one resource in several different ways with the same class, depending on the needs of the learner, so it takes differentiation to a whole new level. The other obvious benefit for schools is the way that resources like these cut down on teacher workload. Using OERs means that if people only produce one resource, by the time we add them all together we have a wonderful collection of learning tools that we can tweak and adjust to meet our own needs. "Nau te rourou, naku te rourou, ka ora te iwi." (With your basket and my basket, everyone will thrive.)

## HOW ARE YOU PLANNING TO USE WIKIEDUCATOR AND OERNZ?

We're already building a range of resources that can be used to support learning: multimedia online textbooks, glossaries and dictionaries, lesson and unit plans, that sort of thing. One project is an interactive textbook for Macbeth. Rather than simply reading the text and doing some activities like students would with a printed textbook, OERs allow us to do things like have an audio book alongside the text so students can be listening to the play as they read it. It also allows us to put video of key scenes next to the activities students are completing. Printed resources simply can't do that.

We're also making use of student strengths in the way we're developing OERs. For instance, my history class has been producing multimedia OERs for the topics we have been studying this year, meaning that they are writing the textbook as we move through the course. It's very student-centred and collaborative, but it also means that anyone up and down the country can contribute to our book – students, teachers and other history experts. We've also got original video interviews with people like John Minto and diplomats who have worked at the United Nations, and anyone can go into the resource and use them for learning.

In a wider sense, we're starting to build networks of educators throughout the country with whom we will collaboratively develop our OERs. In some ways this has been the best outcome of the whole project: the collaboration with others. It means we've got a network of educators to exchange ideas with.

## HOW DID YOU FIND THE SET UP PROCESS?

Setting up a WikiEducator OER is a piece of cake. If you can edit a Wikipedia page you can create one. And with the arrival of the Rich Text Editor, producing them has gotten a whole lot easier. Now you could probably say if you can use a word processor you can build an OER.

## WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED SO FAR?

The best thing about OERs is the community that exists around them. As always, sharing teaching ideas is one of the best things educators can do for one another.

## HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE OERNZ DEVELOP?

I'd love to see more people in there building resources and collaborating with us! Come and share what you know!



MARK OSBORNE

[HTTP://WIKIEDUCATOR.ORG/](http://wikieducator.org/)  
USER:MOSBORNE01

## Training the trainers

OERNZ is hosting a 'Train the Trainers' workshop on 10 December in Christchurch. The aim is to establish a cadre of OERNZ WikiFacilitators or Trainers that can build the capability of New Zealand teachers for reusable and portable content. If you'd like to know more, the Planning Team is working on guidelines for the roles and responsibilities <http://tinyurl.com/wikitrainers>

## Join our planning team

OERNZ is your initiative. It's a project, planned, co-designed and owned by New Zealand teachers for New Zealand teachers – so we want you to get involved! If you're a teacher, you're invited to join our OER planning team.

<http://tinyurl.com/planningteam>

## Donate your content

Many teachers have lesson plans and teaching resources stored as Word documents, PowerPoint presentations, PDFs, etc. If you'd like to share material you have created, OERNZ is able to provide a digitisation service to convert them for use in WikiEducator.

## Get paid to develop an OER

We're currently working on a way to financially reward teachers for creating an OER. We envisage an OER honorarium payment of NZ\$300 or approximately 10 hours of development time – the rough cost-equivalent of a relief teacher. For guidelines and further information go to

<http://tinyurl.com/oerpayment>

## Design by vote

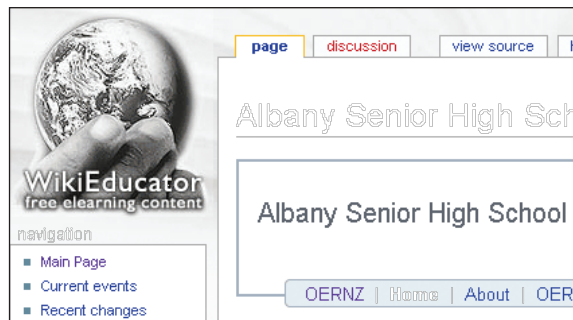
When setting up this newsletter, we tried to live by our motto of 'By Kiwi teachers for Kiwi Teachers'. We offered a selection of possible mastheads and designs and asked OERNZ members to decide. This is the one you chose.

<http://tinyurl.com/layoutvote>

## Meet OERUG

OERNZ has inspired Uganda to start its own national OER portal, 'Making Education Possible to All'. At the last count, 16 schools had already set up portals.

<http://wikieducator.org/OERUG>



ALBANY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
[HTTP://WIKIEDUCATOR.ORG/](http://wikieducator.org/)  
ALBANY\_SENIOR\_HIGH\_SCHOOL

## Share and print



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So, please share and print this newsletter and its contents. The more teachers who know about and use OERNZ, the better it will become.

<http://nz.wikieducator.org>