

The Focus of the Wartime University Library - Open Educational Resources: the Example of the Ukrainian State University of Science and Technology

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The morning of February 24, 2022 changed the life of every Ukrainian. We woke up to explosions and the reality of what was happening to us, right in the heart of Europe, and in the 21st century. It was a full-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine with the intention of destroying the Ukrainian people as a nation, including its history, culture, education, and science.

Eight months since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and almost nine years since the occupation of Crimea, Sevastopol, parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Ukrainian librarians, like the entire Ukrainian people, survived the initial difficult period of the war and are only getting stronger.

The war was a catalyst for the development of open educational resources at the Ukrainian State University of Science and Technology during the lack of access to physical collections and local electronic resources.

The University Scientific Library has been studying the topic of OE and OER since 2019 . And first, it was an analysis of official UNESCO documents, research articles, and the practical experience of academic libraries around the world.

Then, with initial practical experience, came the understanding of what the role of the university library should be in the direction of open educational resources.

A library is an organizational structure that provides an optimal balance between the efforts of teachers, including as authors, and a mechanism for helping to understand OER, as well as creating, using, publishing and distributing OER.

The focus on OER was an initiative "from below" (that is, from the Library), rather than "from above" (such as from the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science).

It was during wartime that the rector and vice-rectors of USUST gave the green light to develop OER. They supported the Library's calls for the introduction of new models of information support for distance learning and teaching.

In addition, the administration, teachers, and librarians understand that after the end of the war, hundreds of disabled people affected by Russian aggression would want to get either higher education or retrain themselves. But physically they will not be able to come to the university. And it is the Library that should support inclusivity with its resources and services. This is social justice.

Today, our library already represents Ukraine in SPARC Europe & ENOEL (European Network of Librarians of Open Education).

The Open Education Global 2022 International Project Competition (USA, October 17-20, 2022) brought victory to our project "Advocacy work of the Scientific Library to Advance Open Education in Ukraine: Ukrainian State University of Science and Technologies", submitted by the ENOEL team and the USUST Scientific Library.

Ukrainians today have stopped looking for an answer to when the war will end; but we have an unambiguous understanding of the dimension in which this answer is located – "until our victory". Librarians have their own service, their own information front, which is difficult. But our university communities need us, and we will not let them down, no matter how difficult and dangerous it is.