



THE INNOVATIVE CAPACITY OF OER

Dirk Van Damme

Head of the Centre for
Educational Research and
Innovation, OECD/EDU

OECD/CERI

- Internationalisation & trade in higher education
 - *UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education*
- University Futures: higher education in 2030
- Knowledge Management and Systemic Innovation in education
- New Millennium Learners
- Skills and Education for Innovation
- AHELO: Assessing Higher Education Learning Outcomes

OER

- A vibrant development with a formidable multitude of small and large projects
- A community
- A movement, part of a broader global movement towards ‘openness’
- A campaign
- A romantic idea, even an ideology?
- A paradox?

OER

- Huge capacities to
 - Bring knowledge and learning to disadvantaged learners, communities, institutions and countries
 - Improve access and success in learning
 - To diversify and innovate teaching and learning arrangements
 - To increase quality in teaching and learning
 - To balance hegemonic relations in global higher education
 - To help knowledge flowing!

Policy challenges

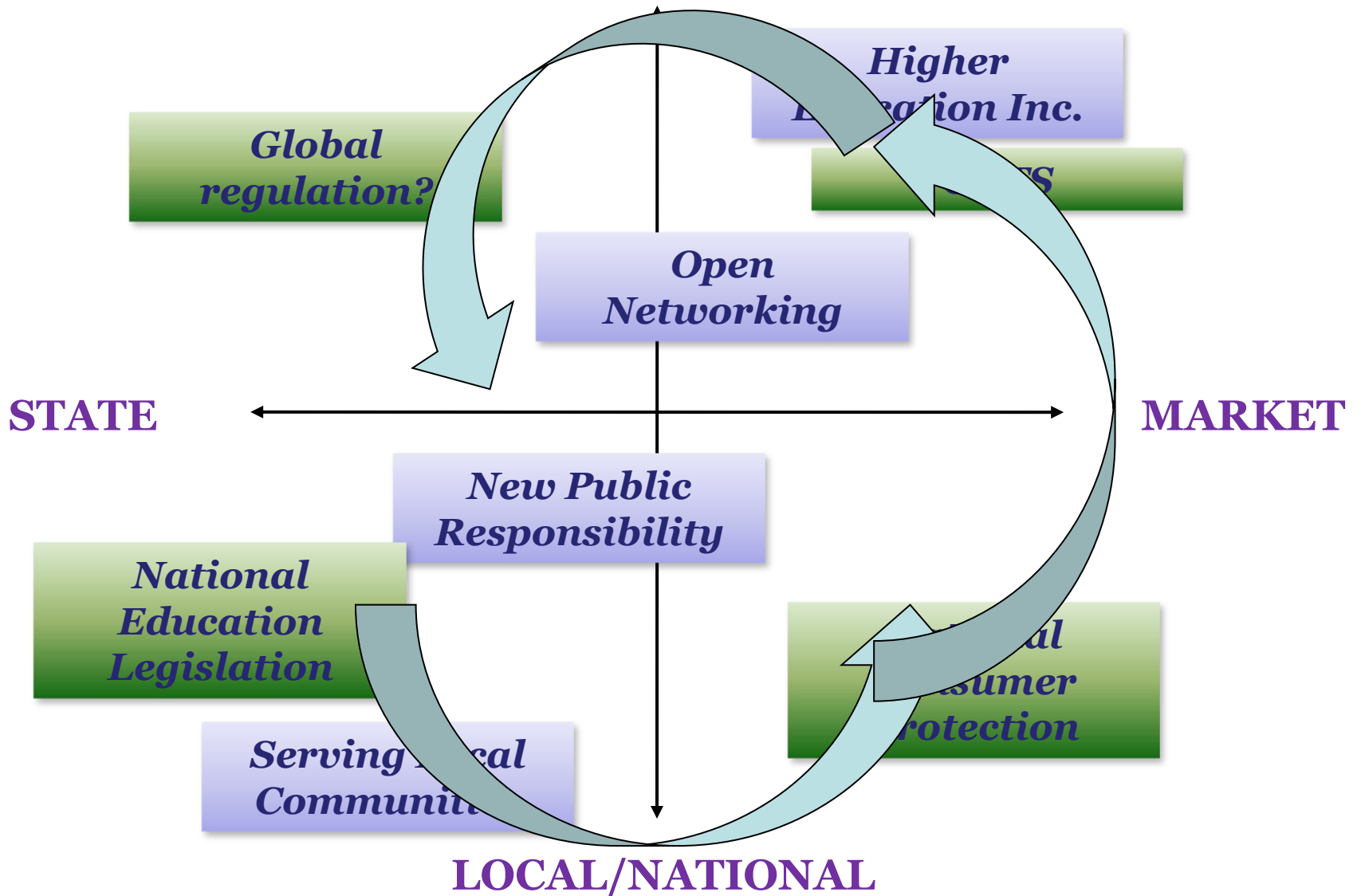
- Awareness raising and advocacy
- Communities and networking
- Capacity development
- Sustainability
- Quality assurance
- Copyright and licensing

(UNESCO/IIEP survey 2008)

Policy challenges

- I really applaud and congratulate UNESCO to take the lead in the global development of OER
 - International higher education at the crossroads: several, sometimes conflicting scenarios and developments
 - Cf OECD/CERI University Futures scenarios

GLOBAL/INTERNATIONAL



Policy challenges

- I really applaud and congratulate UNESCO to take the lead in the global development of OER
 - International higher education at the crossroads: several, sometimes conflicting scenarios and developments
 - Cf OECD/CERI University Futures scenarios
 - OER is part of a broader movement towards a new global governance model of (higher) education, characterised by networking and collaboration
 - OECD is very happy to join and contribute

Critical issues and risks

- Sustainable business models
 - Short lifecycle of projects
 - Risks of intra-institutional development modes
- Captured in romantic optimism of pioneers
 - Need to scale, leverage and mainstream
- Risk of staying in supply-driven mode
 - Skills of users, risks of consumerist uses
- Assessment of efficacy and impact
 - Need to develop strong evaluation culture
 - Many success stories, many disappointments as well: learn from failures

Way forward for OER

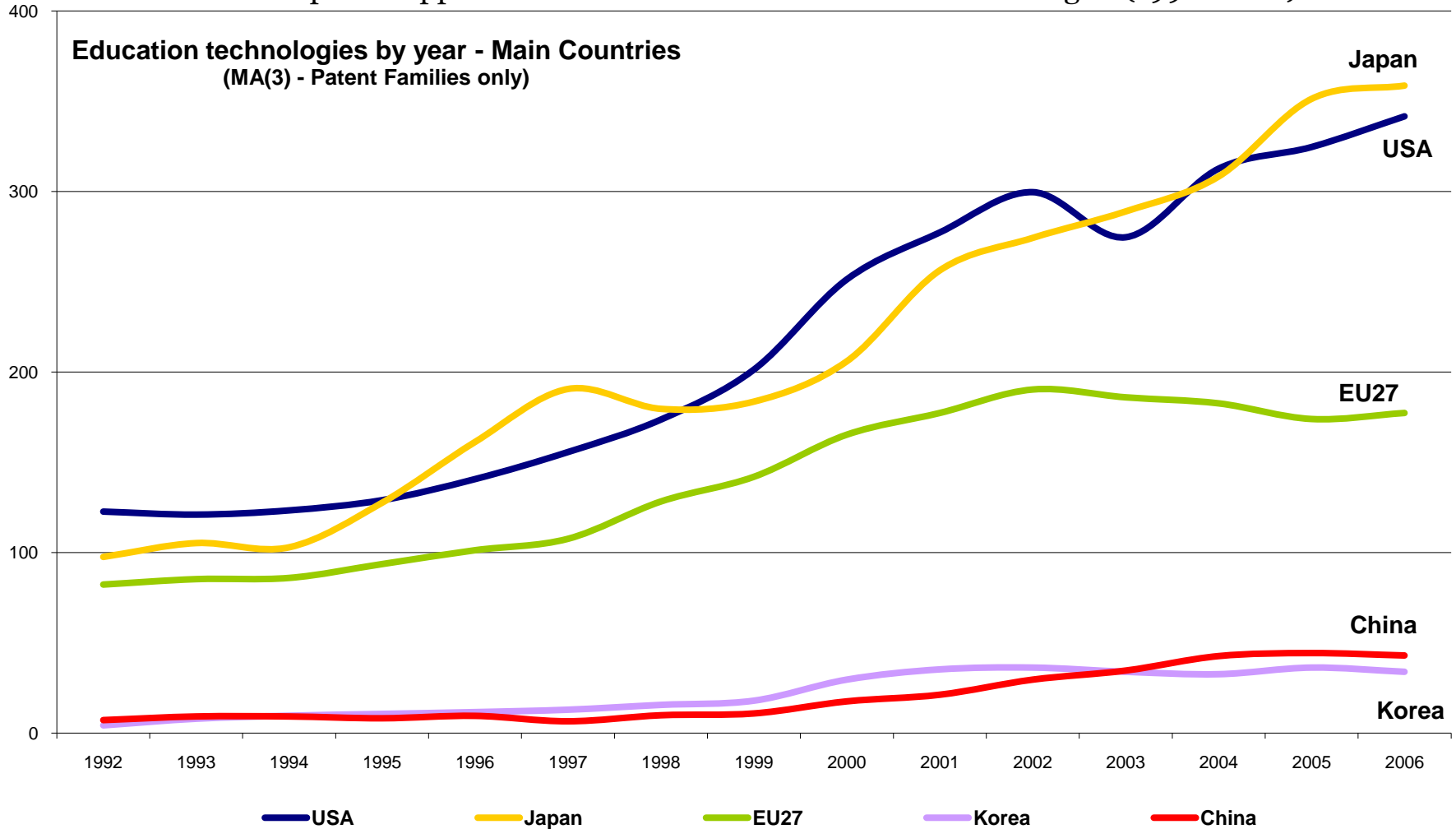
- OER should define itself as *systemic innovation* of the global (higher) education system
 - Scale up from project-based production level towards an OER-oriented ecosystem
 - Need for strong national and international policies
 - The global knowledge economy needs balancing the exaggerated IP regulation, in order to secure the free flow of knowledge and innovation
 - Technology is a fantastic enabler, but not the *raison d'être* nor the purpose

Critical questions

- *Isn't it counterproductive to see OER and 'openness' in general as a correction or even in opposition to the dominant modes of IP regulation of knowledge*
 - Future educational innovation will combine and integrate open and regulated/protected modes
 - 'Openness' is seen by the OECD in its Innovation Strategy as a valuable source of innovation and economic growth alongside IP regulation

The emergence of an innovative education industry

Growth of patent applications: Worldwide new education technologies (1990-2006)



Critical questions

- *Is OER focusing on innovative content, new skills needs and innovative pedagogies?*
 - Some fear that OER is developing (and thereby reconfirming) more traditional content
 - Operating under more traditional pedagogical approaches
 - Whereby more innovative content-pedagogy educational developments are reserved under restricted access regimes

21st Century Skills

- Cf. Microsoft-Intel-Cisco *ATC21S* project

Creativity and innovation
Critical thinking
Problem solving
Communication
Collaboration
Information fluency
Technological literacy

Critical questions

- *From an educational perspective, is it recommendable or even conceivable to separate content from pedagogical design and delivery?*
 - Some fear that the development of OER will counteract other educational innovations, aiming at more active and constructivist learning
 - It makes little sense to make content publicly available and protect educational design under strict protection

Critical questions

- *How to move from ‘resources’ to a more comprehensive perspective on teaching/learning interaction, including*
 - Curriculum: we need to reflect on innovative curriculum
 - Educational delivery, involving technology
 - Learning outcomes: what do we expect learners to achieve and do they realise these?
 - Assessment of learners
 - Efficiency and effectiveness of education

Conclusion

- OER is best defined as a *systemic innovation* in the global education and knowledge system
 - Balancing (not opposing) IP regimes
 - Innovating and improving education globally
 - Taking a comprehensive approach to education
 - Connecting to other innovations
 - And in doing so, providing an enormous added value to the global knowledge economy
- But such perspective puts many new challenges and questions on the table!

Thank you !

dirk.vandamme@oecd.org
www.oecd.org/edu/ceri