

EDUCAUSE Values: Openness

“EDUCAUSE values sharing, collaboration, and open access to knowledge and resources, and thus supports the development and adoption of technologies, applications, and approaches that foster openness.”

A central pillar of the academic community is its commitment to the free flow of information and ideas. This commitment to sharing is essential to scholarly discovery and innovation. It is also central to helping learners engage, absorb, and apply knowledge in order to advance personally and academically. Finally, this commitment to openness provides the foundation for leveraging resources, both within and among institutions, to strengthen the creation, transmission, and preservation of knowledge.

The academic—and, by extension, social—value of unfettered intellectual exchange finds expression in technologies, applications, and approaches that foster sharing, collaboration, and open access to knowledge and resources. By actively encouraging collaboration, customization, and experimentation, open environments—whether social, cultural, or technological—best facilitate the free flow of information and ideas on which discovery, innovation, and high-quality higher education depend. In an IT context, examples include:

- Open standards and interoperability
- Open and community source software development
- Open access to research data
- Open scholarly communications
- Open access to, and open derivative use of, content

Open sharing for the sake of discovery and innovation does not necessarily dictate a specific business model. In some cases, open resources can be monetized or provide the foundation for commercial enterprises. Although not all ventures lend themselves to open, collaborative approaches, many companies have demonstrated that they can participate in “open initiatives” to the benefit of both their shareholders and the common good. Two questions are key:

- Do the technologies, applications, or approaches catalyze sharing and collaboration—and thus discovery and innovation?
- Do all participants—for-profit and non-profit, individual and institutional—know and respect openness as being essential to discovery and innovation?

As the higher education technology association, EDUCAUSE embraces the value of openness. EDUCAUSE will work with its community and others to facilitate discussions on where open technologies, applications, and approaches are needed and how best to achieve them. EDUCAUSE will also look for opportunities, consistent with its mission and member service obligations, to support such efforts and to itself adopt open approaches. Embracing openness as a core value of the higher education IT community commits EDUCAUSE to helping both its institutional and its corporate members engage the topic on a sustained basis. The goal of this engagement is to produce the best options for EDUCAUSE members—both now and in the future—to maximize the flexibility and creativity with which they can advance their mission of creating, transmitting, and preserving knowledge.