Using Pressbooks During COVID-19

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Introduction - Why Pressbooks?

Pressbooks is a wonderful tool to build published or in-the-works materials that can be shared. Pressbooks is based on the WordPress platform and allows you to build a user-friendly and adaptable web book. Also, anyone can easily export the materials in files such as .mobi, .epub, or .pdf. In times like these, which for most of us are unprecedented, it can be challenging to consider how to re-think a course or how to do things differently. This is not just a challenge, but a great opportunity to re-evaluate and test the methods, tools, and the meaning behind your pedagogy.

Open systems, such as OER (open educational resources) can also help students persist through courses and their academic life. During the current pandemic, it's even more important to explore how to make your courses more adaptable, affordable, and accessible. We can also consider thinking about compassion, care, and kindness. I think Pressbooks and OER, in general, can help us expand our compassion, care, and kindness in unexpected ways – OER lowers the cost of education for our students, can involve them in collaborative processes, and help us learn and help us express our own humanity and perspectives in this unique time. Provided below are my favorite guides for Pressbooks and open publishing, and I'm going to bring you through a tour of some materials that faculty have built here at Plymouth State University.

But first, a few quotes from Plymouth State University users of Pressbooks.

> "I used Pressbooks because I wanted a professional publication platform that was easy to use and would allow

open access. I received great advice from Cathie LeBlanc who used Pressbooks."

"It is fantastic that PSU is developing Pressbooks as a tool for instruction and student publishing. We need a platform like this to promote learning, showcase student work, and connect with our communities."

In the next section, you'll find a list of resources, and following that in the final section of this Pressbook, I will include ideas for building out your Pressbook and a video tour through some Pressbooks I really appreciate that were and continue to be built here at Plymouth State University.

1. Resources for the New Pressbooks User

The Beginner User: Tools to Learn

I have found the Pressbooks guides essential to my understanding of the ins and outs of the technology side of Pressbooks and for learning how to use the tool well. The Pressbooks for Edu Guide notably has a wonderful brief section on Accessibility and Universal Design Learning. Both guides are full of the basic knowledge you need to be able to start using Pressbooks. I encourage all those new to the system to take the time and go through one of the two or both guides.

The Pressbooks Edu Guide

Pressbooks User Guide

A great guide on Low Bandwidth Teaching and Learning – for optimizing technology files.

OER in the Classroom

Thinking more about how to create and integrate materials for the class and beyond, the Rebus Community I've found to have some of the best materials to read through. Rebus Community is an initiative of the Rebus Foundation, a Canadian registered charity and they support a model of publishing that is collaborative, efficient, and

open. [1] Rebus Community has powerful resources on [Making Open Textbooks with Students](#) and [A Guide to Publishing Open Textbooks.](#)

Example Texts to Explore

These are a few resources I've found after researching many Pressbooks sites and materials that I like to share as aspirational Pressbooks that university members could look to in terms of different ways to build and develop their Pressbooks. I see these again as aspirational and valuable resources to help you consider how you might use Pressbooks.

[The Word on College Reading and Writing](#)
   This is an introductory collegiate material.

[The Essentials of Linguistics](#)

This is a subject Material written by an expert.

[Driving Educational Change: Innovations in Action](#)

This is a collaboration between students and faculty.

   In the winter of 2020 – Pressbooks also launched a new resource that is extremely valuable for searching Pressbooks materials. It is [pressbooks.directory](#) and we here at Plymouth are launching our cataloged materials in 2021 onto Pressbooks Directory.

1. https://about.rebus.community

Plymouth State University

Our [Plymouth State University Catalog](#)

Our Catalog is a public place, where you can find materials that our community members have published. It's a good place to start idea gathering and to find our other Plymouth State University community members who have used Pressbooks. You could inquire and ask about questions to them or some of the other experts we have in the Pressbooks world on our campus.

Course Textbook

[Creating Games by Cathie LeBlanc](#)

> I wanted to create a textbook to support my face-to-face class while his material is intended to be an entire online course. That said, I will make the materials that I use in my course freely available as I develop it.[2]

Classroom Resource

[Creative Writing, Creative Process by Matt Cheney](#)

This is a collection of writing exercises, mostly (but not solely) aimed at high school and college classroom work.[3]

Lecture Notes

[Copyright for Content Creators by Christin Wixson](#)

Digital Bookshelf

[Digital Bookshelf Plymouth State University Nursing](#)

This virtual bookshelf is designed for nursing students to have OER which replace textbooks and reference material to promote

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2. https://creatinggames.press.plymouth.edu/front-matter/introduction
3. https://creativewritingcreativeprocess.press.plymouth.edu/front-matter/introduction-2/

evidence based nursing practice with up to date open access material [4]

This collection of digital resources replace some reference materials and course textbooks in the PSU nursing program.

Classroom Assignment and Collaborative Book

[Opening Contemporary Art by Sarah Parrish](#)

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4. https://digital-bookshelf.press.plymouth.edu/

2. Considerations for Building Your Pressbook

When thinking about building your Pressbook there will be several things to consider, we're open to the use and creation of the material. Below is a list of considerations and questions to ask when building your Pressbook.

Creation

Who is creating and/or leading the creation of the material? What perspectives do they bring to the material?

Do you expect this Pressbook to continue to evolve and grow, or see it more as a static material, or even something that might change from time to time, maybe not often. Perhaps you're considering making new editions down the road of the material and this one will be your starting material, a guide of sorts for future endeavors.

Do you want to involve students? What might their roles be? When is your book finished?

Audience

Who is the audience for the material? Defining the audience can be a simple task or something more complex. As small an audience as your class is perfectly fine, or as large as the internet itself, or other people within the discipline you practice. Think about whom might be engaging with the material or whom you might want the audience to be. This will influence, the build, the sharing

structure, and the creation itself. Remember to think about the audience within the context of "Open Pedagogy" as well – this material exists beyond the walls of the Learning Management System and that is an important consideration to make.

Community

Who else in the community might be engaged in or participate in the creation of the material or might the material provide value to?

Structure

Pressbooks allows for the integration of digital resources into your material. How might images, audio, video, or interactivity be used in your material, or will they not be? Why or why not? How will you structure your material?

Creativity

What might make this material or interacting with this material be different than other modes currently engaged with during this time of emergency remote learning i.e. Zoom, Moodle, a website? What might make your material exciting? What excites **you** in the creation of a new material?

3. Introductory Videos on the Pressbooks System

Welcome to the next section in your Pressbooks education. I've created some introductory video materials for you to explore your Pressbooks. If you have questions, remember just like Pressbooks is a living and active resource so I hope you take advantage of opportunities to ask questions and learn more.

Pressbooks Introduction

This video introduces you to our Pressbooks site.

> *An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://using-pressbooks.press.plymouth.edu/?p=34*

Organizing Your Pressbook Parts

This video will walk you through setting up your Pressbook parts i.e. your Front Matter, Chapters, and Back Matter.

> *An interactive or media element has been excluded*

from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://using-pressbooks.press.plymouth.edu/?p=34

Navigating Book Info

This video will give you an introduction to the Book Info section on Pressbooks and some things you will want to add or change in your new Pressbook.

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Pressbooks Remainder of Settings

This video will go through the remaining important settings in your Pressbook.

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Exploring Plymouth State University's Pressbooks Catalog

This video gives a brief overview of some ideas of how to build a Pressbook and what other faculty at Plymouth State University have built.

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Acknowledgements

I want to thank all of the advocates for Pressbooks on campus and faculty members who have used the system and continue to build on it. I love what Pressbooks has to offer and I hope you will consider investigating and using it as a tool in your in-person, blended, or digital classroom. I encourage you to explore these resources and beyond.