

The annual BETT exhibition in London was held in London from 30 January to 2 February 2013 - both a slight change of time, from earlier in the month, and a significant change of location. It has now moved to from the rather gloomy halls at Olympia to the gleaming new Excel Conference Centre in London's docklands. As always, it was a good barometer of many current developments in ICT in education - both for what was there and what was not there.

Compared with 3-4 years ago there *seemed* to be fewer Learning Platform and Content providers and public sector/Third sector exhibitors and far fewer 'Resource Banks', which might provide OER and content for virtual education. However, compared with 3-4 years ago there *seemed* to be more tools for managing and manipulating content, furniture (work stations, desks, flight cases, learning space equipment, play structures), management and administrative solutions (such as Cashless Catering, access control systems etc) and overseas exhibitors – the largest group were the Chinese (mainly hardware suppliers) but there was a greater variety of countries represented - Korea, Norway, Sweden, Hungary, Japan, Spain, Bulgaria, USA, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Israel, Netherlands, Turkey, Romania (SIVECO an ODS partner) and Brazil (an initiative of the Brazilian Govt). There was also more specialised Audio Visual equipment (high-quality lighting and sound rigs for media work), together with innumerable Apps and iPad 'accessories' and solutions, display screen exhibitors and data management and security solutions. As in all years, assistive technology suppliers, systems integrators, total solution providers and mobile learning solutions were strongly represented.

Whilst there appeared to be fewer content providers there are still a number of providers of Curriculum Resources and Tools and these are heavily concentrated in Maths, Science and Engineering. The providers of curriculum resources included both major publishers and smaller specialised organisations; their attitude towards OER was ambivalent and in some cases evasive.

In informal chats with suppliers they reported that (in the UK) the decentralisation (particularly the shrinking influence of Local Education Authorities) has created difficulties for them identifying and dealing with customers. There is no real touchable 'market place' nor any economically-sound buyer cohorts/aggregations. One Total Solution Provider told me that they deal with individual Secondary schools because they have little choice but they probably would not deal with Primary schools which are too small to be viable units.

As in other years, there were hidden gems in some of the workshop sessions, notably the ICT in Scandinavian schools session - brochure available from [http:// www.diu.se](http://www.diu.se). This included an enormously impressive presentation by four 15-16 year old students from Nordahl Grieg Upper Secondary School, Bergen on the ways in which they used gaming (Civilisation IV) in humanities subjects and using ICT to improve Maths education. The school is brand new, almost literally transparent and is being used to pilot innovative use of ICT in secondary schooling. It was clear from the presentation that there was some, albeit limited, use of OER.

The Sero team held useful discussions with The Virtual School ([www.thevirtualschool.com](http://www.thevirtualschool.com)), which is not a virtual school in itself, but potentially an interesting mini-case study for POERUP in the use of OER.