



# Bricks: the new magazine for the schools by AICA & Sle-L

*Sharing "bricks" of knowledge and  
experience*

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Reproduction of an editorial presentation on the number zero of Bricks magazine, published by AICA and Sie-L.

Bricks can be accessed at [www.rivistabricks.it](http://www.rivistabricks.it).

Bricks.

This magazine and its related site aim to offer schools and teachers an environment where to share “bricks” of knowledge and experience.

A magazine and a website to build together the school of the future together: a school which knows how to develop the skills necessary to counter the decline of our country [Italy] and re-launch the competition in a globalised world, which can give young people confidence in the future providing them with equal opportunities, were they Italians for generations or just arrived in our country; a school that knows how to exploit the wealth and expertise of hundreds of teachers; a school, finally, that combines the heritage of teaching experience with the use of information technology and communication so that the processes of teaching and learning take place in the new digital environment, so pervasive and so familiar to young people.

In many fields two trends have been confronting: opening or closing the access to resources (of any kind). Allowing the access to resources such as water, medicines, citizenship, information, music, ideas, courses, educational resources or limiting it to protect legitimate interests such as the ownership of goods, of a patent, the paternity of an idea, the link with the territory, the right to privacy, the time spent to write a book, to produce music, to develop a course?

Not a new confrontation and a conflict, but that especially nowadays gets new characteristics in the “flat world” of globalization and digital revolution.

It’s enough to have a computer and an Internet access to enter a whole universe of resources. It’s enough a computer and the Internet to develop, publish, and make our resources accessible to anyone. It’s enough a computer and the Internet to co-operate with anyone with a computer, Internet access and a similar willingness to cooperate.

In the software field, the debate on opening or closing, between free software and proprietary software has been underway for a long time.

Linux, Apache and Moodle in the eLearning field are the most well known software characterized by:

- the possibility to be issued under licences of this kind “You are free to use, modify and distribute it - even for commercial purposes - provided that you keep the same license on the derivative and sue the original author”;
- the way how they have been continuously developed in a collaborative mode by people scattered all over the world by means of a “chaotic” process which looks more like a bazaar rather than the construction of a cathedral according to Raymond’s effective definition.

Well, these products have got significant market shares and have been actually producing business, a proof that the phenomenon of "opening-up" is not necessarily marginal.

As far as educational resources are concerned, MIT Open Courseware and Wikipedia represent, with different characteristics, two milestones. The choice of Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Unlocking knowledge, empowering minds – to make all its courses accessible, under a licence similar to the one of Linux (but with the restriction "non commercial") has already paved a way. OCW consortium can currently rely on nearly a hundred of universities all over the world (none of them Italian, who will be the first?) and fifty associations.

If the logic of OCW is that of sharing and providing quality courses already completed, that of Wikipedia is instead centered on collaborative production: the creation of an encyclopedia of quality thanks to the contributions of millions of users.

The Open Educational Resource movement suggests combining, enlarging and generalising these models.

Individual teachers, schools, universities, training centres should make their own resources available in an "open" way ("open" means it is freely available from the point of view of the law, but also technically reusable and modifiable). Instead of developing resources always from scratch they should start from what has already been developed and suit it to their own teaching context also in order to better it.

Bricks intends to back such a process of "opening" in the learning/teaching field: a concept of "opening" related not only to the sharing and co-operative developing of OERs, but also to the flexibility of paths, learning pace and styles; and thus opening school space and timetable supported by a blended learning (integration between face-to-face and eLearning) or better a "mobile learning" mode.

"Bricks", just to mention even in the title the aim to promote the sharing and exchanging of resources and experiences.

The Web has always been, as noted by Tim Berners-Lee, "a collaborative space where people can interact", but certainly the Web 2.0 has amplified this feature, has made this collaborative space easily accessible even to those who have no special technological skills. And the web 2.0, in the felicitous expression of O'Reilly, has the power to "take full advantage of collective intelligence".

It is such collective intelligence of the school – of teachers, principals, students – that we intend, by the Bricks magazine and its site, to collect, to

promote and to disseminate.

Bricks. Building materials, but not limited to that. How many possible uses for a brick?

In a historic strip published from 1913 to 1944 on various U.S. newspapers, Krazy Kat by George Herriman, the brick was constantly thrown by the mice Ignatius against his partner who interpreted it as a gesture of love.

Let's throw, symbolically, these bricks - as a gesture of love towards school - against everything that degrades and humiliates, against the logic of the cuts to education and research, of a quiet life based on resignation.

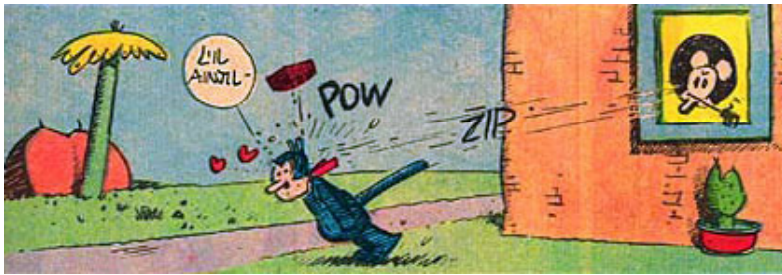


Fig 1 - Taken from Wikimedia Commons PD-US-NOT RENEWED (Public Domain because it was published in the United States between 1923 and 1963, and its copyright was not renewed)

Bricks. Even Bricks is a brick that is going to place next to other prestigious magazines in the areas of school as TD, ITD-CNR, Form@re directed by Antonio Calvani, Education 2.0, directed by Luigi Berlinguer, and next to hundreds of blogs High quality promoted by individual teachers.

There is not a 'market' where to win a niche in competition with other subjects. There is a debate to enrich, there is a whole world of experiences to be voiced, there is a transformation to promote.

Bricks. Guidelines of this journal are to give voice to teachers to share the wealth of experiences carried out in schools and vocational training centres. But teachers - and their principals and students - are not the only person in the field. There are also publishers, producers of educational and instructional software. They too have their own "bricks" of knowledge and experience. Gladly we will host them if they want to confront the logic of openness and sharing.