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You can find whatever your heart desires on the internet, and that's in part thanks to something called open source. It's a bit of an amorphous term, but that hasn't stopped this Utah virtual charter school from diving in to this potentially revolutionizing movement. Open source is just as its name implies--open. In terms of general internet material, that means that the source code (i.e., the program code behind the information) is available alongside the content, to be used and modified as the consumer desires. At an open source virtual charter, that means being able to personalize learning materials to a new level. (Read more about Open Source here.)

So what does this mean for Open High School? No commercial textbooks, which means that lesson materials aren't copyrighted and can be used and modified to a greater degree of specificity for each student. It also means that a staff of four teachers can give personalized attention to 125 ninth graders (tenth grade will open next year). That's a student-teacher ratio of 31.25:1. And that's all in addition to the more traditional benefits of virtual schools, like flexible learning time (the teachers often respond to midnight homework questions on their Blackberries) and basically no overhead (teachers and students work from home). The school is still in its infancy, so we have no metrics by which to evaluate it academically, but using the open copyright laws of the internet to get access to more content, make it more specified, perhaps take the omnipotent textbook publishers down a notch, and drastically decrease operating costs? Yes, please!

<https://edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/flypaper/2010/open-source-education.html>