

Chapter 7

Utilization of MOOCs Platform for E-Learning Environment in Higher Education: A Study

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is a study of the utilization of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for learning in the higher education, given by the top universities in the world. As we know, MOOC platforms are widely popular in the field of e-learning, in the dissemination of higher education all over the world. Such initiatives are essential for students or people who want to be involved in higher education without going to a university for the completion of degree courses. This study found that most of the top universities started MOOCs in 2012 and found that a 72.7% majority of universities offered diploma and certificate courses to people through MOOCs. It was also found that the eDX platform was used by all the selected universities in providing MOOCs.

INTRODUCTION

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are online courses which are open for all to participate or enroll in any courses available through internet without the wall of geographical boundary. The word MOOC was first used in 2008 by Dave Cormier. It was started by the University of Prince Edward Island for a course offered by the

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University of Manitoba, “Connectivism and Connective Knowledge.” About 2300 non-paying students get into the online mode of course and university used RSS feeds to provide course materials, students participation arranged through different modes include Blog posts, Moodle, Real-time online meetings with the students. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) started MOOCs courses through their own software platform OpenCourseWare (OCW) in the year 2011 and it was the first kind of largest collection of e-resources available by the university in open platform (O’Neill et al., 2004).

MOOCs are a new instructional form which platform provides traditional course materials such as readings, filmed lectures as well as an interactive forum for interactions among the students, teachers, Professors etc. It made distance education more easily available through interactions with the teaching assistants. It also includes different types of features such as open access license of structures, contents for remixing and reuse of e-resources. MOOCs firstly had no rudiments or admission requirements, offered at no charge to students, low levels of direct faculty interaction, and carried no academic acknowledgment (Sandeem, 2013). But few MOOCs closed the open license policy for course materials but most of the institution provides free access for students. In 2012 higher educational institutes in the USA started free courses through the internet to millions of students all over the world. Information technology platforms such as Coursera and edX provide support to MOOCs. ‘Futurelearn Consortium’ from the United Kingdom partnered with 80 universities and other institutes which provide various MOOCs courses about 3 million people.

DEFINITIONS

MOOCs are latest invention in the field of spreading education as well as information and communication technology. Though nobody can categorically define what is MOOCs? Wikipedia defines MOOCs as “A massive open online course (MOOC) is an online course aimed at large-scale interactive participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as videos, readings, and problem sets, MOOCs provide interactive user forums that help build a community for the students, professors, and teaching assistants (TAs). MOOCs are a recent development in distance education.” On the other hand “The MOOC model for digital practice’ tries to define “A MOOC is an online course with the option of free and open registration, a publicly-shared curriculum, and open-ended outcomes. MOOCs integrate social networking, accessible online resources, and are facilitated by leading practitioners in the field of study. Most significantly, MOOCs build on the engagement of learners who self-organize their participation according to learning goals, prior knowledge and skills, and common interests.”

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