

Chapter 9

Use of MOOCs for Technology and Business Education

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, massive open online courses (MOOCs) as a new idea have been a highly debatable topic in online education. MOOCs were created to provide unlimited and free participation in higher education and made available to a wide range of recipients from all the corners of the world. Many developing countries rely on this alternative form of learning, which is totally different from the conventional classrooms, to increase access to education and improve the quality of higher learning. This has made educationalists in many developing countries express more interest in looking into how MOOCs can fit in and be implemented. This chapter explores the use of MOOCs in technology and business education.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) as a new idea, have been a highly debatable topic in online education. MOOCs were created to provide unlimited and free participation in higher education, made available to a wide range of recipients from all the corners of the world. Many developing countries rely on this alternative form of learning which is totally different from the conventional classrooms, to increase access to education and improve the quality of higher learning. This has made educationalists in many developing countries to express more interest in looking into how MOOCs can fit in and be implemented. “This can be seen on MOOC platforms such as Coursera and EdX, where MOOCs are now being offered by teachers from a number of universities from emerging economies, such as National Taiwan University, Peking University, IIT Bombay in India, Tecnológico de Monterrey and the National Autonomous University in Mexico, or Thammasat University and Rajamangala

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University (RMUTI) in Thailand” (Clara Eugenia Franco Yáñez, Dilnoza Nigmonova, and Wipada Panichpathom, 2014, p. 6,7). This shows how many institutions from developing countries are willing to join the MOOC novelty. Coursera also states in its own website that their objective is “connecting people to a great education so that anyone around the world can learn without limits” (Coursera, 2013).

In many developing countries, huge improvement in higher education and access to new technologies are needed. In this article, we aim to examine the import of MOOCs in technology and business education, the opportunities and challenges which surrounds the introduction of MOOCs in emerging countries, especially in a country like Thailand. For this reason, we will discuss on the issues of quality of MOOCs, the objective behind them, opportunities and challenges; and we also explore who can benefits from MOOCs, reasons you should take a MOOC, how you can recognize one and sign up for it.

MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE (MOOC)

One of the limitations of the traditional or the conventional learning model is the limitation on participation of the learners. This is one of the things that the massive open online course (MOOC) eradicates. MOOCs are one of the most radical ideas in online education. With no limitation on attendance, since participants are not bound by geographical space, MOOCs deliver learning content online to interested persons who wish to take a course.

“Although there is no consensus around their origin, the truth is that this particular form of online education became really popular in 2011, when Stanford University’s Sebastian Thurn rolled out a series of open online courses that later became Udacity, a pioneer in this space. In less than a year, these type of initiatives grew exponentially, and new startups like Coursera, Udemy, Canvas, and Codecademy came to life. Additionally, most of the United State’s major universities launched programs of their own, such as Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)’s joint venture EdX, which unlike most of its competitors is organized as a non-profit, rather than as a commercial enterprise” (Tomas Franceschin, 2016).

MOOCs are online courses that are made available through the internet. All a participant needs is a computer or a smartphone and an internet connection. MOOCs are modeled just like the online classes, although they are not really structured in a formal way. Students can benefit from MOOC programmes without paying tuition or making a commitment to an academic programme. Many MOOCs provide course materials through filmed lectures, problem sets, readings, and in addition, there are interactive sessions through users forums or social media interactions which aid quick feedbacks among lecturers and students.

A student can register for a MOOC to either pursue a certificate or for professional reasons and just to gain knowledge on an interested course. Whatever the case may be, MOOCs are ideal for learning, either for passion or for a certificate (which may cost a small fee).

Over the past few years, MOOC platforms have become so famous, and has turned into a major learning avenue for higher learning.

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