The History Of MOOCs

 What is a MOOC? Even during the week that this paper was being written the Wikipedia definition of MOOCs evolved. On 2012-09-16 Wikipedia defined a MOOC as â€˜a course where the participants are distributed and course materials are also dispersed across the webâ€™, adding that â€˜this is possible only if the course is open, and works significantly better if the course is large. The course is not a gathering, but rather a way of connecting distributed instructors and learners across a common topic or field of discourseâ€™ (Wikipedia, 2012a). By 2012-09-20 the definition had become: â€˜a MOOC is a type of online course aimed at large-scale participation and open access via the web. MOOCs are a recent development in the area of distance education, and a progression of the kind of open education ideals suggested by open educational resources. Though the design of and participation in a MOOC may be similar to college or university courses, MOOCs typically do not offer credits awarded to paying students at schools. However, assessment of learning may be done for certificationâ€™ (Wikipedia, 2012b).

Because of emerging nature of the concept and the different interests at work, both Wikipedia entries carried the disclaimer that: â€˜this article appears to be written like an advertisement. Please help improve it by rewriting promotional content from a neutral point of view and removing any inappropriate external linksâ€™ (Wikipedia, 2012a,b). We shall describe the short history of MOOCs since the term emerged in 2007, although many courses around the world exhibited some of these characteristics much earlier. The term MOOC originated in Canada. Dave Cormier and Bryan Alexander coined the acronym to describe an open online course at the University of Manitoba designed by George Siemens and Stephen Downes. The course, Connectivism and Connective Knowledge, was presented to 25 fee-paying students on campus and 2,300 other students from the general public who took the online class free of charge (Wikipedia, 2012a). The title itself evokes the aim of the course, which was to follow Ivan Illichâ€™s injunction that an educational system should â€˜provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge knownâ€™ (Illich, 1971). In this spirit â€˜all the course content was available through RSS feeds, and learners could participate with their choice of tools: threaded discussions in Moodle, blog posts, Second Life and synchronous online meetingsâ€™ (Wikipedia, 2012a). We quote Illich to emphasise that the xMOOCs attracting media attention today, which are â€˜at the intersection of Wall Street and Silicon Valleyâ€™ (Caulfield, 2012), appear to have scant relation to those pioneering approaches. The earlier tradition of what Siemens (2012) calls cMOOCs continues (see Cormier, 2010) but the focus of attention has moved to xMOOCs that are far from Illichâ€™s ideals. Surprisingly perhaps, those who coined the term MOOCs and continue to lead much Web discussion about them draw little attention to this change. Downes (2012) comments wistfully: â€˜I was not surprised at all that once (the MOOC format) proved successful it would be adopted by the Ivy League (who would receive credit for its â€˜discoveryâ€™) because this follow a well-established pattern in our fieldâ€™. Perhaps the originators of cMOOCs believe that with time the movement will be drawn back to some of their methods and philosophy and indeed, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is beginning, timidly, to enrich its xMOOCs in this way. ....

No doubt the delayed reaction of the first movers is partly because the new wave of xMOOCs is so recent. Early in 2012 Stanford University offered a free, chunked course on Artificial Intelligence online and 58,000 people signed up. One of the faculty members involved, Sebastian Thrun, went on to found Udacity, a commercial start-up that helps other universities to offer xMOOCs (Meyer, 2012). MIT (2011) announced MITx at the end of 2011 for a launch in spring 2012. MITx has now morphed into edX with the addition of Harvard and UC Berkeley (edX, 2012). Since then similar initiatives from other well known US universities have come thick and fast. There seems to be a herd instinct at work as universities observe their peers joining the xMOOCs bandwagon and jump on for fear of being left behind. At this writing Coursera, another for-profit xMOOC start-up, already claims nearly 1.4m registrations and will offer 200 courses in late 2012 with 33 partner institutions, of which the large majority are in the US (Lewin, 2012a; DeSantis, 2012). Armstrong (2012) has made a useful comparison of the MITx programme and the courses that Coursera has offered with 13 â€˜top-tierâ€™ universitie in the US and abroad. After interviewing some of the players and enrolling in a Coursera course himself, he considers that these two approaches to the expansion of online learning are significantly different in purpose. MITâ€™s venture is rooted in a strategy, going back 15 years, of using online learning to improve and change its teaching on campus. The launch of MIT Open Courseware in 2001 was part of this policy and it is significant that L. Rafael Reif, who as provost oversaw the creation of MITx, has recently been appointed president of MIT. Referring to the work of Christensen (1997) on innovation, Armstrong suggests that MIT considers online learning to be a disruptive technology and is using MITx as a â€˜skunkworksâ€™ to master it in order to learn how to educate more effectively its on-campus students. Stanford University using a similarly considered approach. Although Stanfordâ€™s president talks breathlessly about a â€˜digital tsunami threatening to sweep aside conventional university educationâ€™ (Boxall, 2012), John Mitchell, the vice-provost responsible for online learning, rather echoes the MIT approach: â€˜I think everyone agrees there's something very exciting going on here. So how do we as a university participate in that? What can we learn about teaching and learning through experimenting with different forms of technology? So I think we're going to treat this as an intellectual question and an academic investigation in some senseâ€™ (Weissmann, 2012). Elsewhere he observed: â€˜we really want to see what works. Weâ€™ve started out in one direction with Coursera â€“ which is a great company and itâ€™s great working with them â€“ but clear that the current mode of producing courses is where weâ€™re going to end up in five yearsâ€™ (Lewin, 2012a). Armstro observes that some Coursera institutions are marching to a different drummer from MIT. For them, MOOCs are a sideline rather than core business. Provosts at two of the institutions said that they were not providing any pedagogical help for faculty in the preparation of the courses. â€˜In factâ€™, comments Armstrong, â€˜they looked confused at the questionâ€™. Hi conclusion that â€˜Coursera clearly was a low priority venture for bothâ€™ was backed by his experience of taking one of the courses. He reported that â€˜the pedagogy, however, did not live up to the Coursera pledge of sound pedagogical

foundations… The course is basically a typical college lecture, chunked into roughly 15-minute segments… There is one weekly problem set designed to measure algorithmic rather than conceptual learning. Answers to the set are either multiple choice or a single number which is typed in… the students learn little when they get their assignments back except the grade'. In summary, says Armstrong, 'it seems pretty obvious that no one who had any working knowledge of research in pedagogy was deeply involved in the creation of the course'. Coursera leaves the design of the courses up to the individual institutions within broad guidelines. Clearly they will improve over time although, according to Young (2012), their motivation for improvement is fear of loss of revenue rather than serving students better. He notes, 'college officials, for their part, seem more motivated by fear than by the promise of riches. "Most of us are thinking that this could be a loss of revenue source if we don't learn how to do it well," says Mr Rodriquez, of the University of Virginia. "Thes high-quality potential substitutes for some of what universities do"'. The president of the University of Virginia almost lost her job because the trustees did not think she was moving into online provision rapidly enough (DeSantis, 2012).

Resource: Sir John Daniel sirjohn.ca - Making Sense of MOOCs: Musings in a Maze of Myth, Paradox and Possibilit

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In order to understand where MOOCs are heading (at least taking a stab at guessing their future), it's important to know what the stated goals are. In case you're still new to MOOCs, here's a helpful rundown of the guiding principles behind MOOCs:
 - Aggregation. The whole point of a connectivist MOOC is to provide a starting point for a massive amount of content to be produced in different places online, which is later aggregated as a newsletter or a web page accessible to participants on a regular basis. This is in contrast to traditional courses, where the content is prepared ahead of time.
 - The second principle is remixing, that is, associating materials created within the course with each other and with materials elsewhere.
 - Re-purposing of aggregated and remixed materials to suit the goals of each participant.
 - Feeding forward, sharing of re-purposed ideas and content with other participants and the rest of the world.An earlier list (2005) of Connectivist principles from Siemens also informs the pedagogy behind MOOCs:
 - Learning and knowledge rest in diversity of opinions.
 - Learning is a process of connecting specialised nodes or information sources.
 - Learning may reside in non-human appliances.
 - Capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known.
 - Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning.
 - Ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill.
 - Currency (accurate, up-to-date knowledge) is the intent of all connectivist learning activities.
 - Decision making is itself a learning process. Choosing what to learn and the meaning of incoming information is seen through the lens of a shifting reality. While there is a right answer now, it may be wrong tomorrow due to alterations in the information climate affecting the decision. (by Jeff Dunn on 2012-10-04 http://edudemic.com/2012/10/moocs-past-present-future/)

Resource : by Jeff Dunn http://edudemic.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/history-of-moocs.jpg

What does this emerging landscape of educational delivery models look like? I have categorized the models not just in terms of modality—ranging from face-to-face to fully online—but also in terms of the method of course design (see Figure 1). These two dimensions allow a richer understanding of the new landscape of educational delivery models. Within this landscape, the following primary models have emerged: ad hoc online courses and programs, fully online programs, School-as-a-Service, educational partnerships, competency-based education, blended/hybrid courses and the flipped classroom, and MOOCs (see Figure 2). (by Phil Hill)

Resource: Online Educational Delivery Models: A Descriptive View by Phil Hill is an independent consultant and blogs at e-Literate. http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/online-educational-delivery-models-descriptive-view
Different Resources:http://mooc.ca/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massive_open_online_coursehttp://www-jime.open.ac.uk/jime/article/viewArticle/2012-18/htmlhttp://www.forbes.com/sites/collegeprose/2013/01/28/moocs-a-college-education-online/http://www.openculture.com/freeonlinecourseshttp://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/02/24/the-great-divide-over-moocs/http://www.oclc.org/research/events/2013/03-18.htmlhttp://www.massivelyopenonlinecourse.com