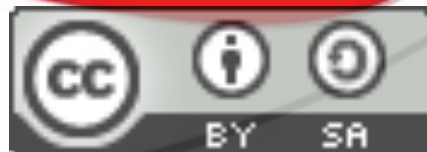


The Future of Online Learning in Higher Education, MOOCs and more

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SEFI, Engineering Education Fast Forward
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Centre for Learning Sciences and Technologies
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Overview

- MOOCs, quick intro
- Pedagogical issues
- Ethical issues (socio-political)
- Conclusions



MOOCs
are they the future of
online learning in higher
education?



Characteristics

- online courses, often delivered by top-notch universities, for free
- some attract massive numbers of learners
- substitute offline, f2f class for an online class



History

- original cMOOCs (2008) versus better known xMOOCs (2011)
- xMOOCs took off in fall of 2011 with Intro AI Course at Stanford
- platform providers (Coursera, edX, Udacity, FutureLearn) vs content providers (Stanford, Harvard, MIT, Edinburgh, OU, ...)



Current situation

- ever more platforms and providers
- successful in terms of numbers of ‘subscribers’, not numbers of ‘graduates’
- searching for business model, *cf.* music and book industry
- for now sponsored by venture capital (Coursera, Udacity) or alumni (edX)



Issue I

pedagogy (didactics)



- MOOCs subscribe to offline broadcasting model and apply that online (behaviourist)
- but open, distance-learning institutions have done 'teaching at a distance' for decades
- they have researched their practice meticulously, and have 3 decades of research results, that MOOCs ignore



Principle 1: asynchronous is better

- asynchronous offers flexibility of time, pace and place (three tenets of ODL)
- MOOCs have embraced this principle
- (blended, mixing offline and online is still better)



Principle 2: media are different

- each medium has its strengths and weaknesses (text, film, audio, simulations, ...)
- MOOCs offer little in the way of a mix of media (largely canned videos of talking professors)



Principle 3: computers to communicate

- learning is thoroughly social, computers can't replace humans (yet)
- but, computers are excellent people (and content) recommenders
- MOOC platforms have not understood this (yet), they look at AI for replacing humans (assessment, feedback)



Principle 4: use social learning environments

- is the most recent insight
- people build social VLEs: Landing by Athabasca U., Cloudworks by OUUK, OpenU by OUNL
- existing social media are used too (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs)
- ignored by xMOOCs, adopted by cMOOCs



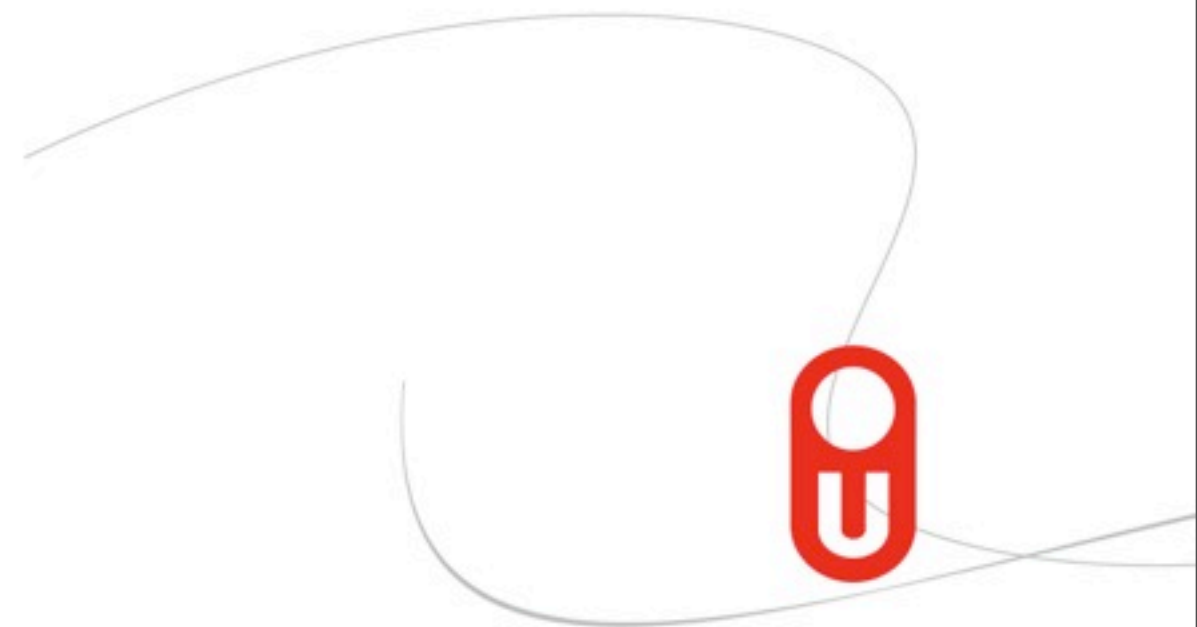
Conclusion

- xMOOCs have a long way to go
- but, they are very active in improving their platforms, backed by venture capital and excellent researchers (roots in computer science)



Issue II

ethical, socio-political



Public versus private education

- MOOCs exemplify an attempt to draw higher education into the market economy and away from the public domain
- embraced by governments that are strapped for cash (California, Georgia)
- applies mainly to USA, ambition to spread world-wide (Thrun: in 50 yrs, 10 unis)



Democratising higher education

- MOOCs for the developing countries
- win-win, access to content by top-notch universities, expanding the MOOC market
- will it work? I don't think so
- is it ok (cultural imperialism)? I don't think so.



Conclusions



MOOCs are to be welcomed

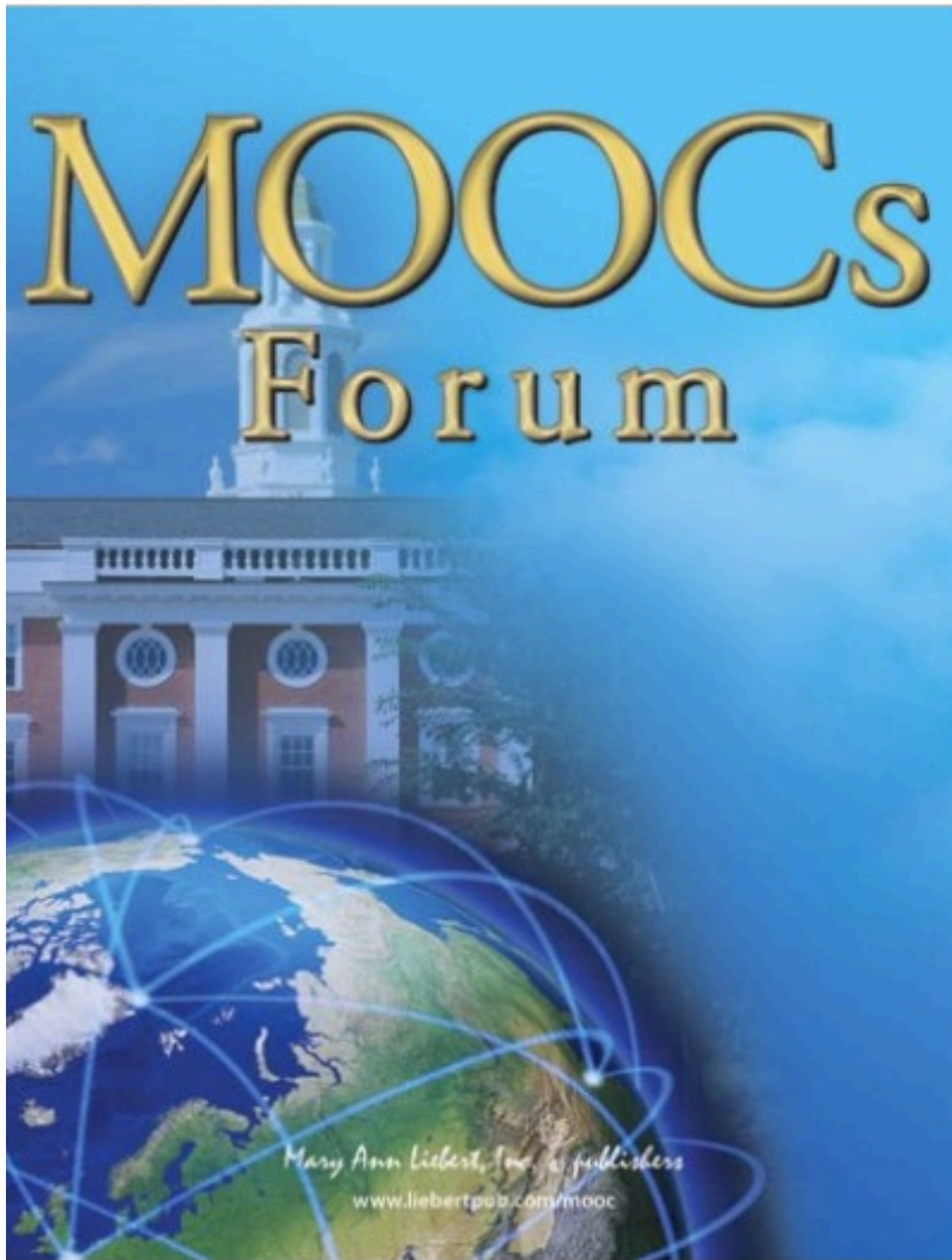
- introduce online learning to f2f teachers
- are a driver for innovation (ped. and econ.)
- make high-quality content easily available to many, for free, increasing access to higher ed.



MOOCs are to be dreaded

- are a step towards commercialising higher education (for now mainly in the USA, but ..)
- make good quality higher education (not just content) less accessible
- exemplify a form of cultural imperialism





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Networked Learning - MOOCs and more

Anything on matters of online, networked learning and training

Curated by Peter B. Sloep



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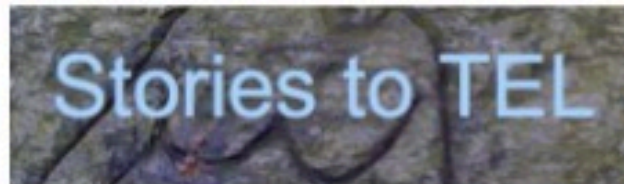


Suggestions



Scooped by [Peter B. Sloep](#)

Learning in networks and in communities of practice | Peter Sloep - Stories to TEL



From pbsloep.blogspot.nl - September 15, 3:57 PM

A blog post of mine on the difference between a learning network and a community of practice: Although different, they are very much interde-

pendent

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10

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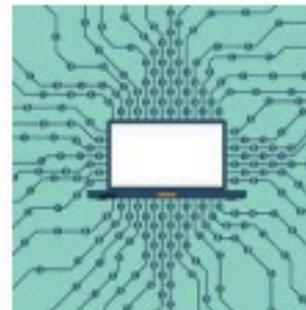
Scooped by [Peter B. Sloep](#)

The attack of the MOOCs | The Economist, Higher Education



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Money Models for MOOCs | Dellarocas & Van Alstyn - Communications of the ACM



From cacm.acm.org - August 27, 2:46 PM

Despite the massive media ink spilled over massive open online courses, the ink spilled by MOOCs themselves remains red. MOOCs lose money. Most are free. Universities and venture capitalists subsidize them while searching for the class of the future.



Peter B. Sloep's insight:

So far nothing new. Complaints about the lack of viable business models for MOOCs are probably as old as MOOCs themselves, xMOOCs that is. However, what sets this article apart is the systematic way in which it approaches the issue. Dellarocas and Van Alstyn discern two different kinds of revenue streams, by charging for things and by charging people. However, when charging for things, it is not the product itself that carries the price tag, after all that is free, but complements or add-ons. Thus, one could charge for providing student data ('analytics'), or for certification or tutoring services. When charging people, it is not the MOOC learners themselves that have to pay - again, the product is free - but others whose interests somehow depend on the students. So, prospective

Thank you!

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