

Massively Open Online Courses: MOOCs

Presented by LibraryLinkNJ, the New Jersey State Library and the New Jersey Library Association: **Technology Speed Dating** – Monroe Township Public Library, March 5, 2013

*What is a MOOC? Dave Cormier, one of the pioneers in structuring open courses from the University of Prince Edward Island, explains them here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW3qMGqcZQc>

*Basically, a MOOC is a great way for you to take online classes without paying a thing! With most MOOCs you can choose when to take a course, how much time you want to dedicate to it, whether or not you want to complete the assignments, participate in the forums or even take the final assessments.

*If you are looking for professional development opportunities, or simply want to learn more about something, MOOCs are a great way to branch out.

*Here are some of the places to find MOOCs:



coursera

<https://www.coursera.org/> Coursera's motto is, "Take the world's best courses, online, for free." Coursera offers 222 courses ranging from Analytic Combinatorics to Greek & Roman Mythology to Vaccines. Coursera offers some courses geared toward self-study, while most have specific start dates and courses last anywhere from four to thirteen weeks. Thirty-three universities have partnered with Coursera. Among them are Stanford, Georgia Tech, University of Pittsburgh, Columbia University, Duke University, Johns Hopkins University, Princeton University and most recently, Rutgers University.



U
UDACITY

<https://www.udacity.com/> Udacity's motto is, "Learn. Think. Do." Udacity currently offers 22 courses, most of them in some area of computer science or mathematics. Udacity courses are completely asynchronous and you can enroll at any time. This also means that you can truly take each course at your own pace and complete the work when you find time. This is good for busy librarians!



edX

<https://www.edx.org/> edX's motto is, "The future of online education for anyone, anywhere, anytime." edX has partnered with some major universities to offer courses *from* these universities— not specially made 'MOOCs'. There are, of course, many computer science courses to enroll in, but there are also many others; courses like, The Challenge of Global Policy, Copyright, Justice, and The Ancient Greek Hero. Courses come from places like Harvard, MIT, Georgetown, UC Berkeley, and The University of Texas system. Currently, edX has the most potential to completely disrupt higher education with it's partnerships.

*A recent presentation called MOOCs & Librarians, from the ACRL Virtual World Interest group held a panel on MOOCs and their impact on libraries.

MOOCs can benefit librarians by providing opportunities for:

- Professional development
- Personal learning
- Networking
- Reminder of the pressures and anxieties faced by students

*Some more places to find information about MOOCs:

- Alt-Ed Blog: <http://alternative-educate.blogspot.com/> Alt-Ed is devoted to documenting significant initiatives relating to Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), digital badges, and similar alternative educational projects.
- Course Buffet: <http://www.coursebuffet.com/> CourseBuffet lists over 500 college courses from many different providers and universities. No need to spend time going to many websites to find all the choices available.
- Class Central: <http://www.class-central.com/> Class Central is a free online course aka MOOC aggregator from top universities like Stanford, MIT, Harvard, etc. offered via Coursera, Udacity, edX, Canvas Network, & others.
- Open Culture: <http://www.openculture.com/freeonlinecourses> This collection includes over 650 free courses in the liberal arts and sciences. Download these audio & video courses straight to your computer or mp3 player.

*MOOCs are always changing and evolving. According to the New York Times, 2012 was the year of the MOOC (Pappano 2012). What 2013 will bring is still unknown, but it should be exciting and definitely worthy of following along.

*References:

Alt-Ed blog. <http://alternative-educate.blogspot.com/> (accessed February 21, 2013).

Cormier, Dave and George Siemens. 2010. Through the Open Door: Open Courses as Research, Learning, and Engagement. *Educause Review* 45, no. 4 (July/August): 30-39. <http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/through-open-door-open-courses-research-learning-and-engagement> (accessed February 21, 2013).

Hill, Valerie, Michelle Keba, Ilene Frank, and George Djorgovski. 2013. MOOCs & Librarians. *ACRL Virtual World Interest Group*. February 17. <http://www.slideshare.net/valibrarian/acr-lmooc-panelsildeshare> (accessed February 21, 2013).

Pappano, Laura. 2012. The Year of the MOOC. *The New York Times* November 2. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/education/edlife/massive-open-online-courses-are-multiplying-at-a-rapid-pace.html?smid=pl-share> (accessed February 21, 2013).

Thompson, Kelvin. 2011. 7 Things You Should Know About MOOCs. *Educause Learning Initiative*. November 11. <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7078.pdf> (accessed February 21, 2013).