The Yin and the Yang of MOOCs: What IT Leaders and Undergraduate Learners Have Told Us

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MOOC Hype
2013: The Year of the MOOC (Hype)

- Chronicle of Higher Education
  - 490 articles on MOOCs in past 3 years
  - 330 (67%) in the past year

- Google Scholar
  - 2,550 articles in past 3 years
  - 1,980 (78%) in past year
2013: The Year of the MOOC (Hype)

- “tsunami”
- “revolution”
- “disruption”
- “transformation”
2014: Year of MOOC Skepticism?

- “doubts”
- “mixed bag”
- “failure”
Angered by MOOC Deals, San Jose State Faculty Senate Considers Rebuff

By Steve Kolowich
Who Offers MOOCs?
Questions

- Has your institution offered a MOOC?
- For those who didn’t raise your hands, how many would like to see your institution offer a MOOC or at least wouldn’t oppose your institution offering a MOOC?
MOOCs Primarily Offered by Large Doctoral Institutions

- Doctoral Institutions: 60% offering today, 70% future plans to offer
- Enrollment over 15,000: 20% offering today, 60% future plans to offer
- Other Institutions: 10% offering today, 20% future plans to offer
Why Institutions Do Not Offer MOOCs

- Unclear/unproven business model
- No demand for MOOCs among students
- Leaders have no interest
- Lack of financial resources
- Faculty have no interest
- MOOCs may be a fad
- MOOCs are for others
Why Institutions Offer MOOCs

- Explore this new method
- Build overall reputation
- Attract students
- Appeal to leadership interest
- Invest in alternative revenue
- Build reputation in specific area
- Greater good; share knowledge
- Appeal to faculty interest
- Showcase star faculty
- Appeal to alumni interest
- Attract faculty

- Strategy
- Resources
- Interest

leadership  faculty
Although MOOCs got more hype, the broader topic of online learning has greater interest.
Who Takes MOOCs?
University of Pennsylvania; 35k responses

Similar findings in other MOOC demographic studies…
MOOC-takers tend to be…

- Haves rather than have-nots
- Males rather than females
- “Older” (>30) rather than younger
- From abroad rather than from U.S.
- Currently employed rather than new job seekers
- Fun/curiosity seekers rather than purposeful
- PD opportunist for current job rather than training/skills for new jobs
4 out of 5 MOOC students are college graduates.

U of Pennsylvania study on 35,000 MOOC students.
But what about YOUR students?
Nearly 3 in 4 undergraduate students have NEVER heard of MOOCs (by name, acronym, company).
What types of undergraduates take MOOCs?
What types of undergraduates are more likely to finish a MOOC?
More likely to take:
- MEN
- PRIVATE DOCTORAL STUDENTS
- HISPANIC / WHITE / OTHER
- OVER 25
- NON-US

Gender
C-class
Ethnicity
Age
Country

More likely to finish:
- WOMEN
- COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS
- BLACK STUDENTS
- OVER 25
- U.S. AND CANADA
What is the value proposition for students?

- Personal or professional development?
- Supplementing traditional course content?
- Using cognitive surplus constructively?
- Documenting new competencies with a badge?
What’s a “Badge” worth to undergrads?

About 1 out of 3 students who took a MOOC completed it; about half of those students received a digital badge or certificate.

But regardless of MOOC experience, few undergraduate students would include a digital badge or patch in an application portfolio.
What is the value proposition for institutions?

**Institutions are struggling to identify the business models**

- **AN UNCLEAR BUSINESS MODEL IS THE MAJOR DETERRENT FOR THOSE NOT OFFERING MOOCs**
  - 45% of institutions view the ROI as a moderate or major concern
  - 60% of institutions view the cost of providing and/or developing MOOCs as a moderate or major concern

But...Moody investors services has designated MOOCs as a “credit positive”
What is the value proposition for institutions?

Among a select set of institutions that are offering MOOCs:

- 45% are discussing the possibility of awarding credit
- 33% are considering monetizing
A Lousy Product?

“We were on the front pages of newspapers and magazines, and at the same time, I was realizing, we don't educate people as others wished, or as I wished. We have a lousy product.”

-Sebastian Thrun (Udacity)

…nah, just a young product
Where Do MOOCs Go from Here?
Can you have open access AND robust accountability/success metrics?

It is “de rigeur” to expect success, but MOOCs challenge this model.
Discussion Question

- What is the future role of the MOOC?
  - ...at your institution?
  - ...in higher education?
References

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Thank you!

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