

MOOCs and UK Higher Education: a rapidly evolving world

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Abstract

MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) are gradually capturing the public imagination. From experimentalist beginnings in Canada, platforms ranging from 'homebrew' to professional have emerged, and although there has been much focus on US platforms, the phenomenon has grown on a worldwide scale.

in 2012 various UK institutions entered the fray including the Universities of Edinburgh and London who used the US Coursera platform. In 2013 a consortium led by the Open University launched FutureLearn to predominantly host British courses. The University of Southampton was an early FutureLearn partner. At the same time, UK educationalists and learning technologists committed to Open Education Resources and innovative and emerging educational paradigms have launched, taught with, or actively participated in a range of less than mainstream MOOC enterprises.

This presentation provides an account of MOOC development in the UK, including a discussion collaborative and interdisciplinary approach adopted in the University of Southampton FutureLearn MOOC called 'Web Science: how the Web is changing the world'.

These accounts and experience will be used as a basis to discuss ways in which MOOCs in the UK are impacting on the broader Higher Education experience and influencing educational and strategic approaches across the sector.

Su White

Su White is a senior lecturer researching in the Web and Internet Science Group within Electronics and Computer Science (ECS) at the University of Southampton. Her current research activities reflect emerging agendas in MOOCs and web science. Recent publications have addressed the role and impact of MOOCs in the UK from a strategic and experiential perspective, developments within the web science curriculum, semantic technologies, open data and open repositories. Working in collaboration with the University's Centre for Innovation in Technologies and Education, she is building a MOOC Observatory around the ongoing research of current PhD students. Su also teaches research methods within the Web Science doctoral consortium and is an active member of the Web Science curriculum development community. She is also part of the team developing the use and functionality of the Southampton Learning Environment and Southampton's EdShare educational repository.

Su began researching the intersection of institutional change and innovation in the early 1990s. She has published extensively addressing institutional change, the educational use of technology for learning, and educational and curriculum innovations. Previously a senior member of the Learning Societies Lab, Su has considerable experience of TEL projects, particularly from an institutional change perspective (the subject of her PhD thesis). Su has been PI or a major contributor to the educational development, evaluation and dissemination activities to a number UK funded TEL projects. Sue has served on the steering group of a range of such projects at other institutions. Latterly her focus in that area turned to the evolution of personal learning environments and was co-chair of the 2nd International PLE conference PLE_SOU hosted in Southampton. Until its dissolution in 2011 Su was a member of the UK JISC Infrastructure and Resources Committee.