

# Chapter 2

## MOOCs: The Indian Journey So Far

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### ABSTRACT

*MOOCs are student-friendly, a great addition to the field of distance education as it no longer needs pre requisites for enrollment in a course, have no age bar, and have no heavy financial constraints (while some charge a minimum amount for award of certification and other requirements). Various institutions across the world compile video lectures, formulate assignments, quizzes, lecture notes, presentations, demonstrations, etc. and upload all the content on MOOC platform accessible globally through the world wide web. The opportunity that MOOCs offer for the massification of courses has generated significant interest from governments, institutions, and commercial organizations. In this context, the article focuses on the various MOOCs initiatives like SWAYAM in India and gain a deeper insight in the course diversity, content types and formats provided. Besides, the study shall make an endeavor to understand the innovations and future plans of major promoters of MOOCs in India.*

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## INTRODUCTION: HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Massive Open Online Courses or commonly known as MOOCs is a groundbreaking and a proliferating concept in the electronic ambience. Defying the geographical barriers, MOOCs has emerged as one of the successful and easy way of getting education. The term MOOC was derived in 2008 by Dave Cormier of the University of Prince Edward Island and Bryan Alexander of the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education. MOOCs are of a very recent origin in distance education, started somewhere around mid of 2011 (Chakravarty & Kaur, 2016). The development of MOOCs is rooted within the ideals of openness in education, that knowledge should be shared freely, and the desire to learn should be met without demographic, economic, and geographical constraints (Yuan & Powell, 2013). While online education has a long history, the current wave started in the fall of 2011 when about 450,000 students signed up for three computer-science courses offered by Stanford University (Vardi, 2012). The current generation of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) attract a diverse student audience from all age groups and over 196 countries around the world. Researchers, educators, and the general public have recently become interested in how the learning experience in MOOCs differs from that in traditional courses (Guo & Reinecke, 2014). MOOCs are student friendly, a great addition to the field of distance education as it no longer needs prerequisites for enrollment in a course, no age bar and no heavy financial constraints (while some charge a minimum amount for award of certification and other requirements). In addition to traditional course materials, many MOOCs offer interactive user forums to aid community interactions between the learner and mentor. Various institutions across the world compile video lectures, formulate assignments, quizzes, lecture notes, presentations, demonstrations etc and upload all the content on MOOC platform accessible globally through World Wide Web. The opportunity that MOOCs offer for massification of courses has generated significant interest from governments, institutions and commercial organizations. A number of bespoke MOOC platforms have been developed and offer courses independent of or in collaboration with universities. A growing number of institutions have been involved in engaging and experimenting with MOOCs for the purpose of expanding access, marketing and branding, as well as the potential of developing new revenue streams (Yuan & Powell, 2013a). The current MOOC landscape consists of several large platforms such as Coursera (a for-profit business working with 100 universities, led by Stanford); edX (a non-profit joint venture of Harvard and MIT); Udemy (a business allowing anyone to create courses, offered for free or a small price). Courses range from core academic subjects such as micro-economics or statistics, to higher level specializations such as neuro-science and robotics; passing interest or arts/culture classes like Greek philosophy and poetry to workforce or skill related courses (Agrawal, Kumar & Agrawal, 2015). MOOCs

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