

Learning with MOOCs: promises and problems

Karl Steffens, University of Cologne, Germany

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) may be considered to be a new form of virtual technology enhanced learning environments. Since their first appearance in 2008, the increase in the number of MOOCs has been dramatic. The hype about MOOCs was accompanied by great expectations: 2012 was named the Year of the MOOCs and it was expected that MOOCs would revolutionise higher education.

Two types of MOOCs may be distinguished: cMOOCs as proposed by Siemens, based on his ideas of connectivism, and xMOOCs developed in institutions such as Stanford and MIT.

Although MOOCs have received a great deal of attention, they have also met with criticism. The time has therefore come to critically reflect upon this phenomenon.