

Title:

abiertaUGR: a MOOC framework based on online learning communities

Authors:

Miguel Gea, Centro de Enseñanzas Virtuales, Universidad de Granada, Spain
Rosana Montes, Centro de Enseñanzas Virtuales, Universidad de Granada,
Spain
Roberto Bergaz Hernandez, Máster Gestion de Procesos de Negocios.
Universidad de Granada

Abstract

Massive online courses (MOOC) are adopting popularity in Higher Education due to the ability to create online contents for wider student communities. This is also a new way to adapt Informal learning on universities using non traditional model, engaging OER, gamification models and participatory game-driven mechanism (badges, peer review, reputation). Our approach (abiertaUGR) is based on a social approach to create MOOCs. This framework allows us to construct an online learning community where each user has a personal learning environment (PLE) and also activities for engaging team-groups and social networks. Most of MOOC strategies focus on increase the highest number on enrolment in the courses, so the success of the courses are rated using this data. In our case, the methodology is based on the community building, so our parameter are oriented in terms of course completion rate, activity indicators, PLE building, satisfaction and fidelity. Some of these parameters are good indicators of quality assessment and lifelong learning strategies for wide communities attached to Higher education Institutions.

Introduction

Massive open Online Courses (MOOC) is a current trend for creating online courses in the aims of Higher Education Institutions to have free good quality teaching initiative with relevant visibility on Internet. This model has been conducted through inter-institutional platform of courses (i.e. Coursera[1], EdX [2], Udacity [3], as well as MiriadaX [4] in Spain). These approaches should represent new models for open learning [5] as a relevant role for (future) universities. These approaches may overcome the following issues:

- How quality and success of these courses are measured. Sometimes these aspects are focused mainly on the number of student enrolment and completion rate.
- Purpose and outcome of these courses. These methodologies are the same as campus-based courses (content and assessment methods), but losing innovative practices in online education [6].
- Recognition and connection with the pedagogical model of higher education institutions. These courses should be connected with other formal learning strategies offered from universities.

AbiertaUGR [7] is a good example as a case study to understand the relevance of involving universities at MOOC strategies. This proposal has been developed using features that should be taken into account in this scenario:

- Use OER for learning activities and promotion of user-generated contents [8]
- Creation of online learning communities [9]
- Recognition at Universities

The courses have been developed to a wide community in order to acquire transversal competences and skills currently required in graduated titles. Some of the most relevant competences are the following:

- Knowledge and skills for an autonomous learning by creating their own

personal learning environment

- Enhancing the collaboration and work in groups
- Enhancing the creativity, Leadership, and reputation in a online community of learning

These abilities are engaged in a context of social learning enhanced in the abiertaUGR platform using common technologies (blogs, twitter, groups, bookmarks, debate, etc.). It is conceived as a social community: each user is shown in the platform (figure 1) as a living community with his/her own personal learning environment (figure 2)

The screenshot shows the header of the abiertaUGR platform. On the left is the logo of the Universidad de Granada. In the center is the 'abiertaUGR' logo. To the right are navigation links: 'Inicio', 'Cursos', 'Miembros', 'Cafetería', and 'SOS'. Below the header, the page is divided into several sections:

- Cursos UGR en Abierto**: A text block explaining that the University of Granada, through the Center of Virtual Teaching, is part of a global initiative for open online education. It mentions MOOCs and states that enrollment is free with a quality guarantee. It also notes that after enrollment, users receive access keys, but content is not accessible without logging in.
- Últimos cursos**: A section titled 'Cursos en convocatoria de matriculación' (Courses in enrollment call). It states that enrollment is open and free. It lists three courses:
 - Identities Digitales (started April 8, 2013)
 - El Aprendizaje Ubicuo (started May 6, 2013)
 - Licencias Creative Commons and open resources on the Internet (started June 3, 2013)It also mentions that these courses are for a general audience and that the only requirement is basic knowledge of internet and communication tools.
- Reconocimiento**: A section stating that completing the three courses earns 3 credits as a cultural activity for degree students. For others, a certificate of completion is issued by the Center of Virtual Teaching.
- Nuevos miembros de la red**: A grid of 24 small profile pictures of new members.

Figure1. abiertaUGR social learning platform

The image shows a user profile on the 'abiertaugr' platform. The profile is for Miguel Gea, a user from Granada, Spain, who is a teacher at the University of Granada. The profile includes a profile picture, a bio, and various social media links. The bio mentions a collection of tweets and a MOOC interest. The 'Cursos realizados' section lists a course on user interface design. The right sidebar shows 'Blogs' and 'Twitter' feeds.

figure 2. user profile with the personal learning environment

Analysis of results

This initiative started on April with a series of courses oriented to internet technologies for learning, each one has 4 week duration with a recognition of 1 ECTS credit:

- Digital identities. <http://goo.gl/yHcam> , 8th of April (finished)
- Ubiquitous learning. <http://goo.gl/7bCZo>, 18 of May (ongoing)
- Creative common and Open Education Resources. <http://goo.gl/yV8dC>

Up to now, we have the following data of these courses

	Enrolled	Completion	Completion Rate
Digital Identities	1.805	620	34,3%
Ubiquitous learning	971	(*)	-
CC and OER (**)	662	-	-
Community	2.654	-	-

(*) Ongoing (**) Not started

A wide community has followed this initiative on Internet. During these months, we have identified an increasing traffic of visitors. Some of these data as shown below:

	March	April	May	Total
Visitors	6.140	14.678	6.169	26.987
Num of visits	12.045	32.289	12.155	56.489
Trafic				
Duraction visitas	465s	1281s	1291s	

Evaluation methods are based on activities to promote the learning on the community facilitating tasks and goals to enhance participation, automatic recognition (through badges) from the activities performed, and facilitating the social recognition and reputation as another learning skill. Some activities are done in groups so we enhance the collaboration through the community to develop these results. Some activity indicators in the first course are shown below (activity during four weeks):

Activity indicators	1st week	2nd week	3rd week	4th week
Documentation	1841	1085	641	113
Activities	532	445	358	0
Interviews	926	295	629	0
Debate	1901	993	877	0
Tasks	169	813	285	0
WorkGroup (4 groups)	0	0	0	688
PLE (some data)	689 Blog		1275 bookmark	

This activity means that the community is living (in a high percentage) during the four weeks, also with a good maintenance in the personal portfolio (PLE) as well as with group activities.

Finally, other data about user satisfaction in different aspect are shown below.

User Satisfaction from Course Resources					
	Very weak	Weak	Correct	Good	Excellent
Platform	1,3%	10,7%	26,1%	47,0%	15,0%
Workspace	2,2%	13,4%	35,3%	35,8%	13,4%
Contents	1,7%	2,6%	18,6%	45,5%	31,6%
The participation availability	3,0%	3,9%	14,2%	37,3%	41,6%
Course planning	0,9%	8,2%	23,6%	39,9%	27,5%
Tutoring and mentors	2,2%	5,2%	31,3%	33,9%	27,4%
Technical support	3,9%	15,6%	30,3%	32,0%	18,2%
Twitter use	4,0%	9,3%	31,9%	34,5%	20,4%
The community (personal PLE)	3,0%	9,4%	27,0%	42,9%	17,6%
Working groups	3,5%	12,8%	31,0%	37,6%	15,0%

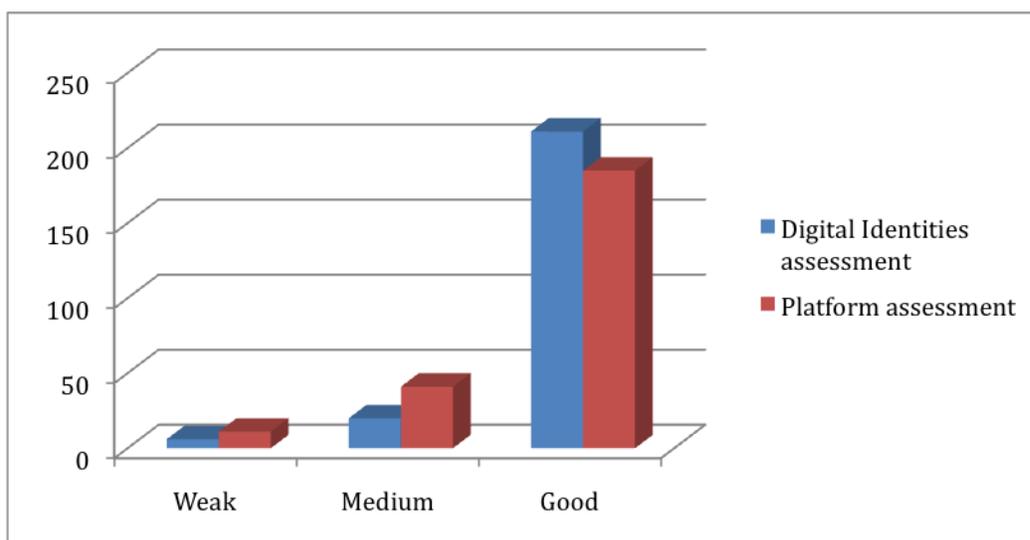


figure 3. User satisfaction

Conclusions

This paper presents a novel model to create massive open online courses based on online learning communities. The purpose is to create living communities to learn and acquire digital competences such as reputation,

participation, collaboration, critical assessment, use of technology, etc. These issues are connected with the Higher Education Institutions for a lifelong learning process to the society and connecting these courses with some kind of recognition of informal learning. These study has been supported with the some data of the first course in this approach.

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