



## MOOCs - which way now?

This event is currently full. However you can register now and get added to a waiting list. You will be notified if spaces become available.

### [Register Now](#)

This event is a **free conference** organised by the ALT MOOC Special Interest Group, with keynote from Diana Laurillard, Professor of Learning with Digital Technologies, Institute of Education.

The themes of the conference are:

- Growing your own Mooc – models for providers outside consortia.
- Incorporating others' Moocs within an existing course ('wrapping').
- Widening and sustaining participation.
- Designing and planning for 'massive'.
- Assessment and accreditation.

A full programme is now available via [this link](#).

When

27 Jun 2014 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Location

Roberts Building

University College London

Torrington Place

London, WC1E 7JE

United Kingdom

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# ALT MOOC SIG

## Association for Learning Technology Special Interest Group on Moocs



## ‘MOOCs – Which Way Now?’ programme for June 27th

This page contains **joining instructions, contact details, programme, abstracts** for ‘MOOCs – Which Way Now?’, a one-day conference convened by the Association for Learning Technology’s Special Interest Group on MOOCs.

### Getting there and joining instructions

Please note that you need to [register via ALT](#) to attend this free event.

From 09.15 on Friday 27th June, please come to the Roberts Building, University College London, Torrington Place, London, WC1E 7JE. The Roberts Building is part of the [Faculty of Engineering](#) – see [picture and map of the building](#). Find out about [getting to UCL by public transport](#).

Join in on Twitter with the [#altmoocsig](#) hashtag and see our [ALT page for signposts to other online meeting places](#).

We will record the sessions (assuming consent) and may be able to webcast – details in due course.

### Any questions?

- For booking and registration inquiries, please contact [ALT](#).
- For participant, speaker or venue inquiries, please contact [Fiona Harvey](#) (Southampton) – after 16th June please contact [Mira Vogel](#) (UCL).
- The event's organisers are Mira Vogel (UCL), Fiona Harvey (Southampton), James Little (Leeds), Tracey Madden (Bath), David Smith (Charles Sturt University).

## Programme

TIME	ROBERTS FOYER	ROBERTS G06 SIR AMBROSE FLEMING	ROBERTS G08 SIR DAVID DAVIES
09.15	Registration, refreshments and socialising		
09.45		Welcome and housekeeping	
09.50		Diana Laurillard (London Knowledge Lab, IoE) <a href="#">Which problems could MOOCs solve, and how?</a>	
10.20		Fred Garnett (London Knowledge Lab), Nigel Ecclesfield (Jisc) <a href="#">Before and After Moocs: equity and inclusion</a>	
10.50	Refreshments and socialising		
11.10		Alexander Griffin (Huddersfield) <a href="#">Whereigo geocaching MOOCs and the investigation of virtual places</a>	Amy Woodgate (Edinburgh) <a href="#">Exploring (new) potential: moving MOOC design beyond the 'norm'</a>
11.30		Patrick Haughian (QUB) <a href="#">Beyond the selfie – social learning in a</a>	Freda Wolfenden, Tim Seal (OU) <a href="#">MOOCs and the development context: a</a>

		<a href="#">connectivist environment</a>	<a href="#">design approach</a>
11.50		Shirley Williams (Reading) <a href="#">MOOCs need stewardship</a>	Eileen Kennedy (IoE) <a href="#">What can we learn from Moocs? Exploring new directions.</a>
12.10		Aidan Johnston (Strathclyde) <a href="#">Storytelling through MOOCs</a>	
12.35		Frances Bell, Jenny Mackness (independent) <a href="#">The Rhizome as a Metaphor for Learning in a MOOC</a>	
13.00	Lunch and socialising		
13.50		Curt Bonk (Indiana University), Mimi Miyoung Lee (University of Houston) <a href="#">Stepping Into Life Change: A New Measure of the Impact of MOOCs and Open Education</a>	
14.20			TBC
14.40		Ronald MacIntyre (The Open University in Scotland) <a href="#">Open Educations and the Promises We Make</a>	Helena Gillespie (UEA) <a href="#">MOOCs and Metrics: an examination of success criteria and data</a>
15.00		(Workshop)	Sherif Halawa (Stanford) <a href="#">Dropouts in MOOCs: what do we know about them?</a>

15.20		<p>Matt Jenner (UCL)</p> <p><a href="#">MOOCs: it's not about the money</a></p> <p>(Discussion / debate)</p>
15.55		Close
4.00	Refreshments, socialising, and / or geocaching tour of the locale.	

## Abstracts

### Which problems could MOOCs solve, and how?

Diana Laurillard (London Knowledge Lab and Institute of Education)

The phenomenon of the MOOC has opened up the possibilities of what online learning might do to a much larger group of people. So there is inevitably a lot of speculation about what they might mean for the future of education, universities, and learning. Some of it is wild and wrongheaded, so it is up to our community to contribute a clear-headed understanding of what they are actually achieving, and what more they could do to address the really important educational challenges our institutions face.

The presentation will compare the problems MOOCs are currently solving with those they could solve, to discern possible future directions.

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### Before and After MOOCs – Equity and Inclusion

Fred Garnett (London Knowledge Lab) and Nigel Ecclesfield (Jisc)

UK Education reform has a long history. Much modern education has roots in the 19th (Working Mens Institutes) & early 20th centuries; democratic schools & educational broadcasting (NIACE). In many ways these are partially realised dreams of equity in education. In 1981 Yoneji Masuda outlined the elements of a future computer-based economy, with cradle-to-grave education linked to a “global information utility”. For many technological interventions in education offered an opportunity to design a fairer system. The traditional lecture-driven classroom-based technology of learning in formal institutions was derived from the inaccessibility of medieval books locked away in libraries. Oxford began with 30 books Cambridge, 100 years later, with 130.

In 1997 I gained approval for a blended learning course in Information Systems in Society and opened it with “participatory literacy” activities. As part of TaLENT in 1998 I was involved in designing a 00000Community Grid for Learning (CGfLs) for teaching teachers ICT Literacy for the NGfL, becoming involved in running a national programme to develop CGfLs. Several successful CGfLs were developed; learners.org covered all of Manchester with several thousand users. CGfLs were built around local learner-support with cloud-based learning resources. From 2002 I have been involved in researching successful inclusive e-learning, developing the Community Development Model of Learning for community centres, The Open Context Model of Learning for OERs, the Emergent Learning Model integrating informal & formal learning and Digital Practitioner. This has involved building new learning solutions such as Ambient Learning City from which Aggregate then Curate was developed.

From this perspective MOOCs look like e-learning without the learning and prisoners of a traditional pedagogy concerned only with content-delivery. This talk will discuss what we have learnt about inclusive learning from 17 years of technology-enhanced learning design.

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## **Whereigo geocaching MOOCs and the investigation of virtual places.**

Alexander Griffin, Huddersfield University

Whereigo is a form of Geocaching; a GPS based treasure hunt game that is played throughout the world. Participants find hidden containers, called geocaches, using GPS coordinates and then share their experiences online. The game started in May 2000, when the U.S. government turned off Selective Availability, a feature that limited the accuracy of GPS signals for civilians. Within 24 hours the first geocache had been placed and its coordinates were posted online. Today there are over 2,000,000 geocaches worldwide and 6,000,000 geocachers.

A wide variety of geocache types allow the game to be played in different ways. One of the latest types of geocaches is the ‘Whereigo’ cache. This type of cache allows participants to interact with physical and virtual elements, such as a city walking tour. Whereigo geocaching enables people to communicate and participate online as they navigate virtual and or physical environments. Though geocaching is rarely described as a MOOC, it is perhaps one of the largest and widely used online open access learning adventures that draws people from a multitude of ages, languages and demographics.

For the past two years at Huddersfield University, Year 1 architecture students have utilized traditional geocaching as a means to explore Butterly Reservoir (near Marsden in the Peak District) in preparation for a bothy design project. Next academic year it is intended to plant a Whereigo cache in Huddersfield as part of an urban analysis project. This paper argues that Whereigo geocaching is a type of MOOC, and seeks to explore how the game can be used as an engaging online tool to help architecture students investigate both actual and virtual places as part of their design projects.

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## **MOOCs and Metrics: an examination of success criteria and data**

Helena Gillespie (University of East Anglia)

The debate about MOOCs is maturing, the hype is dying down, it is becoming clear that the MOOC probably doesn't mean the end of higher education as we know it, or at least not imminently. It is almost a year since UEA became FutureLearn's first MOOC partner with 'The Secret Power of Brands'. In this time we have launched four more MOOCs, each generating a range of data about uptake and participation of learners. However one question persists 'How many did you get?' Despite a better understanding of the purposes of MOOCs, alternative questions and answers with regard to MOOC success criteria are only just emerging. This short paper will explore the data created by UEA's five MOOCs and look for possible success criteria.

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## **The Rhizome as a Metaphor for Learning in a MOOC**

Frances Bell, Jenny Mackness (independent)

We recently participated in a 'home grown' MOOC- 'Rhizomatic Learning: The Community is the Curriculum' (#Rhizo14), convened by Dave Cormier and using distributed technologies of his and the participants' choosing. The concept of the rhizome as a metaphor for thinking was developed by Deleuze and Guattari in their book 'A Thousand Plateaus', published in 1980. This book, intended as an experiment in schizophrenic and nomadic thought, has captured the attention of some educators, who see the rhizome as a useful metaphor for understanding learning in open environments such as MOOCs. #Rhizo14 attracted 500+ registered participants.

Designed to run for 6 weeks, it continues via an active Facebook group and Twitter hashtag more than two months after the end of the MOOC. The MOOC design explicitly modelled rhizomatic learning and thinking principles: there was minimal content or direction by the MOOC convener and participants were expected to create their own curriculum. Nomadic behaviours, lines of flight, multiplicities, the making and breaking of connections, subversive behaviours, territorialisation, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation were all in evidence. #Rhizo14 provoked us to conduct research to investigate learning and the usefulness of the rhizome as a metaphor for teaching and learning. The initial survey generated over 30,000 words of qualitative data from a survey completed by 47 participants. Current data analysis is generating key themes that will be explored with those survey respondents who have volunteered to engage in further email interviews.

We shall present our initial findings, which suggest that there are many aspects of the rhizome metaphor which are deemed useful for modelling effective teaching and learning in MOOCs. There are also ambiguities and concerns, principally around the role of the convener, the role of power and politics in a MOOC of this type, the social structure of the community, and the nature of the curriculum.

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## **MOOCs need stewardship**

Shirley Williams (University of Reading)



When planning a MOOC getting the right educator(s) to front a course is essential to produce engaging content. But it is also important to think stewardship while the course is running, and to be aware that a popular course may be run several times over years. When the University of Reading started offering MOOCs we wanted our learners to feel that they were supported, however we were aware that with massive numbers of participants it was unrealistic for this to be done by an individual. To achieve a supportive environment we developed a three strand approach:

- The educator team
- Student mentors
- Participants

The educators worked out among the team how to regularly interact with the course, across all our courses we have found there are times when members of the educator team were away due to their academic commitments. Student mentors were recruited from University of Reading students who were familiar with the content.

For our [Begin Programming](#) course we used undergraduate students who had studied related materials during their second year. While for our [Managing People](#) course had all postgraduate mentors with research experience in the course materials. As well as receiving payment the students were able to use the experience for the RED Award (the University of Reading's employability skills certificate). The educators and mentors maintained a back channel for raising issues and ensuring anything "tricky" (such as trolls) was dealt with by the educators. Participants were encouraged to support each other using areas like "let's help each other", and at the end of runs of courses participants were encouraged to come to return for the next run either to consolidate what they had already learnt, or to help support the new community. On the one course we have had multiple runs we had a number of supportive people return who helped the new learners.

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## **Exploring (new) potential: moving MOOC design beyond the 'norm'**

Amy Woodgate (Edinburgh University)

There was a perception for many at the start of MOOC development that these online courses would implicitly widen reach of HEIs to communities globally. However, despite massive uptake, the demographic spread has been uneven. As part of Edinburgh's third wave of MOOC builds, we have begun a number of initiatives keen to challenge the 'MOOC' label/design, aiming to develop fit-for-purpose learning experiences with target audiences explicitly acting as the driver for development (not just 'in mind' during build) and these communities actively influencing and inputting to the overall course design. Such projects include Global Mental Health developing mobile-first and partnerships with Uruguay for multi-language computer science courses for high school integration – taking MOOCs into new spaces to challenge and grow experience, encourage pedagogical risk taking and deeper reflection on a given MOOC's purpose.

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## **MOOCs in a Development context; a design approach**

Freda Wolfenden, Tim Seal (Open University)

At the 2012 World OER Congress at UNESCO the reuse and adaptation of OER was highlighted as a deficiency within the extended potential impact of OER in education. It is within this that OER localisation remains one of the greatest challenges of the open education movement (Wolfenden and Buckler, 2012). The uptake of MOOCs within the HE sector has increased exponentially in the last 2 years with a proposition that they will provide one sustainable solution to the issues around provision of education to meet ever expanding demand (Trucano, 2013). With the majority of MOOCs originating from and being aimed at the global north (ICDE, 2013) how can MOOCs be adapted for developing country contexts and how does OER support this contextualisation? The TESS-India project with input from the Indian government is seeking to produce a MOOC aimed at developing the capacity of Teacher Educators to use collaborative and open practices and OER in teacher education programmes. The MOOC design draws heavily on the use of already existing OER with the generation of minimal original content. The design will need to address low bandwidth issues as well as support, potentially beyond the more standard online approaches. A significant amount of OER is produced in the global north the design will seek to address contextualisation through scaffolding and support that the MOOC offers. This presentation aims to illustrate our approach and discuss the current perceived advantages and disadvantages of such an approach.

## References

- Wolfenden, F. and Buckler, A. (2012) 'Adapting OERs for professional communities: The Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa Experience', in Connolly, Teresa; Okada, Alexandra and Scott, Peter (eds). Collaborative Learning 2.0 – Open Educational Resources, IGI Global.

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## What can we learn from Moocs? Exploring new directions

Eileen Kennedy (Institute of Education)

Increasingly critical comment on the retrograde pedagogy and effectiveness of MOOCs (for example, Bady, 2013; Laurillard, 2014; Portmess, 2013) suggests that we should be extremely wary of embracing this model of education without question or creativity. However, the MOOC phenomenon is difficult to ignore since it has begun to exert an influence on the direction of education, raising awareness of the possibility of learning online among educators, policy makers, industry, as well as potential students.

This paper explores which (if any) features MOOCs could most usefully inform teaching and research, and considers the extent to which the phenomenon is able to offer new ways of doing things online. Two online courses run by the IOE and Bloomsbury Learning Environment will be discussed: the International Learning Designs Challenge, a week-long online course that took place in February 2014, and the BLOOC, an online training course aimed at teachers in the 5 University of London colleges in Bloomsbury. While the designers of both courses might resist the MOOC label, the courses exhibit certain features of MOOCs, and arguably would not have been conceived without the prior existence of MOOCs. The paper will reflect on useful ways of embedding MOOC-like features in both education and design-led research projects.

## References

- Bady, A. (2013, May). The MOOC bubble and the attack on public education | Academic Matters.
- Laurillard, D. (2014, January 16). Five myths about Moocs | Opinion | Times Higher Education. Times Higher Education. London.
- Portmess, L. (2013). Mobile Knowledge, Karma Points and Digital Peers: The Tacit Epistemology and Linguistic Representation of MOOCs. Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology, 39(2), 1–8.

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## Storytelling through MOOCs

Aidan Johnston (University of Strathclyde)

There's been – as Taggart apparently never actually said – A Murder. The body of a woman has been found in a car on the shore of Loch Lomond. It looks like she's been shot. And it's up to you to crack the case. On the upside, you have six weeks to do it and it'll only take about three hours a week. It's all online, so you won't need to get your hands dirty. Oh, and no-one's really died.

Welcome to [Introduction to Forensic Science](#), the murder mystery that forms the backdrop for a university course. The Introduction to Forensic Science was the first MOOC that the University of Strathclyde ran in partnership with Future Learn. The course, which attracted over 26,000 participants from all over the world has storytelling at the heart of the MOOC design. So why use storytelling? "What we wanted to do was to give them the means whereby they could immerse themselves in the story – the real science behind forensic science", says Niamh Nic Daied, Strathclyde's Professor of Forensic Science.

In this plenary, I will give an overview of the MOOC course design, the challenges and the critical success factors of the University's first and very high profile MOOC launch. And share with you a small part of the learning we are taking forward to our next MOOC design.

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## Stepping Into Life Change: A New Measure of the Impact of MOOCs and Open Education

Curtis Bonk (Indiana University) and Mimi Miyoung Lee (University of Houston)

On April 4, 2001 (i.e., "441"), Charles Vest, then president of MIT, made an historic announcement. He set a goal of having most of his university's courses freely available on the Web in a decade. While some thought this to be a rather bold proclamation, people in remote parts of the world are having their lives altered, and perhaps even transformed, from OpenCourseWare (OCW) and now MOOCs. So, too, are your neighbors, colleagues, and members of your family. At this very minute, countless millions of individuals are engaged in self-directed, informal, and solitary learning experiences with open educational resources (OER). Millions more are learning from more interactive content with global peers who have signed up for a MOOC or MOOC derivative.

As these learning experiments unfold, there are assorted debates about the value or even the need for a degree. Too often, however, the focus becomes one of course completion and retention, instead of other measures of success such as life change in the form of a job promotion, new career, or novel professional interest. In response, this research explores the learning experiences of self-directed learners, including the common barriers, obstacles, motivations, and successes in such environments. It also documents possibilities for life change from the use of OER and MOOCs. Data collection included subscribers of the MIT OpenCourseWare (OCW) initiative as well as participants of a MOOC hosted by Blackboard using CourseSites. The findings not only capture the motivational variables involved in informal and self-directed learning experiences, but also provide a set of stories of life change that might inspire others into MOOCs, open education, and beyond. Life change could be the defining characteristic of MOOCs. It is time, therefore, to capture and share such life stories of MOOC success (as well as the challenges and failures) so as to inspire others into becoming part of this newly emerging “Learning Century.”

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## Open Education and “The Promises” we make

Ronald MacIntyre (The Open University in Scotland)

This workshop explores a simple question, the rhetoric behind openly licensed material suggests a radical reconfiguration of the relationship between the haves and the have nots. However, while openly licensed or free education materials clearly Widen Access (more people learning), at present they are doing little to Widen Participation (WP, widening the socio-economic base) (Falconer et.al 2013). What the data suggests is that it is merely a way for the well educated to embed their comparative advantage.

Following Kotler (1997) the session considers this in relation to “the promises” we make in the broader Open Education movement, and the role of those “promises” in encouraging people from socially excluded backgrounds into education. Building on recent work on partnership and participatory design (Macintyre 2014) it asks whether one of the reasons that uncertain learners do not engage with free and openly licensed resources is that two key “promises” are missing. Promises around support along the learning journey, and the ability to gain recognition for those studies. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on and discuss whether these promises are important, and explore what other promises we ought to make in order to engage uncertain learners. From this we hope to identify the areas that we need to explore and build on to ensure we have the capacity to keep those promises.

### References

- Falconer, I., McGill, L., Littlejohn, A. and Boursinou, E. (2013) Overview and Analysis of Practices with Open Educational Resources in Adult Education in Europe. Luxembourg: European Commission
- Kotler P. (1997) Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control, (9th ed), NJ, Prentice Hall
- Macintyre, R. (2014). Open Education P’s at the OU in Scotland: Partnership, Practices and the Development of Open Educational Policies. In Proceedings of OpenCourseWare Consortium Global 2014: Open Education for a Multicultural World.

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## **Beyond the selfie – social learning in a connectivist environment**

Patrick Haughian (Queens University, Belfast)

If we accept the research which suggests interaction is good for learning then what Jacob Nielsen calls the '90-9-1 rule' is extremely problematic. This is, in online communities, 90% of users are lurkers (read, observe but don't contribute), 9% contribute occasionally while 1% account for most contributions. Nielsen's rule is particularly challenging in designing a MOOC, when studies show better completion rates for courses which don't promote active engagement but rely on instructor-led video lectures.

So how do we design an online course which promotes sustained social engagement, interaction and connection when most learners do not want to engage? For a recent MOOC offered by Queen's University Belfast, 'Identity, Conflict and Public Space', the solution was an attempt to blend the xMooc-cMooc models into one which encouraged learners to share knowledge in a way which others could best benefit. In this model, instructor-led videos are layered with learning activities which promote social engagement and generate learner content which then becomes an important course dynamic. The approach blended a mix traditional online discussion, innovative social media services along with bespoke interactive exercises in order to promote and sustain participation. This session will look at the Queen's approach and lessons learned in the attempt to build a connectivist learning environment best suited to facilitating social learning approaches. [The course can be viewed on the FutureLearn platform.](#)

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## **Dropouts in MOOCs: what do we know about them?**

Sherif Halawa (Stanford University)

MOOC dropout is a phenomenon that has attracted a lot of research attention since 2012. In the short term, understanding dropout allows you to predict at-risk students and intervene to increase persistence. In the longer term, understanding dropout helps us understand what challenges different learner sub-populations face, and eventually develop MOOC design guidelines that help learners achieve more in the course. In this talk, I will summarize our last 1 year of research in Stanford's Learning Analytics (Lytics) lab on understanding dropout. I will address questions such as: Can we predict who is going to dropout and who is going to stay? Can we estimate the contributions of different risk factors (such as lack of ability, motivation, or time) to a specific dropout? How does course design affect persistence in a MOOC? How does persistence vary with various learner demographic and goal-setting traits?

We are nowhere near any definitive answers for any of these questions. We learn new things as we study data from new MOOCs. In this talk, I aim to describe what we want and where we currently stand regarding understanding dropouts in MOOCs.

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## It's a MOOC, Jim, but not as we know it

Julie Watson (Southampton University)

This presentation will showcase a home-grown large online course with several thousand international student participants, delivered each summer since 2011 by the University of Southampton. Its particular learning design mixes and matches aspects of c-Moocs and x-Moocs and blends social media tools with a conventional delivery platform. The course is designed to allow for large scale student-led discussion and community-building, combined with use of scaffolded activity-based learning resources, with the content focus on social and academic acculturation. The degree of student engagement with the course is high and yet the tutor is absent. Participant feedback and course use data will be referred to, and an evaluation of its effectiveness will be made.

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## MOOCs: it's not about the money

Matt Jenner (UCL)

Matt Jenner (UCL) MO Many institutions, organisations and countries have subscribed to MOOC-mania since 2012. There are millions of learners registered on thousands of past and upcoming courses from numerous providers. But what's the incentive to invest resource in building and running more MOOCs, especially for those who are new to the arena? Additionally, if it's time to evaluate – what metrics are we using to discover the value of this activity? A motivator for early adopters was to gain momentum from the MOOC-mania, it was a way of actively responding to a new 'game-changer' in education. And rightly so, this bought media attention, large enrolment numbers and opportunities to experiment, safely away from the confines of traditional teaching and learning. The raising of institutional profiles and reputation through big numbers of learners might have been enough for some to get involved but it doesn't seem to be sustained. The MOOC landscape has become more crowded and direct benefits may be diminishing. Perhaps it is now time to look for the indirect benefits for institutions? Speaking on behalf of a non-participating institution who are still waiting to make their move; it was an advantage for us to know of the indirect benefits of MOOCs. It is perhaps the original wish of vice chancellors that MOOCs might become another revenue stream. Expenditure doesn't necessarily equate to a direct, financial return on investment. Instead, at UCL we have identified 30 associated benefits of running MOOCs which span five domains. They are harder to quantify but seem valuable to consider in qualitative terms. It is these benefits we discovered when scouring the literature for MOOCs and HEIs and the areas we wish to explore with the conference audience and see what was left out, with a participatory exercise from the group. 2014 might be the year of evaluating the MOOC – and if so, we think these benefits will bring a set of metrics to measure against.

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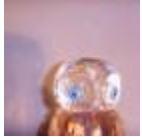
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## About Mira Vogel

E-Learning Facilitator at UCL - interested in: Learning analytics Academic development Peer assessment  
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