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Resisting the MOOC stampede: is there still a place for small scale online CPD for library and information professionals?

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Introduction

• MOOCs
  • Current context, pros and cons, their potential use for CPD
• Small scale online CPD courses
  • Introducing FOLIO, evaluation of a recent course
• Conclusion
Current Context

- UK Higher Education Sector increasingly marketised environment.
- HEI’s contributing towards a “knowledge economy” (Olssen and Peters, 2005)
  - research
  - Work related courses / research informed practice
- Rise of the “entrepreneurial university” (Etzkowitz, 2013)
What’s your USP?

• Why not showcase your wares with a MOOC?

• MOOCs can help institutions:
  • Raise their profile – research and teaching
  • Experiment with new teaching approaches
  • Recruit new students
  • Share knowledge freely
  • Learn how to ‘do’ online learning (Gaebel, 2014)
I’m sorry what’s a MOOC?

• A massive open online course
  • Massive – no participant limit
  • Open – no entry requirements / no credits
  • Online – hosted on the www
  • Course – xMOOC’s based on traditional methods e.g. lectures and self-tests.

(Gaebel, 2014)
The future of higher education?

• Possibilities and limitations BIS (2013)
  • Some institutions left behind?
  • New pedagogical approaches?
  • Providing increased access to disciplinary knowledge?
  • A triumph of style over content?
  • Lack of support for learners with additional needs?
  • Widening the digital and knowledge divide or increasing access?

• Institutional experience
Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development?

• Personal perspective:
  • Access to high quality content
  • Learn at own pace, pick up/put down
  • “Passive” learning
  • Social networking

• Formal CPD:
  • No credits/awards - is this a problem?
  • Provision from elite institutions but is the appropriate content available?
  • Limited access to tutors, but no financial outlay.

BIS (2013)
Alternatives

• Blended learning online/F2F
• F2F courses
• Cost, travel and learner preference implications (Booth et al, 2009)
• Small scale CPD online - the best of all worlds?
FOLIO

● Online CPD courses for library and information professionals (2003-present)

● National & International

● Topics relating to professional skills, learning & teaching skills, management skills, contextual knowledge

Photo by Anthea Sutton
FOLIO v MOOCs

- Small-scale
- Tailored to specific audiences
- Completion rate
- Individual communication with participants
- Peer-review groups
- Detailed feedback on assessment

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Recent FOLIO

- Commissioned by HEE LKSL
- 30 NHS library and information professionals
- Scanning and Synthesis

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Outcomes

- 97% completion rate
- 10 commendations
Evaluation

● Questions on enjoyment, usefulness, platform (CourseSites), topics covered, further comments.
● Feedback from course portfolios.
● Informal feedback.

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Things we did well...

- Course Structure
- Variety of tasks
- Interaction
- Assessment (key task and reflection)
Potential Changes

- More practical exercises & less reading!
- PDFs of course materials
- Personal Tutors
- Course Platform?
- Guidance on being an online learner?

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Conclusions

- Is there still a place for small-scale tailored online courses in the CPD marketplace?
References


References


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