

edX

edX is a joint venture involving the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University that will offer university-level courses from a wide range of disciplines online to a worldwide audience at no charge. The two institutions have each contributed \$30 million to the nonprofit project. Scheduled for launch in Fall, 2012, edX will incorporate and build on MITx, a similar project launched by MIT in December, 2011^[1]. The "learning platform" will be developed as open source software and made available to other institutions of higher learning which wish to make similar offerings; there are plans to allow other schools to offer courses on the edX website also. Plans are to create online learning software that moves beyond videos of lectures to interactive experience.^[2] For a modest fee certificates of successful completion will be offered but not college credit. Neither MIT nor Harvard students may take the online courses for credit; they will be used to enrich their learning experience.^[2] In addition to educational offerings the project will be used to research learning and distance education.^{[3][4][2]}

Anant Agarwal of MIT will lead the project with Alan M. Garber, Provost of Harvard University, assisted by Michael D. Smith, a computer scientist who is Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, handling Harvard contributions. Five courses are planned for the initial offering in fall 2012.^[3] The design of a viable business model for sustainability of the enterprise is in progress.^[4]

History

The low-cost not-for-profit online education industry was pioneered by several major players. The first program to bring well recognized branding was the for-profit Udacity (at the time, Know Labs), which launched a course mirroring the Stanford AI course in the fall of 2011. Coursera, a similar VC-backed commercial venture, launched shortly after Udacity. In addition, edX follows a number of non-certificate-granting programs, including Khan Academy, MIT OCW, and CMU OLI.

Earlier projects offering university level courses online, "Fathom" developed by Columbia University, failed in 2003 and AllLearn in 2006.^[3] The AllLearn project was a consortium of Stanford, Yale and Oxford Universities. This was an ambitious online learning project which provided 110 high-quality enrichment courses from Oxford, Stanford, and Yale Universities for modest fees to over 10,000 participants from seventy countries.^{[5] [6]}

References

- [1] MIT press release, Dec. 19 2011 (<http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2011/mitx-education-initiative-1219.html>)
- [2] "edX FAQs" (<http://www.edxonline.org/faqs.html>). edX. . Retrieved May 3, 2012.
- [3] Tamar Lewin (May 2, 2012). "Harvard and M.I.T. Team Up to Offer Free Online Courses" (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/03/education/harvard-and-mit-team-up-to-offer-free-online-courses.html>). *The New York Times*. . Retrieved May 3, 2012.
- [4] Nick DeSantis (May 2, 2012). "Harvard and MIT Put \$60-Million Into New Platform for Free Online Courses" (<http://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/harvard-and-mit-put-60-million-into-new-platform-for-free-online-courses/36284>). *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. . Retrieved May 3, 2012.
- [5] "Failure of a Prestigious Venture" (<http://www.checkpoint-elearning.com/?aID=2553>). . Retrieved 21 January 2010.
- [6] Townshend, Emma (2009). *Darwin's Dogs: How Darwin's Pets Helped Form a World-Changing Theory of Evolution*. Francis Lincoln Ltd., London.

External links and further reading

- edXOnline.Org (<http://edXOnline.Org>) – official site
 - MIT press release (<http://web.mit.edu/press/2012/mit-harvard-edx-announcement.html>)
 - Harvard press release (<http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2012/05/mit-and-harvard-announce-edx>)
 - official logo (http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/edX_Logo_Col_RGB_FINAL.jpg)
 - "Barriers to Adoption of Online Learning Systems in U.S. Higher Education" (<http://www.ithaka.org/about-ithaka/announcements/barriers-to-adoption-of-online-learning-systems-in-us-higher-education.pdf>) study by Lawrence S. Bacow, William G. Bowen, Kevin M. Guthrie, Kelly A. Lack, Matthew P. Long published by Ithaka S+R May 1, 2012 This study coins the term "Interactive Learning Online" or ILO.
 - Taylor Walsh, author, William G. Bowen, foreword, *Unlocking the Gates: How and Why Leading Universities Are Opening Up Access to Their Courses*, Princeton University Press (December 28, 2010), hardcover, 320 pages, ISBN-10: 0691148740 ISBN-13: 978-0691148748
 - "The X Factor" (<http://chronicle.com/blogs/brainstorm/the-x-factor/46395>) Brainstorm blog post by Kevin Carey *Chronicle of Higher Education* May 2, 2012
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