
MOOCs and libraries: the good, the bad and the ugly

'Well worth a trip! #mooclib great talks, discussions and collaboration!'

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This summer the first European MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and Libraries Conference took place in central London. Hosted by the Open University Library in partnership with OCLC Research and Jisc, it was attended by 125 delegates who represented organisations based throughout Europe, the USA and the UK. It was an exciting first opportunity for librarians in Europe to share their experiences of MOOCs.

A variety of speakers shared their thoughts on the challenges MOOCs pose to the traditional delivery of library services and the opportunities they offer for libraries to rethink and revitalise their service offer. Merrilee Proffit of OCLC Research and Jennifer Dornier of Berkeley both spoke of how libraries in the US have proactively sought to contribute to the development of MOOCs in their institutions – for example at Duke University, where the library is central to MOOC production. Jennifer also highlighted the positive impact of the edX libraries consortium, which has enabled significant issues, such as research skills, to be worked on in partnership. The Open University has developed the FutureLearn Partner Librarians Network to fulfil a similar function in the UK.

One of the major themes to emerge from the day was around licensing and the issues raised when using resources on a global scale. Sally-Anne Betteridge from the University of Birmingham is a MOOC veteran, and spoke of her experiences as a participant. She noted that sometimes study resources were freely available in the US but not in other countries, which illustrates why knowledge and understanding of licensing and copyright issues are fundamental to a successful MOOC. Add to this the need for quality resources

and guidance for research skills, and it becomes clear why librarians need to be part of the MOOC conversation.

The MOOCs and Libraries conference presented the first real opportunity for librarians in Europe to share their experiences of MOOCs so far, and to develop a strategic direction for higher education libraries in particular by which to navigate this new landscape.

Presentations from the day can be viewed on the OU Library website:

www.open.ac.uk/library/training-and-events/1st-european-moocs-and-libraries-conference

Don't miss your place at the second conference, to be held in September 2014 in the Netherlands; dates will be available soon on the Open University web site.