
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Piet Kommers is an Associate Professor at the University of Twente, The Netherlands. His specialty is social media for communication and organisation. As conference co-chair of the IADIS multi-conference, he initiated the conferences of web-based communities and social media, e-society, mobile learning and international higher education. He is a Professor at the UNESCO Institute for Eastern European Studies in Educational Technology and Adjunct Professor at Curtin University in Perth, Australia.

Margriet Simmerling is Peer Consultant/Senior Manager for R&D projects in the area of e-society and web-based communities. She participated in the advisory board for the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and is active as a Reviewer for the European Commission. She designs and moderates e-learning modules and workshops on e-learning modules and workshops in the domain of education technology and psychology at the PhD level.

So far we have seen that the potential of web-based communities entail both to solutions and to complications of new innovations like the arrival of massive open online courses (MOOCs). The first symptom of MOOCs as a solution is its widespread dissemination; any online learner may access the best available video lectures from top teachers at top institutes around the world. The first complication is that countries that rely heavily on international students may fear less online students or maybe a shorter residence as they already master parts of the prerequisite courses via MOOC-based certificates. Feel welcome to visit our monitoring of recent reflections on MOOCs by Ronald Voorn and Piet Kommers: <http://www.scoop.it/t/disruptive-innovation-and-moocs>. A second potential positive effect of MOOCs is its stimuli to increase quality awareness by the traditional f2f universities; lectures currently show a great deal of improvisation and rest upon pseudo-interaction between the teacher and the students in the best case. In the scope of this special issue, it is the challenge to see how students' perception of 'joining an online community' can mitigate the negative connotation of 'feeling a remote guest' rather than a 'participant', etc.

The overall reactions to MOOCs is that it is essentially not a new phenomenon and MOOCs are massively overhyped. Its unique selling point that it may attract several hundred of thousand students at the same time already shows to be a disadvantage; systems get overloaded and the size of responses to broadcasted course schedules can hardly be handled in back- and mid-offices. An even more pervasive problem is that research on instructional design so far migrated from pure delivery to interactive and cooperative learning modes. So we barely lack appropriate models for optimising broadcasted learning modules. Even more: the majority of academicians doubts about the essential premise that distance learning can be achieved without tutorials and process diagnostics by a human teacher. In other words: MOOCs need to be complemented by collaborative learning anyway.

MOOCs offered by the best universities and entities are entering our world. Business models are yet to be developed. How these how does the interactions work in online education. How can web-based communities support this new developments? Important aspects are:

- virtual versus pseudo social presence
- demand – instead of delivery-based knowledge
- courses where (re)construction, problem solving and creativity is key
- collaborative – rather than solitary learning
- new implications for social media in education
- fresh quality awareness and branding standards for the institutes in higher education.

The next questions are addressed in the successive articles in this special issue:

- 1 Does social presence play an important factor in the further development of MOOCs? Patrícia Brandalise Scherer Bassani and Débora Nice Ferrari Barbosa present the result of a qualitative study. The purpose of the study is to identify social presence in a web-based collective writing environment. In the article 'cooperation and participation in online education' the communication, cooperation and coordination (3C model) is the starting point of the analysis.
- 2 Do MOOCs address specific student groups and specific problems? In the article 'Students' web-based actions when linking theory and practice', Linda Reneland-Forsman focus on the question how students use web-based communities to construct knowledge. The study has dealt with students classified as non-traditional: no previous higher education, older than the average student and working while studying. The outcome is important for all those involved in the development of MOOCs.
- 3 Do MOOCs host online forums and do MOOCs contributes to the branding for an institute? Important findings and research is done by Hanna-Kaisa Ellonen, Miia Kosonen, Anssi Tarkiainen and Lisbeth Tonteri. In the article 'The positive outcomes of a sense of virtual community', empirical finding are presented, as well as managerial implications.
- 4 So many social media, so many sites to be active on, time to think about new models around a 'social internetworking system'. Antonino Nocera and Domenico Ursino

propose a SIS model based on User and resources affinities, seen from various point of views. Their approach could be seen as a recommender system, suggesting users and resources to the ego and operating on multiple social sites. In the article, 'A new ego network model and an approach to extracting an ego network compliant with this model from a social internetworking system' new results are presented.

- 5 Perspectives on the evaluation of affective quality in social software. Elaine C.S. Hayashi, Lara Schibelsky Godoy Piccolo and Maria Cecilia Calani Baranauskas report about the research around an online social software platform: Vila Na Rede. It intends to be a source of opportunities for creating a digital culture amongst the least favourite part of the Brazil population. Vila na Rede started with a non-online community and its needs and abilities were gradually built into an online community.
- 6 In the domain of digital art, cooperation is identified as a key element in the creative process. In the article 'Web 2.0 and digital art communities: applications and potentialities', Sotiris P. Christodoulou and Georgios D. Styliaras examine various digital art projects, present a set of common general steps and make a connection to the possibilities within Web 2.0 applications.
- 7 Michelle O'Shea and Abel Duarte Alonso detect that also Australian sport organisations discover the benefit social media. In the article 'Fan moderation of professional sport organisations' social media content: strategic brilliance or pending disaster?' they investigate the relation with branding and professional sport.

We are proud to present you articles from 14 researcher coming from Austria, Brazil, Sweden, Finland, Greece, Italy and Portugal. We would like to thank the more than 130 experts, who have generously contributed with their time and expertise as reviewers in 2013. Without their efforts, we would not have been able to manage the journal so efficiently and raise its profile internationally.