

**Designing Learner-Centric MOOCs**  
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**Lecture 01**  
**Perception of MOOCs**

## Perception of MOOCs

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** -If this question is posed to us, "What according to you is a MOOC or what according to you are the components of the MOOC?" What will each of us say?

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** – So, "What was the need for calling it a MOOC or making it into a MOOC". Online courses existed for long time, good courses, OpenCourseware, of MIT and all but why MOOC.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - Yeah.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - So one is I think the synchronous orchestration, right?

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** – Right.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - So the MOOCs have, there is start date and the online courseware was not having that model. It was just resources. It was moving from the model of just having resources to the model of a course.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - Unless you look at universities which ran online courses as part of their formal courses, then there was a start date, there was an end date, and there were these particular things.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – Yeah.

**Dr. Jayakrishnan** - The moment this concept of having technology to support big data, that's when I think really MOOCs really originated for me.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - So you are looking at a historical perspective.

**Dr. Jayakrishnan** - I think I am looking at it more from a technology perspective.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - But I am saying, so what he said was a pedagogy perspective. That instead of just self-paced that you... it's a resource, you use it whenever you want to. Instead of that it has been formally given out as a course where there is the structure is defined by the instructor and only in that manner it should start.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - I think these resources, they were never called a course. They were online resources or repositories.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – Courseware, yeah.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** – No, but there were course like, you know NPTEL, we had NPTEL courses.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – Correct.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - But that course, so from course to MOOCs, so one need what he just said was that, it has to be following a synchronous pattern so that people can interact at the same time. That is definitely one. Anything else.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - So the other way, so what has changed in a MOOC is the massive part and the open part.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – Correct.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - Because the online courses were for specific...

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - So are we saying that M and O are attached to that O and C. So O and C existed...

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - So Open on the one hand, open courseware existed, open courseware but without the structure of a course existed.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** – Correct.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - On the other hand, formal structure courses existed but they were not open and they were not massive in this sense.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - So the massive has another role to play. So because of the massive, new technologies also came into play.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** – Correct.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - So if it were an online course, I am still looking at analytics which the university normally provides to me. Because of the massiveness, I think big push came towards looking at analytics.

**Dr. Jayakrishnan** - I mean earlier you had a single university system, the server client whatever be the architecture. So there is the central thing. The moment the idea of cloud came in and people, so any one could, you could have your server hosted virtually everywhere. I think that is when for me this idea of MOOC as we know now...

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - So the first question is what is the goal of the MOOCs as at least the first generation MOOCs as we know it and secondly did the technology come first or did the goal come first and then the technology was invented to realize this goal.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - So let me take a shot at answering that. I think what happened or what the natural progression was that everybody agreed that the expert lectures by the leaders in the field needs to be disseminated widely. So that's where...

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - the archival value...

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - archival value and not just archival value it's dissemination, like the new form of information dissemination.

**Dr. Jayakrishnan** - Access, access to the experts.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - Yeah. Not just through just textbooks that are written but also through videos that they give.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** – Right.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – So, initially a whole bunch of these experts lectures became available like which, some of which became the OCW courseware and so on. And after that we thought of putting some structure on it and creating courses at which time activities, assignments, all those things also became part of these OCW materials. Right? And subsequently is when people thought that why not make this an open course. At least if you look at the historical evolution that has been the direction.

**Dr. Jayakrishnan** - The way these Udacity or those things came, it was Andrew, that machine learning lecture, which he openly put out. And that's when they saw that there is this, I think they just tested the proof of that concept and they succeeded in that. That's when these platforms... I think that's when Coursera or those kinds of platforms, the idea of those platforms emerged.

So for me it's all about the technology being available at the right place. Evolution of technology has a larger way. The goal was always there I think. From 90s or whenever we are thinking of computer-based or technology-based interventions and classrooms at any other places. So having wikis, having all these things put out, blogs... So this idea of dissemination was always there and the moment this technology came in that's when it got a big push. Ok. "Why don't we do this, why don't we move out the university from the walls to" ...

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - No and it's become so routine for instructors now that it's yet another format that a regular instructor can play with.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - Correct.

**Dr. Jayakrishnan** - Yeah.