

National developments in online higher education in Norway; recommendations of the MOOC Commission

Eva Gjerdrum, Director Norway Opening Universities

2nd European Summit on open and online learning and the modernisation agenda for European higher education



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Themes

- **A bit about general policies of digitalisation of HE in Norway**
- **The Norwegian MOOC-Commission**
- **Preliminary recommendations from the Commission**



Government initiatives in HE

- **Promote development and best use of technology through the project unit Norway Opening University (Norgesuniversitetet)**
- **Investment in intercampus infrastructure through 5-year eCampus-program**



Status of ICT in Norwegian HE

- **Modern technology infrastructure in place in most schools and HEIs**
- **7 % of total number of students in HE are enrolled in online distance studies**
- **Need for unifying ICT policy of HEIs**



MOOCs in Norway

- **eCampus programme –technical infrastructure in all institutions. 5-year programme, offering testing with Canvas & edX**
- **The first Norwegian MOOC offered in 2013 (fall) – by NTNU**
- **More courses are being developed by several institutions, between 15 and 20 by now**
- **Individuals taking MOOCs**





Time for MOOC

MOOC Commission sub-report

13 Desember 2013



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Mandate

- **11 member Commission appointed by the former Norwegian Government**
- **The Commission shall:**
 - **Inquire into the possibilities and challenges that accompany the development of MOOCs and similar offers**
 - **Provide Norwegian authorities and educational institutions with information on how they shall relate to this development**
- **A more detailed report in the summer of 2014**



The report

- **Overview of the development – in Norway and internationally. What are the driving forces?**
- **Limited to higher education**
- **Key questions:**
 - **financing of higher education, educational grants and loans**
 - **accreditation and quality assurance**
 - **quality in higher education and research based education**
 - **lifelong learning/continuing and further education**
 - **cooperation between institutions, division of labor and concentration**
 - **cooperation with business and working life**



The definition of MOOC?

The comitee uses a wide definition emphasising the overall common features of MOOC and similar provisions.

- Courses that are online**
- Courses that are massive, scalable as regards to the number of participants**
- Courses that are accessible and open, anyone can sign up**
- Courses in a wide sense of the definition**



21 Different Preliminary recommendations

Based on a positive overall view of the potential of MOOC, the main recommendations are connected to the following areas:



Innovative Education and Pedagogics

- **Enhanced efforts on research on and dissemination of results of learning technologies, esp. learning analytics**
- **Systematic and targeted efforts in developing digital competence among employees in HE**
- **Incentives in HE at the individual level as regards professional development of teachers**



Infrastructure

- **The Commission believes there is a need for continuing and increasing the national appropriations for technological infrastructure**
 - **For the infrastructure for web-based education in general, and for developing an infrastructure for MOOCs in particular**
 - **In depth study of whether it is appropriate to have a single national MOOC portal or whether alternative solutions are better**



MOOCs and skills needed in working life

- **The Commission recommends in general that business and working life use MOOC and similar provisions for employee skills development.**
- **In this lays also the challenging of Norwegian HE in providing skills through MOOCs**
- **Allocate resources to develop and aquire experience in the use of MOOCs in continuing education**



Quality-assurance, accreditation and recognition

- **MOOCs with exams and credits can be regular parts of a degree as the system works today**
- **The commission recommends that the Norwegian HEIs exploits the possibilities in the existing regulations for recognising subjects and courses in a degree. A study should be made to examine and widen these possibilities**
- **The comission recomend trials with admission to MOOCs in HE for applicants that do not satisfy the traditional requirements for admission**

Quality matters, criterias and assuranse will be important themes in the final report.



Financing higher education

The commission recommends incentives for:

- **Supporting cooperation between institutions when it comes to the development of MOOCs and similar**
- **Relevance in education, and the cooperation between HEIs and parts in the working life in the development of skills in MOOCs**

The commission also recommends an appropriation within the strategic funds to support the development of digital educational content and technological infrastructure for MOOC and similar.



The final report

- **June 2014**
- **A further discussion on the themes of the preliminary report**
- **Important themes**
 - **Quality matters: learning activities, learning analytics etc.**
 - **MOOC and quality development**
 - **HE and different forms of assessment and exams**
 - **Copyright and other legal issues**
 - **Competition and collaboration in HEIs**





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The Norwegian Educational system

- **Broad access to higher education**
- **No tuition fees in Norway**
- **Educational support and funding of higher education via public grant schemes**
- **Few private donations/gifts to higher education**
- **State-run higher education institutions – with some exceptions**
- **Decentralized access to higher education**
- **Healthy public finances – less pressure on cuts in public spending than in other countries**





A decentralized
higher education
sector and many
small institutions

