

Assessment of existing MOOC platforms and choosing the platform to be used

AURA & Rogers Foundation

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1. Summary of the process

Between February and May 2017 AURA and Rogers Foundation completed a comparative assessment of MOOC platforms, in order to choose the one that fits CONNAT's aims the best.

The steps of the comparative research were the following:

- setting up a list of criterias to be evaluated during the research
- choosing ten of the most famous MOOC platforms
- collecting data on the chosen platforms
- collecting additional data on the functionalities of the chosen platforms (if available)
- limiting the number of platforms to four for further research (by AURA)
- deeper analyzis of the chosen four platforms (by AURA)
- testing two of these four platforms (by AURA and Rogers Foundation)

The four chosen platforms were Coursera, Udemy, EdX and Edmodo. Out of these four, Udemy and Edmodo were tested further (an account was created to see how the site works) and in the end **Udemy was chosen**.

2. Initial results

When setting up the list of criterias to be evaluated, we focused on the features that could determine our future success with that site. These were:

- statistics (number of users, providers, courses, etc.)
- types of courses and certificates
- price
- usability (how is easy to use from a participant and from a provider point of view)
- inside features (ways of mentoring, collaboration, assessment)
- whether it can support multi-language courses
- offline usability
- personal experience

The ten platforms we worked with at the beginning were Coursera, edX, Udacity, Future Learn, Open2Study, Moodle, Udemy , Edmodo, openedx and Eco MOOC. These were chosen for consideration based on how well-known they are and partners' personal experience with them. At this point of the assessment partners' aim was to get an overview of platforms. First, partners collected basic information on all 10 sites, then followed by the extra information available. As for collecting detailed information on all platforms requires registering and testing how the site works and thus being excessively time-consuming, these sets of information wasn't collected for all 10 platforms but for those where it was available. The research was made online (visiting the sites and reading articles).

We have collected all the information on them in the following chart:



Name	Coursera	edX	Udacity	Future Learn	Open2Study	Moodle	Udemy	Edmodo	Open edX	Eco MOOC
Link	www.coursera.org	www.edx.org	www.udacity.com	www.futurelearn.com	www.open2study.com	moodle.net	www.udemy.com	www.edmodo.com	open.edx.org	ecolearning.eu
No. of partners/instructors	149 (from 29 countries)	650+	-	73	26	75830	20000	-	-	23
No. of students	16123306	5000000	4000000	2639959	36747	1,01E+08	15000000	76900000	-	-
No. of courses	2049	737	110 (+7 nanodegree programs)	214	48	11705171	450000	-	-	76
Types of courses	-	5 types: verified, highschool, credit-eligible, Xseries program, professional education	3 types: free courses, experience courses, nanodegree programs	-	-	Depending on the provider	-	-	-	-

Certificates	3 types: free, "Signature track", specialized	3 types: free, verified, xseries	3 types: free, verified, nanodegree	2 types: participation, verified	1 type: participation	Possible to create a certificate by an additional plugin	-	-	-	Badge (provided by the instructor)
Topics - where would CONNAT fit?	Personal development	Health&Safety, Phylosophy &Ethics	Mostly technical topics	Health&Psychology, Nature&Environment	Health&Medical sciences	Any	Personal development	Any	-	Any
Business modell	For profit	Non-profit (funds from universities)	For profit	For profit	Part of Open Universities Australia	Individuals and organizations contribute	-	-	This is the open source platform of edx	Non-profit
Price for students	free / 40-50 \$ for signature track certificate	free / 50-100\$ for verified certificate	free / "course experience" courses for 150 \$ / nanodegree for 200\$ per month /	free / certificates are priced	free	Free/depending on the course provider	free	free	free	free

Price for providers	free/you give rights to Coursera	-	-	-	-	Free	free	free	free	Free
How user-friendly?	According to reviews: it is user-friendly; no unneeded functionalities	-	-	-	-	The provider can choose a theme; if you put a lot of work in it as a provider, it looks user-friendly	good	good	ok	ok
How to upload a course?	Form a binding contract with Coursera - longer process	-	-	-	-	There are detailed manuals available,; the provider can decide about features	-	-	Have to install it	Have to fill out an application form, they accept it or not
Any criterias for uploading a course?	Collaborate with universities/ "top organizations" only	-	-	-	-	Interactivity, No illegal content, Backupfile should be less than 250 MB if for downloading	-	-	No	Following the pedagogical model

Ways for participant-collaboration?	Discussion boards	-	-	-	-	Chat, Forum	-	-	-	Peer-reviews, forums (Karma - your popularity based on your forum-activity)
Ways of mentoring/monitoring	Progress bar, questions	-	-	-	-	Competences, Activitiy completetion, Course completetion, Course report, Badges, Certificate, Progress bar	-	-	-	Self-checking your progress
Ways of assessment	homework, quizzes, exams, projects, and other assignments ; peer evaluation	-	-	-	-	Greades, Give comments; Assignment, Choice, Quiz	-	-	-	Peer-review
Multi-language?	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	
Can we use it offline?	Through a mobile app	-	-	-	-	It is possible to download a course	-	-	-	-
Can we save the course for later use?	It's on the site, but Coursera has the	-	-	-	-	If downloaded	-	-	-	-

	right to modify, delete (it notices you before)									
Does any of us have personal experience with it?	No	-	-	-	-	As a participant	-	-	-	-
Any personal preference ?	We are not a university - I think it is not possible	-	-	-	-	From experience: not so user friendly	-	-	-	-

3. Data analysis and introduction of the four chosen platforms

After collecting data on these ten platforms, AURA has selected four of them that seemed to be working for CONNAT. Considering that the project's aim with the MOOC is to mainstream our course (during and after the project) and make it available for as many users as possible, one of the main factor we took into account was how popular and well-known each site was. To asses this, we have looked into number of partners and number of students on the platforms, as well as partners' own previous knowledge. This way we have decided that *Eco MOOC*, *Open2Study* and *FutureLearn* are not the right choices, as we either couldn't find data on users or found that the numbers were considerably smaller than other possibilities. We decided not to use *Open edX* as it needs installation and the partnership has preferred an online working platform. *Moodle* was not considered for further analysis as some partners have had negative personal experiences with it previously, namely being not user-friendly, both for providers and for users, as well as technical difficulties occurring. Out of the remaining five platforms *Udacity* was discarded because our profile was very different to what it offers, as it contains mostly technical (ITC, digital issues, business, etc.) topics.

Therefore the four platforms we have chosen to analyze deeper were: Coursera - Udemy - EdX – Edmodo. AURA has studied these four platforms, creating accounts if necessary to check functionality, reading through manuals provided by the platforms.

COURSERA is a MOOC platform that allows to follow many courses online. Every course on Coursera is taught by top instructors from the world's best universities and educational institutions. Courses include recorded video lectures, auto-graded and peer-reviewed assignments, and community discussion forums. When you complete a course, you'll receive a sharable electronic Course Certificate. Unfortunately it doesn't allow to create a course by yourself, so it cannot be our choice.

Reasoning for our choice: Even though we have had some information from the initial research that Coursera may not work for CONNAT, as it is known to work only with universities, we still



decided to look at them to find out whether there is a way to be included. As partners have wide networks, Rogers Foundation is also in connection with several Hungarian universities, theoretically there could have been a way for partnering up with a university for hosting our course. This would have been very fruitful cooperation for the project, as Coursera is probably the most well-known MOOC platform with high quality assurance, and also a partnership like that would have given an even wider access to potential users (even after the project). After analysis we have found that this wouldn't be possible, considering it would be longer process than it can fit to the project timeline.

UDEMY is a MOOC platform for learning and teaching online where students are mastering new skills and achieving their goals by learning from an extensive library of over 45,000 courses taught by expert instructors. With Udemy you can create your own online course using state-of-the-art, free-to-use course design tools. It's quite simple to use and the support is very professional and helpful. It also allows to insert video lessons with subtitles in different languages. This is the right choice for creating our course. ***Udemy is what Aura suggests to use for developing the mooc of connat.***

The support is very efficient, it is multilanguage and is specific for moocs. It is very easy to insert video clips from Youtube as well your own video. It is very easy to create subtitles in the language we wish.

It has Forums, badges. Aura thinks it is the best platform for mooc.

Reasoning for our choice: After the deeper analysis we have found that the best choice for us would be Udemy – it is a well-known site, with possibility to create your own course. AURA has studied the functionality of the platform and found no reason to eliminate it from our choices. AURA and Rogers Foundation has organized a Hangout-meeting to check the site together, and both partners have found it satisfying. The site was introduced to Isoropia as well, who has agreed with the choice.

EDX is an online learning platform and MOOC provider, offering high-quality courses from the world's best universities and institutions to learners everywhere. The courses are created with edX Studio. Currently, edX only provides edX Studio to edX Members. They don't have a public site available for general use at this time, so it isn't our choice.

Reasoning for our choice: EdX was dropped, as it hasn't had a public site available. Open edX is the open source version of edX, but as found in the initial research, it needs installation, which the partnership has decided not to do if possible. But edX still could have been a great choice, as similar to Coursera it is very well-known, but we found during the deeper analysis, it was not possible for CONNAT to join it.

EDMODO is a global training network that helps students get in touch with people and resources to develop their potential. It works like a social network with different functions that allows teachers to create their own class and assign them homeworks, educational materials and so on. But it is not a platform for creating a mooc. It doesn't allow to create a MOOC so it can not be our choice. It is multilanguage as well, but it is not specific for developing a mooc. It is specific for schools and it is something like Facebook.

Reasoning for our choice: Initially our choice was Edmodo, as some partners have had great experiences with it, and after testing, we have found that it is easy and fast to use, but after further consideration (as written in the description) we decided not to use it as it is not really a platform for traditional MOOCs, but more of a network of users sharing knowledge.

