Do social media, MOOCs & other digital opportunities in education add value?

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The added value for teaching

• They allow the sharing of ideas and knowledge between individual teachers and learners beyond the confines of the classroom – moving from individual to collective practices;

• Their potential ‘openness’ can enable educational institutions and other organisations to create resources or courses more efficiently and/or effectively in collaboration with others;

• They do allow individual teachers or educational organisations to reach a global audience at scale;

• They provide easier access to interactive simulations and audio visual material;

• They can potentially reduce the carbon-based impacts of education.
The reduced value for teaching

- They encourage and/or reinforce **bad instructional practices**, fostering teacher/content-centred approaches rather than student-centred ones;
- Digital-based activities and assessments can be **inauthentic** and not relate well to everyday uses;
- Some proprietary digital media and technologies can be **more costly to access and use** than ‘traditional’ methods;
- Students generally **read fewer words per minute** off screen rather than in print and have to re-read more often and teachers have to adjust learning resources to compensate;
- They may **increase plagiarism, collusion and other forms of cheating** and/or erode differences in academic writing styles (whither the footnote in the humanities?).
The added value for learning

• They provide greater access to a much wider range of sources of knowledge and information from many different countries and cultures;
• They enable multi-way communication to be made to many more people than a student’s own immediate peers;
• They enable ‘mobile’ study whereby resources and people can be accessed wherever you are and wherever they are;
• They involve and promote ‘digital’ skills that are seen as critical for 21st century living and working, including the use of visual media in place of plain written text;
• Online badges and portfolios can provide more visible expressions of a student’s abilities and competencies.
The reduced value for learning

- Digital-based activities and assessments can be **inauthentic** and not relate well to everyday uses;
- The **quality of digital conversations** can be degraded compared to face to face conversations;
- They can **exclude** many people through enhancement of both digital and educational divides;
- Multiple technologies and platforms can provide a **confusing or irritating experience** to learners;
- People generally **read fewer words per minute** off screen rather than in print and have to re-read dense writings more often;
- If people can get access to educational resources and courses for free what will they still be **willing to pay for**?