

**Soapbox**

## Mooc technology threat to the MBA

The digital revolution has dramatically changed the way in which services are delivered to consumers – Amazon has replaced many bookstores for example.

However, a service that has changed remarkably little, despite the digital revolution, is business school education. At the majority of US business schools it still takes two years to complete a full-time MBA programme. The costs of that

programme, in contrast to the productivity gains realised elsewhere, have gone up rather than down.

The emergence of massive open online courses (Moocs) offers the prospect of dramatically lower instructional costs and a shorter time away from the job.

Organisations such as Coursera and Udacity are considered potential disrupters of the academic business school community. Will business schools face the same fate as bookstores and will business school professors find themselves jostling for space with virtual stars?

Despite the cost advantage, Moocs do not threaten top business schools. Online courses, open to

everyone and given away for free, will not lead to the extinction of MBA programmes.

It is the technology embedded within the Mooc – chunked asynchronous video content created by an expert – that poses the real threat.

However, if used differently, the same technology could strengthen today's business schools by boosting student learning and leveraging faculty and other expensive assets.

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