

Past & Present of Open Learning: MIT OpenCourseWare

Curt Newton, Director, MIT OpenCourseWare

May 21, 2019

2000



- Dot Com bubble bursting
- Search engine shakeout: Google becomes default for Yahoo
- Streaming video dominated by RealMedia
- Embryonic social media
- Stallman proposes free-as-in-freedom online encyclopedia

2000+: What were WE doing?



- Oct 2000: MIT faculty committee recommends OCW concept; conversations with Hewlett Foundation and Mellon Foundation
- Jan 2001: Wikipedia launch
- Apr 2001: MIT OCW announced in NYTimes
- July 2002: “Open Educational Resources” coined at UNESCO Forum
- Oct 2002: MIT OCW proof-of-concept site launched
- Dec 2002: First CC licenses
- July 2003: First language translations of MIT OCW by Universia
- 2005: OCW Consortium launch, several schools create OCWs

MIT OCW has become...

2,450 courses:

- ❑ OER collection spans full university curriculum
- ❑ Many courses on a given topic: intro to advanced, various disciplines
- ❑ Syllabi, lecture notes, reading lists, assignments, exams, ...

Some courses include:

- ❑ Sample student work (>400)
- ❑ Instructor Insights (>200)
- ❑ Audio/video lectures (>180)
- ❑ Online textbooks (>60)



<https://ocw.mit.edu>

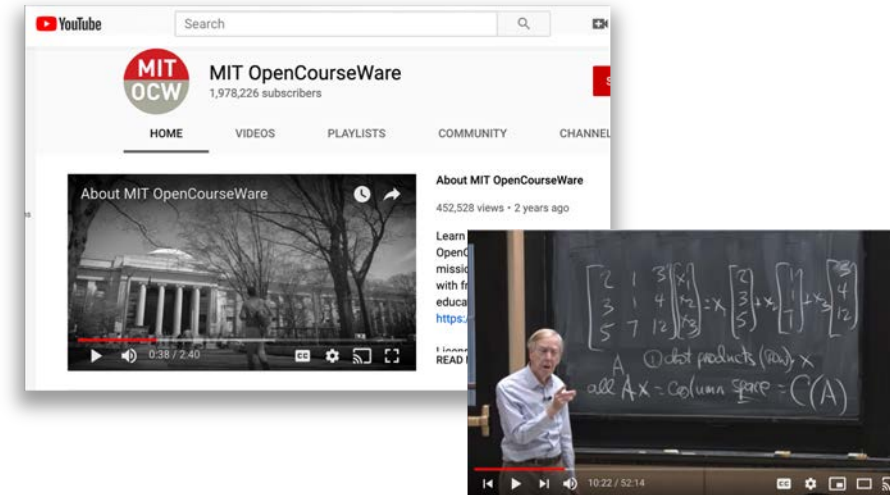
MIT OCW has become...

A trusted source of learning

- Over 300 million visitors
- Over 1 billion minutes of learning
- The most-subscribed .edu YouTube channel

A space for educators

- *Instructor Insights*: behind the scenes with MIT faculty
- Portal to find teaching material



Impactful early choices

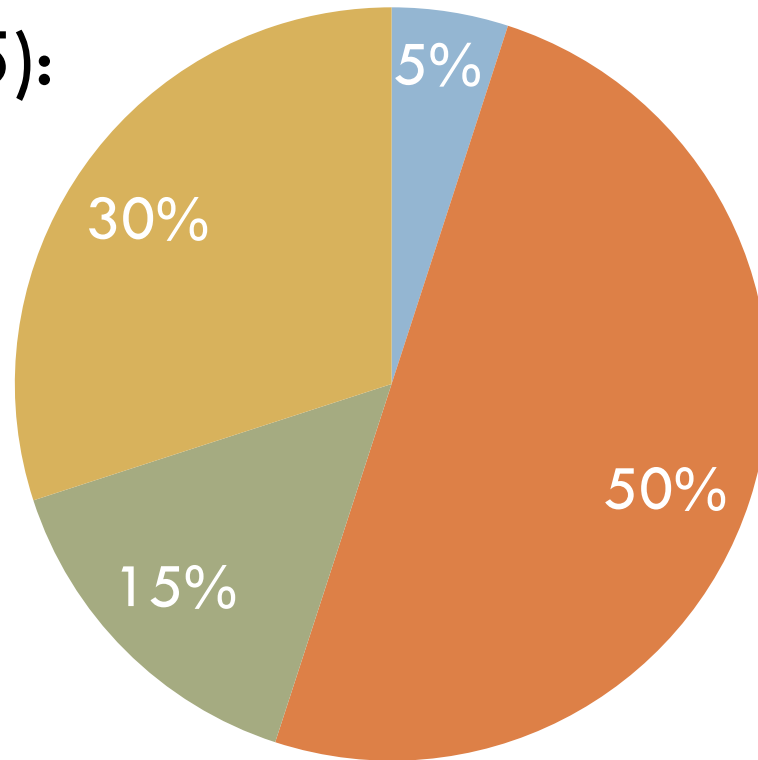


- Dual mission
 - ▣ Share teaching materials from “virtually all” MIT classes
 - ▣ Expand reach and impact of OpenCourseWare: build a movement
- No registration required, freely browse and use it all
- MIT faculty: non-commercial license
- Invest in broad curriculum coverage (syllabi) over complete content for each course (videos, solutions)
- Proprietary CMS, not open source

Who are MIT OCW users?



- Expected mostly educators, some students
- What we got (2015):



Guess which is

- **Self-learner**
- **Student**
- **Educator**
- **Professional**

- Distinct needs!

Today



- Continued experiments with production, learning and impact
 - ▣ Keep up with pedagogy, instructional design and new tech
 - ▣ Access and discoverability
- Diverse definitions of Open, and questions of where it matters
 - ▣ Free-cost YouTube learning channels vs free (as in freedom) OER
- Proliferation of online learning options
 - ▣ Can they help maintain (restore) truth and trust in a polarizing world?

Content Wants to Be Where the People Are



Prominent presence → use and impact

- Google search
- Wikipedia references
- YouTube
- Social media (various)
- Mobile

Creative Tensions



- Divergent vs shared needs of educators, students, professionals, independent learners
- Learner credential vs. “knowledge is your reward”
- Diverse views of what constitutes Open; cross-domain license compatibility
- Trusted creators vs crowdsourced dynamism: what constitutes a “publication,” and how much should we care?
- Encouraging derivative works to share back into the commons