

GOOD PRACTICE

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Massachusetts  
Institute of  
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## Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) OpenCourseWare

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**

UNITED STATES

North America

<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>

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Keywords

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## Summary

**An OpenCourseWare is a free and open digital publication of high quality educational materials, organized as courses. MIT OpenCourseWare (MIT OCW) is a web-based publication of virtually all MIT course content. Hence, MIT OCW publishes course material-building syllabi, lecture notes, exams, homework, labs and some interactive media from all 1800 of MIT's classes freely and openly on the web for reuse, redistributions and adaptation under non-commercial conditions. OCW is open and available to the world and is a permanent MIT activity.**

## Description

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) OpenCourseWare (OCW) freely shares educational materials used in MIT's residential classes. This addresses multiple social and economic issues by providing resources to support individual and systemic learning. Educators around the world use the materials to improve their courses and teaching, students at other universities supplement the courses material they receive at their institutions, and working professionals use the site as a lifelong learning resource.

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The project's source of financing is mixed and includes foundations grants, corporate philanthropy and the MIT General Institute Budget. The approximate budget needed to run the project turns around the 4 million per year.

MIT OCW is currently participating in OpenCourseWare Consortium (<http://www.ocwconsortium.org/home.html>), a collaboration of more than 200 higher education institutions and associated organizations from around the world creating a broad and deep body of open educational content using a shared model.

## Purpose and specific objectives

The aim of the university is to publish materials from all classes and inspire other schools to do the same.

Shared with the OpenCourseWare Consortium, the general objectives of the MIT OpenCourseWare include:

- Extend the reach and impact of OpenCourseWare by encouraging the adoption and adaptation of open educational materials around the world.
- Foster the development of additional OpenCourseWare projects.
- Ensure the long-term sustainability of OpenCourseWare projects by identifying ways to improve effectiveness and reduce costs.

## Main activities

MIT OpenCourseWare is an idea developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who holds the mission to advance knowledge and educate students in science, technology, and other areas of scholarship to best serve the world. In 1999, the MIT considered how to use the Internet in pursuit of this goal, and in 2000 proposed OCW. MIT published the first proof-of-concept site in 2002, containing 50 courses. By November 2007, MIT completed the initial publication of virtually the entire curriculum, over 1,800 courses in 33 academic disciplines. Going forward, the OCW team is updating existing courses and adding new content and services to the site.

## Results

MIT OpenCourseWare organizes evaluation data according to the following three concepts:

- Access: Visitors educational roles and profiles, geographic location and the technical conditions under which they access the site.
- Use: Visitors educational goals in using the site, the materials that facilitate these goals and the levels of success visitors experience in accomplishing educational goals.
- Impact: The difference the site has made in the educational experiences of individual visitors and how has the site affected educational practices worldwide.

Data sources for this evaluation include web metrics; surveys of OCW users, MIT faculty, MIT students, and MIT alumni; e-mail feedback; OCW visitor interviews; and affiliate project data. The visitor survey, from which much of the data is drawn, includes responses from 4115 site visitors, has a margin of error of not more than 1.5%, and over-represents international users, returning visitors and visitor with older systems.

The major findings up to 2008 are the next:

- **Access:** Online access to MIT OpenCourseWare content continues to grow dramatically on [ocw.mit.edu](http://ocw.mit.edu) and on translation sites, with currently more than 1 million monthly visits to OCW's content, and a 56% annual increase in visits.
- **Use:** The OCW site is being used by educators, students and self learners to successfully accomplish a wide range of educational objectives; and visitors are widely satisfied with the breadth, depth and quality of OCW content.
- **Impact:** Individual educators and learners report high levels of current impact on their learning goals, and expectations for even higher impact in the future; institutions worldwide are both using MIT OpenCourseWare materials and publishing their own materials openly—with more than 2,000 courses representing over 50 institutions currently available online.

More generally, MIT OpenCourseWare continues to attract a global audience of educators, students and self learners. Nearly half of all educators visiting the site have incorporated OCW content into their own teaching materials. Students use the site both to supplement materials from courses they are taking and to study beyond the bounds of their formal course of study. Self learners find the site to be a valuable resource for informal study at nearly all stages of life, both prior to and after formal educational programs, and report the site allows them to update their professional skills. Site visitors are highly satisfied with the material they find on the site, indicate the site has already had a significant impact on their learning, and expect even greater impact in the future. In addition, the site is providing significant benefits to all constituencies of the MIT community, supporting the long-term sustainability of the project. In 2007, MIT OpenCourseWare was joined by approximately 50 other institutions world wide who are openly sharing their educational resources, creating body of material from more than 2,000 courses and a diverse range of cultures.

Innovative aspects

Start date, estimated duration and current status  
2002; ongoing

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