studibit, MOOCs, and the Disruption of BIG UNIVERSTY

online education's next-generation on-demand, self-curated textbook

by

Scott Pickard

Online education is not only here to stay, but it is growing so fast that it is forcing massive disruption across BIG UNIVERSITY campuses worldwide because:

- Big University budgets are under pressure exacerbated by failing state budgets
- the cost of traditional university education is pricing itself out of the market
- the debt that students and their families are carrying is destructive and not sustainable
- MOOCs are cost-efficiently scalable on a massive global scale
- corporations are increasingly valuing "verifiable skills" when assessing new employees

High-demand MOOCs can attract anywhere from 5,000 to 50,000 global students or more to register for a course and this is only going to grow as more and more hiring corporations value "skills verification" which can be very cost-effectively obtained via these MOOCs. The number of registered students for a given course is driven by the brand name of the professor, the university, and the topic's perceived valuation by employers. Any topic that adds to a student's "verified skills," builds credits toward a degree, and ultimately leads to a good-paying job will be in high demand.

On platforms such as Coursera the student is able to take the course for free (so far), so the marginal cost to pay a modest amount for some digital and/or Print-on-Demand (POD) publications is something many students will pay for. Each MOOC attracts a massive captive market of students ready to purchase on-demand class materials from any mobile device with an Internet connection anywhere in the world.

Coursera courses attract tens of thousands of students worldwide to register for just one course. The list of partner universities is quite impressive and others are rapidly jumping on this bandwagon: https://www.coursera.org/about/partners

Here's a link to a typical course with the topic of "cloud computing concepts":https://www.coursera.org/course/cloudcomputing

The course is free but a student can earn a "Verified Certificate," and the course is part of a series of courses in cloud computing. Currently no textbook is required. This will change, however, because both the instructors and the students would value the option to have downloadable and/or print-on-demand hardcopy class materials (even a textbook).

The "Verified Certificate" is one way Coursera and its partner institutions can monetize the course. The "cloud computing concept" certificate is $49. To offer the option of downloading ePUBs and/or POD course materials would be a second way of monetizing. To further add value to this proposition for the student, Coursera and its partners could give students more control over the content, length, and format of the class materials they want. **studibit** proposes to give the student the power of ***self-curation***.

studibit

The classic hardcover, full-color, 600-age textbook is a communication medium which is in the midst of disruption (and eventual obsolescence?), and there are several reasons why:

- Knowledge is no longer static (excepting basic physics, etc.). Knowledge will forever be dynamic and it is being modified, added to, leapfrogged, and obsoleted at an accelerating pace. This means a static or "fixed-content" textbook needs updating the day the textbook is printed.
- It is now possible to access all knowledge from any mobile device, anywhere, any time.
- Students don't really need to carry in their backpacks a fairly heavy 600-page textbook at the moment they are studying a particular piece of content (chapter). When a student is studying a 10-page section of a 600-page textbook, the other 590 pages are generally of no use at that moment. And it's safe to say that some portion of the content of the remaining 590 pages is already in need of modification and updating.

The solution to this is the "**studibit**," a browser extension that allows the student to self-curate any amount of content from an online textbook at any moment in time from any mobile device, which they can choose to either: (a) download as a secure PDF file; and/or (b) print-on-demand (POD) a bound hardcopy document.

binding formats

Studibit will only work on content from participating online content licensors. In most cases the student will create a studibit of the pages (or chapter) they are currently studying. With studibit the student can simply click and highlight content of their choosing, and then studibit will:

- automatically stitch together the highlighted sections into one document;
- automatically paginate, insert a table of contents, and a cover page;
- automatically configure the size format (e.g., 6"x9" or 8-1/2" x 11") and binding (e.g., perfect bound, saddle stitch, spiral bound) based on the number of pages and embedded images and graphics
- automatically e-mail a DRM-secured ePUB file with a pre-specified number of printable copies; and/or,
- automatically ship a POD bound booklet-to-book in 2 days or less

studibit does not intend to completely replace the traditional textbook. The full textbook will always be available online, and full hardcover textbooks will always be printed and available based on demand. Studibit supplements the traditional full textbook by enabling students to download and/or POD that section of the textbook they are currently studying which they can conveniently carry around in hardcopy form for highlighting, doodling, and annotating text, because this is proven to be an important part of the learning and memorizing process that can't be replicated on a monitor. Each studibit will be a consumable content item and once the content is read and the student has mastered the material and been tested on it, the student will most likely archive the studibit as they generally would for traditional class notes.

The per-page cost to the student would be cents/page similar to what a student would pay to have copies made at a library or print shop. This payment would be split between studibit and the content licensor.

- sp -