

## Massive open online courses discover global talent



We're starting to learn more about how massive open online courses — free online classes from some of the world's top universities — are being used. The four major organizations Coursera, edX, Udacity and Udemy already have millions of users. But while the appeal of gaining knowledge from Harvard or MIT, among many others, is strong about 90 percent of participants never finish or even start their classes. Still, there are real benefits to offering free higher education to anyone in the world.

Namely, they're helping universities discover talented young people around the world whose talents might otherwise be overlooked by major institutions. The Financial Times reports on one teenage boy from India who was accepted to MIT after his skills caught the eye of the professor who then wrote him a letter of recommendation to attend the university, a win-win for both student and school.

While it seems natural that these college courses attract mostly college-age students and adults who want to continue their education, the number of teenagers who are taking advantage of the services is growing.

And despite the fact that these courses were developed by universities in the United States, they're attracting a global audience. EdX, a nonprofit founded by Harvard and MIT, gets most of its students from the U.S. than any other country, but two-thirds of students are international and the second highest population of students come from India.

Online courses open doors for teenagers [Financial Times]<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The source: <http://www.smartplanet.com>