

Business Education Online

Monday March 11 2013

www.ft.com/reports | twitter.com/ftreports

Academic freedom goes global

It is possible to teach more students in one massive online class than any single institution has ever taught, discovers *Della Bradshaw*

Although Kevin Werbach has made his name teaching about games, there are some things that the Wharton business school professor takes very seriously. One of those is the latest generation of online courses – Moocs, or massive open online courses – and just how his Ivy League institution, the University of Pennsylvania, can take advantage of them.

“They are an extraordinary opportunity for us,” says Professor Werbach. “For me it’s a platform to experiment on... I think these online resources free us up to do in the classroom the things that can only be done in the classroom.”

Though Moocs have been around for less than a year, they are one of the trendiest topics in education, says Jeff Seamen, co-director of the Babson

Survey Research Group, which publishes an annual report on online learning. “What we see at the moment is a genuine excitement that this represents a fundamental change in the way we can deliver education.”

On campus, business schools have often been quick off the mark to adopt the latest technologies. From Kindles to iPads, and from videoconferencing to the latest online networking, MBA programme directors have been enthusiastic adopters.

Just as technology has advanced, so has the perception of online programmes. In the early days, they were seen as local alternatives to classroom programmes, says Idie Kesner, interim dean of the Kelley School at Indiana university. “What’s changed today is that, unlike residential programmes that tend to compete in a

specific geographical sphere, online education is competitive worldwide.”

This gives established business schools access to students in inhospitable regions. Kelley is launching a degree with the American University of Mongolia in September, says Prof Kesner. “We will do courses completely online – particularly in the winter months. As you can imagine, it is very cold in Ulan Bator.”

Video Special »

Ray Carvey, Harvard Business Publishing looks at radical changes www.ft.com/bized-video

Increased bandwidth and the latest internet technology are giving a second lease of life to more traditional technologies such as videoconferencing.

Soumitra Dutta, dean of the Johnson school at Cornell University, says there are plans to extend the videoconferencing executive MBA it runs with Queen’s university in Canada. In the past year the programme has been run in Mexico and Colombia using boardrooms, where students participate in broadcast lectures. In the coming year the schools plan to expand further in South America.

“This is an interesting hybrid market,” says Prof Dutta. “It is running and it is successful.”

The Wharton school has recently invested in this kind of point-to-point video through agreement with compu-

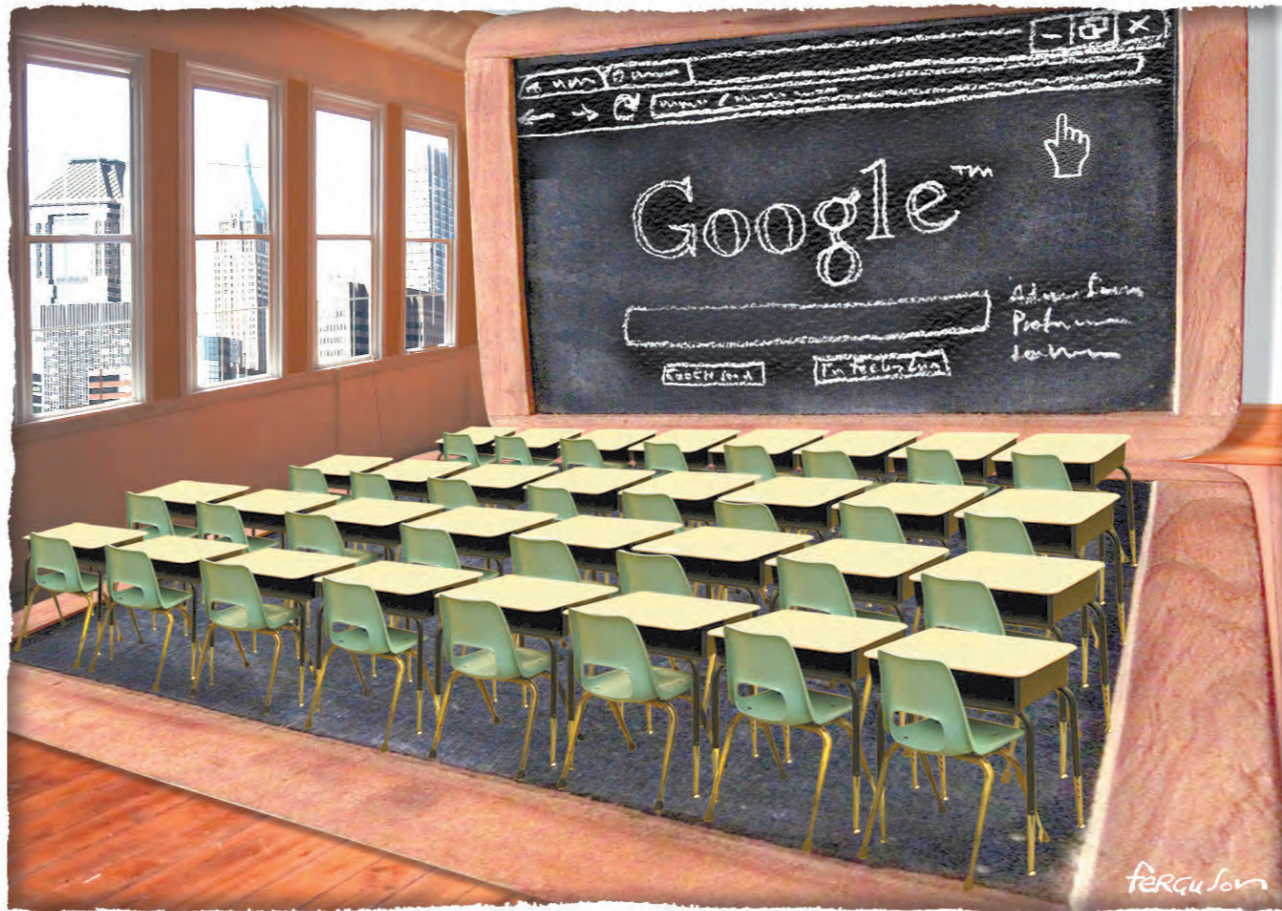
ter giant Cisco to link classes on its two campuses, in Philadelphia and San Francisco. It is still in trial phase, says Wharton dean Tom Robertson. “I don’t know what percentage [of programmes] we would deliver [in this way].”

Online technology permeates all levels of business education, from undergraduate degrees to executive courses.

In the UK, Nicola Adamson has been studying for a Masters degree in management from Ashridge, the UK business school, while working full-time in senior management at a healthcare trust and looking after three children under the age of nine.

She began studying online in 2010 and has taken breaks as family and job required. As with many online students, flexibility has been the key.

Continued on Page 3



Inside »

Points of view

Deans from two top US business schools look at a changing landscape **Page 2**

Customised tuition

Supporting study anywhere in the world is key **Page 2**

On FT.com »

Degree of quality

The stigma of online business degrees has all but been erased

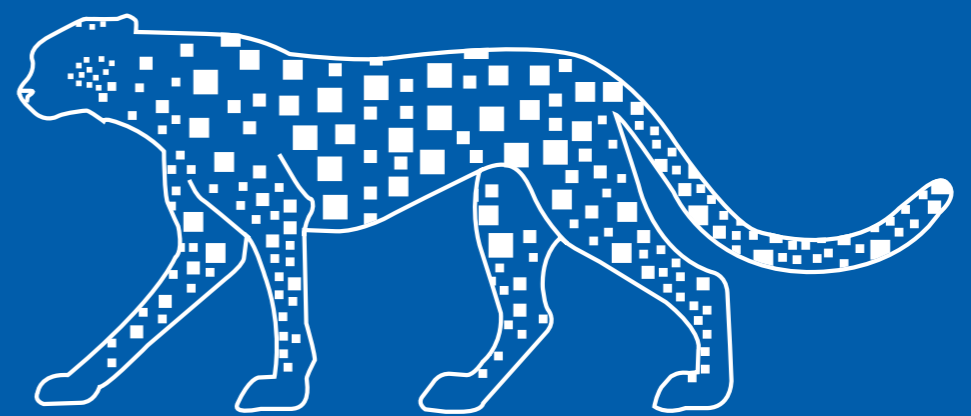
Social media aids teaching

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube earn place in academia

Strategic study

Australia’s RMIT has an executive MBA that can be done in as little as one year

www.ft.com/reports



It’s a jungle out there

To survive and thrive, you need to be ahead of the pack. Warwick Business School will equip you to be just that.

At WBS we believe that leadership relies on a firm understanding of human behaviour and creativity. It’s what gives our MBAs the edge, in a highly competitive world.

We invented the distance learning MBA and we are experts in giving you the edge, wherever you are in the world.

⌘ The Warwick MBA by distance learning

Ranked Number 1 in the UK and Number 2 in the world, by topmba.com

Come to our website to watch our film about the Warwick MBA by distance learning.



wbs.ac.uk/go/ftonline

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

