

# Google engineers to pump up MOOC.org website from edX

September 12 2013, by Nancy Owano

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(Phys.org) —Free online courses continue to be a work in progress as the next upheaval in education. Google will be advancing progress momentum, based on Tuesday's announcement from Google Research: Google is joining the Open edX platform. To get some of this lingo soup out of the way, we start with Open edX, which is a platform for creating courses that can be taken by anyone with Internet access. Behind this open source learning platform is edX, a group of 28 institutions, the xConsortium. Founded by Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of

Technology, edX is dedicated to transforming online and campus learning. A nonprofit, edX distributes online courses for free.

What will Google bring to the project? Google will work on core platform development. Google's Dan Clancy, Director of Research, said Tuesday, "We are taking our learnings from Course Builder and applying them to Open edX" for the latter's new platform.

By Course Builder, Clancy is referring to the open source [experimental platform](#) that Google started in 2012 with the similar spirit of support for online learning, providing the tools for those who want to create an interactive online course. Though it was Google's first step into this kind of project, Course Builder attracted a community of education-focused people around the world. In 2014, however, the edX alphabet soup is going to have a key main ingredient, yet another catchy phrase to watch, called MOOC.org. This will go live in 2014 with courses.

"We look forward to contributing to edX's new site, MOOC.org, a new service for online learning which will allow any academic institution, business and individual to create and host online courses." said Clancy.

For those involved in Course Builder, questions remain as to what next year's MOOC.org means for them. Google's Clancy said Google will provide "an upgrade path to Open edX and MOOC.org from Course Builder."

According to the Course Builder site, in a notice titled Hi Course Builder community, "As we transition our focus to Open edX, we will minimize Course Builder feature development. However, we are committed to providing support to current and future Course Builder users in the interim." For anyone who has customized Course Builder, "we cannot guarantee that these will transfer to Open edX. However, Open edX has a customization framework called XBlocks that may address some of

these needs. Additionally, as an [open source platform](#), Open edX can be customized at the source code level."

Meanwhile, Anant Agarwal, president of edX, welcomes the Google move because of the opportunity to work with Google's world-class engineers and technology, which "will enable us to advance online, on-campus and blended learning experiences faster and more effectively than ever before."

The new site is to invite contributions not only from schools but businesses and individual course authors and instructors. MOOC is shorthand for Massive Open Online Courses.

**More information:** [groups.google.com/forum/?fromg ...  
announce/vtW1KiK5\\_Kc](https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromg...announce/vtW1KiK5_Kc)  
[mooc.org/index.html](http://mooc.org/index.html)  
[googleresearch.blogspot.com/20 ... en-edx-platform.html](http://googleresearch.blogspot.com/20...en-edx-platform.html)  
[code.google.com/p/course-builder/](https://code.google.com/p/course-builder/)

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