## Transcript of the Talk, "Planning for MOOC"

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Welcome to this session on Planning for MOOC. We will provide an outline of factors and processes that could go into planning a MOOC. My name is Balaji. I want to acknowledge the help I have received from Michelle Gruda in preparing this talk.

We kind of sub titled this session. We have used the phrase an event perspective. We would view a MOOC as a massive multi-media event.

At the end of this talk, you will be able to appreciate why and how an event perspective is useful to understand MOOC planning. We know by now that media plays an important role in MOOC . When media is such an important part of MOOC the event character is influenced by media considerations.
In a talk earlier on this course, Prof Prabhakar already spoke about MOOC as an event. It may be good to re-visit that talk after finishing this session.

The word "event" is a loosely applied in everyday life. There are many layers in the meaning of this word. Also, event management is already a widely known and established practice. Event management is thought to be part of strategic communication management. While we do not have to follow all those procedures and protocols, it is useful to ingrain the core sense of that phrase, event management, while planning a MOOC.

Now, MOOC is an event that has a very different feel to it, one could say. Like an event, MOOC has a duration. But it is long by standards of event management. Unlike a conference which might at best last a week or so, MOOC can take place for several weeks.

It has a spatial extension. An event typically takes place in a limited space like a convention center or in multiple such centers within physical proximity. However, in a MOOC, anyone anywhere can participate via Internet. MOOC is an event in cyberspace, thus different considerations apply.

Although MOOC is a course, methods and approaches derived from the classroom might not apply. The numbers can be far too large.

We therefore need to plan a MOOC keeping these considerations in view. MOOC is aimed at mass participation. It is important to comprehend the audience. Careful research in this regard will be quite rewarding and is strongly recommended. Even if you have an initial idea about the audience, it is worth doing a closer study. For example, in the MOOC on mobiles for development, our team conducted extensive online surveys and a workshop to get a good picture of who the audience would be.

Once we have a good idea of the audience, the other important factor is to research the exact needs for learning. It is possible that there is a large group out there that is in need of a particular set of information and skills. They may not yet be ready or willing to invest time to learn. The audience research is useful to understand if such a need exists.

A MOOC is only as good as the team that offers the MOOC. Like any media-related event, MOOC is not managed by an individual.

Not only is a team necessary. The team must bring together different types of expertise and capabilities.

At the very heart of the team is the expertise in the subject matter, the domain expertise.

MOOC platform management capabilities are a must in the team. The level of capability needs to be a bit higher than managing an LMS typically since multiple web-based services need to be tracked and coordinated. Reasonable capacity for media production is important.

It is useful to have team-level familiarity with online pedagogy. This is still spreading and possibly every team may not have it locally.

The other important consideration is to have capacity in the team for facilitating discussions in online space.

The team needs to commit to delivering every service in the MOOC to a globally accepted level of quality. Maintaining schedules is also a matter of value.

Like any event where there is an identifiable figure that anyone associates with the event, the MOOC team needs a leader. Such a leader can be thought to exemplify core values. For example, reputation for competence in the topic- which is a core value. That vale relates to the quality of content which is a key factor in attracting joiners and the team leader more or less guarantees that.

Unlike a class room, the lead in a MOOC is not always at the center. Most interactions take place among the learners and a fair amount of learning also takes place in that space. The team

leader must therefore be able to change her profile from that of a central figure to one of a facilitator in the MOOC public.

Formulating a code of conduct within the team, and a code of honor for participants is essential. The MOOC space is public space and there are no restrictions on anyone from moving in or out. The best way to maintain harmony is through adherence to shared codes of conduct and an appeal to the individual's sense of honor and dignity.

MOOC activities for the team commence much earlier than the start date. We have already mentioned audience research.
All content must be identified before the launch of the course and the sequence of topics and assignments should be readied. Content can be created even through the duration.
Deciding upon the MOOC delivery platform is a key prior decision.

A key consideration is to avoid thinking that joiners will arrive once they somehow hear about your MOOC. This is just not the case. A significant amount of effort must be invested in marketing.
Data from audience research is a very good basis to plan the outreach to potential learners. Our experience is that multiple modes are necessary to spread the information. If you have partner institutions in a MOOC, it is good to pool all the relevant contacts.
We have generally used email and social media esp Facebook. We have supplemented these with direct meetings with contacts and have used conferences to spread the word about the MOOC.
Commercial advertising does help. For example FB posts can be boosted for a fee. AdWords in Google could be another paid channel. These can be effective to an additional extent but there are costs associated that can spiral out.

While we do all that is ethically acceptable to attract joiners, we should ensure that the course space is secure at all times. Unauthorised access or data pilferage can lead to serious consequences and can compromise the reputation of the MOOC provider. It is therefore important to make repeated efforts prior to launch and all through the course to make sure the integrity of the course space is guaranteed.

Another key part of planning process is to ensure that you have an adequate media production facility at your disposal. You have observed in this course how a typical video production facility functions. You have also understood how one can use relatively simple desktop arrangements to produce a good quality video. It is useful to keep the arrangement well maintained prior to launch and through the course. MOOC has a media event character.

Thus, you can regard MOOC as an event in the cyber space. It is a global event in that anyone from anywhere can join in. There is a strong media component to it. Planning and preparations are essential to the success of a MOOC media event.