

Scratch@MIT Conference 2016

Session title:

Scratching in the Code Yourself and A Programar MOOCs

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Description of session:

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are an increasingly popular approach to promoting and teaching computer science to a worldwide audience. A MOOC is a course of study made available over the Internet without charge to a very large number of people.

Recognising the impact that MOOCs can have on the worldwide education landscape, on the one hand, and the scarcity of existing computer programming MOOCs for a young demographic, on the other hand, the University of Edinburgh and Universidad ORT Uruguay have joined forces to develop a 5-week MOOC for young teenagers. The MOOC, called “Code Yourself” [1] in English and “A Programar” [2] in Spanish, introduces young teenagers to programming with the use of Scratch, while promoting the development of computational thinking and the use of best practices in software engineering. No previous knowledge or background on computer programming are required.

The course was first delivered in March-April 2015, with the English- and Spanish-speaking versions running simultaneously on the Coursera platform. More than 84,000 students worldwide attended this first session, with very positive results: 93% of students found that the course met or exceeded their expectations, and more than 90% stated that they plan to continue programming in the future.

In this session, we will demonstrate our MOOC and give participants the opportunity to navigate and try out the learning material, including video lectures, interviews with experts in the field, Scratch code examples, quizzes and peer-reviewed programming projects. We will also invite them to browse the course discussion forums, which showcase successful peer-supported learning. We will discuss the detailed results and lessons learned.

[1] MOOC: Code Yourself! An Introduction to Programming. The University of Edinburgh and Universidad ORT Uruguay. <https://www.coursera.org/learn/intro-programming>

[2] MOOC: ¡A Programar! Una introducción a la programación. Universidad ORT Uruguay and The University of Edinburgh. <https://www.coursera.org/learn/a-programar>

Summary of session:

The University of Edinburgh and Universidad ORT Uruguay have developed a 5-week MOOC on Coursera that introduces young teenagers to programming with the use of Scratch. More than 84000 students attended the first session in March 2015. 93% of them found that the course met or exceeded their expectations. We will interact live with this MOOC, have a look at student projects and discuss experiences and results around teaching and learning on a large scale.