

## Abstract

Contrary to popular belief, the University of Phoenix and other for-profit providers represent only a small fraction of online education. Recently, prestigious non-profit universities have begun offering free courses as well as inexpensive online degree programs. We show that these courses provide new educational opportunities to non-traditional demographics including driven children, curious grandparents, and working professionals. Moreover, these courses transcend geographic boundaries reaching developing countries and refugee camps.

## The Growth of MOOCs

Over 70% of online education is now offered by nonprofit providers

Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) have become the primary form of online education

- Created by the biggest names in higher education
- Available to anyone with internet access
- Cover a wide and rapidly growing range of topics

## Concerns About MOOCs

About 10% of students that start a MOOC complete it

- Simply looking at the completion percentage leaves out the majority of the story
- The scale of the courses are such the even 10% of the students is approximately 100,000 people
- MOOCs serve a far larger and more diverse group of students than traditional education
- The true power of MOOCs are in the other 90%
- MOOCs cater to a underserved group of students that want education for reasons other than a certificate

## Findings

Benefits to traditional undergraduates:

- As it replaces large unengaging lectures
- As students are able to watch the lectures when and where they want

Older professionals are able to:

- Stay up to date on advancements in their fields
- Watch the lectures when they have time in their busy schedules

Children have the opportunity to:

- Explore their interests before going to college
- Further learn about topics taught to them in school

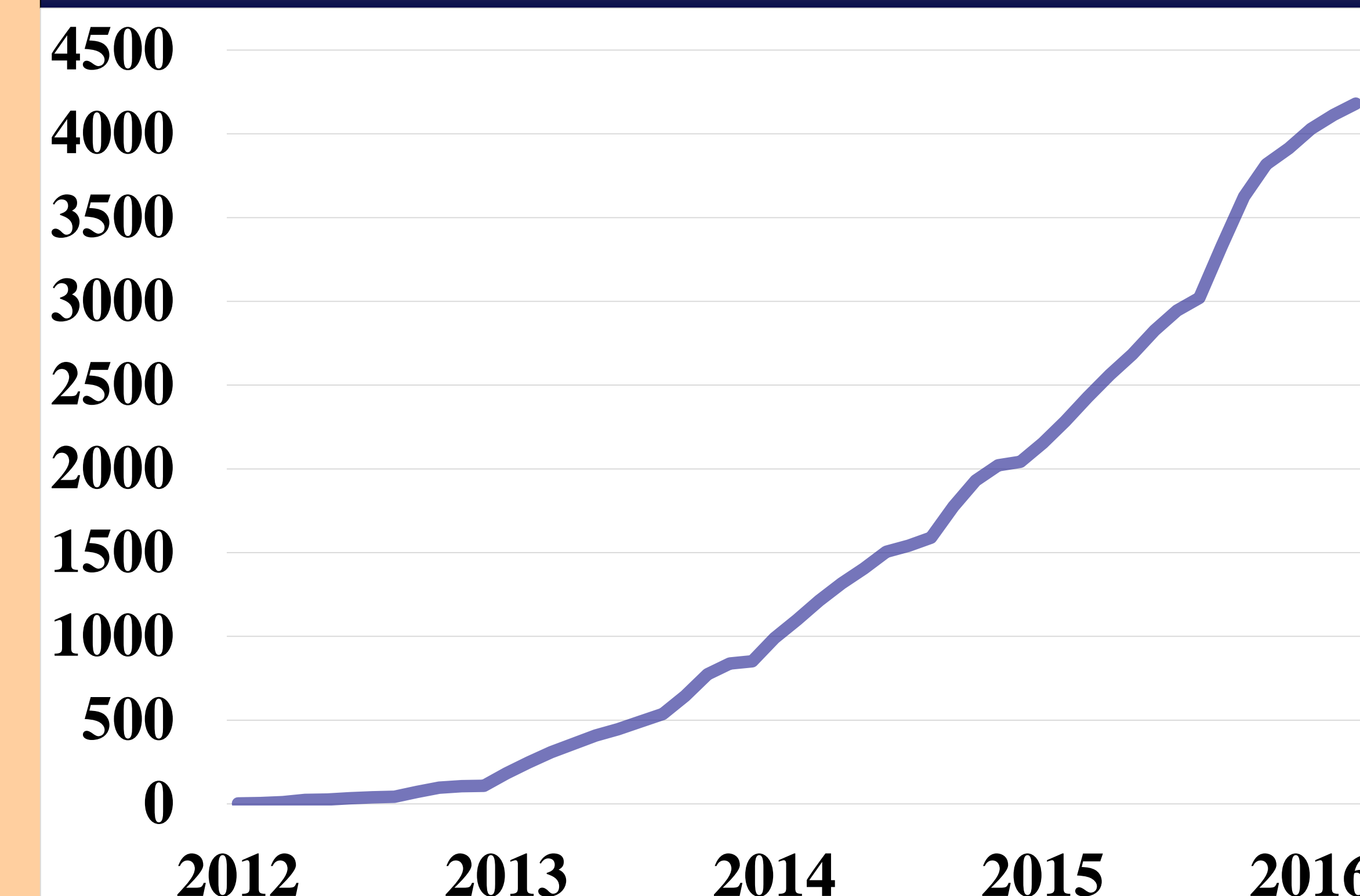
Online master's degree programs provide:

- An unmatched opportunity for mid-career professionals to advance their education
- Without leaving one's job or family

Those geographically isolated from education benefit:

- From access to education they previously did not have
- From learning skills that help them become integrated into society

## Growth in MOOC Courses Offered



## Conclusion

Online courses provide an unmatched educational opportunity as they:

- Have little or no cost
- Can be taken anywhere at anytime of the day
- Enable students to get the education they seek at any point in their lives

The online education industry is growing rapidly and it is no longer a question of if online courses will become a large part of education, it's a question of how soon and to how many.