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Google to partner with online learning collaborative edX to help build software

Posted by Matt Rocheleau September 10, 2013 10:20 AM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Google will help develop online software for edX, the Cambridge-based free online education collaborative created by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, officials announced Tuesday.

The Internet company best-known for its popular search engine, map and email systems will work on core software platform development and will help build out and operate MOOC.org, "a new site for non-xConsortium universities, institutions, businesses, governments and teachers to build and host their courses for a global audience," a statement from edX said.

To work on the projects, which will run on the open source learning platform Open edX, Google will team up with experts from edX partner institutions, including MIT, Harvard, UC Berkeley, Stanford, University of Western Australia, University of Queensland, and Tsinghua University, officials said.

Google and edX will also collaborate on research "into how students learn and how technology can transform learning and teaching on campus and beyond," according to the statement.

"We have long admired Google's commitment to open access to information, and we believe they will be a perfect partner to work with as we shape the next generation of open education and learning," said a statement from Anant Agarwal, president of edX.

"Google shares our mission to improve learning both on-campus and online," he added. "Working with Google's world-class engineers and technology will enable us to advance online, on-campus and blended learning experiences faster and more effectively than ever before."

The statement from edX said the MOOC.org will be build on Google infrastructure to "provide a platform for colleges, universities, businesses and individuals around the world to produce high-quality online and blended courses."

"We envision that the site will become an ideal way to develop and refine novel online learning experiences," Agarwal said. "Faculty, for example, new to online learning could get their feet wet, and learners who may not want to take a full course could also just get a taste. Moreover, we will be able to learn how to improve our platform by having more individuals build and use content."

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