

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Internet provides opportunities to further education

by Sammy Weyser

Today's notions of education are often confined to classroom studies and restricted to the material on homework and tests. Seldom is extracurricular learning considered for its own merits. But for those interested, the blessing of the internet opens the door to infinite knowledge. While some online forms of educational media may be expensive, the following platforms are free of charge.



Known for its vlogs and cat videos, YouTube is also one of the internet's most versatile and popular educational resources. Many YouTube channels are dedicated toward teaching viewers about topics both common and obscure - from practical to esoteric.

Among popular educational channels is Vsauce, which follows Michael Stevens' search to answer his deepest scientific questions, especially those about physics and astronomy.

Meanwhile, AsapSCIENCE is a top choice for those interested in science but prefer shorter lessons. Created by couple Mitchell Moffit and Gregory Brown, AsapSCIENCE employs creative anima-



Graphic by Benji Zoller

Other useful MOOCs include Udemy and Udacity.



Another online educational outlet is TEDx. Short for "Technology, Entertainment, Design," the original TEDx conference was held in 1984 in Silicon Valley. 32 years later, TEDx Talks are held throughout the world and uploaded to the TEDx website (as well as YouTube). Conferences are held internationally, and audiences may attend live speeches. Speakers include historians, authors, scientists, philosophers, and anyone else who can shed light on a topic. Local TEDx events are held at the SMU campus in University Park.



iTunes U is yet another way to harness the educational opportunities of the internet. Introduced by Apple in 2007, iTunes U offers users a variety of easily-accessible recorded lectures as well as video content from university courses. It currently has over 75,000 uploaded files — lectures ranging from foreign language lessons to lab demonstrations.

In addition to college lectures, iTunes U also offers material from libraries and museums across the globe as well as video tours of college campuses. The platform has grown more popular each year since its inception. As of 2013, its recordings have been downloaded over a billion times internationally.

MOOCs

A popular means of receiving extracurricular learning are Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

Among many well-regarded MOOCs is edX. The brainchild of professors from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, edX is a globally renowned nonprofit resource. For those seeking lessons on topics ranging from computer programming to political science, edX is an effective means

of gaining knowledge on subjects beyond the reaches of a classroom curriculum. Founded in 2012, the site now has over five million users and continues to grow each year.

Another effective MOOC is Coursera which was also founded in 2012 as a small online tutoring company. Today Coursera has over 15 million users and is one of the most popular MOOCs on the internet. The site offers courses on various topics in the math and sciences and provides users with "specializations", courses which focus on narrow areas of interest. Examples of "specializations" include digital marketing and specific robotic programming.

tions, including stop motion, to explain difficult topics.

For the math-orientated viewer, Numberphile ventures into the depths of mathematical theory, rather than the more practical study that takes place in school.

The channel Big Think poses questions to public intellectuals and prominent thinkers, covering everything from string theory to free will. Videos last anywhere from two to 10 minutes.

Beyond these channels are many more waiting to fill one's hankering for philosophy, history, economics or anything else that arouses curiosity.



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