

→ Fast Facts



MOOCs

“Coursera, the largest MOOC provider, has grown from 300,000 registrants taking seven courses in April 2012 to more than 4 million learners taking 453 courses today.” Nearly 90 other companies are offering MOOCs for higher education, K–12, and professional development.

Curtis Kendrick and Irene Gashurov, “Libraries in the Time of MOOCs,” *EDUCAUSE Review*, November 4, 2013, www.educause.edu/ero/article/libraries-time-moocs (retrieved November 6, 2013).



Survey of adult skills

By international standards, despite a relatively high level of educational qualifications, the basic skills of adults in the United States are relatively weak. Unlike many other countries, there has been little sign of improvement in recent decades. Thirty-six million adult Americans (about one in six adults) are living with the consequences of low literacy skills. They can, at best, read short texts and understand basic vocabulary. In Japan, the comparable figure is one in twenty. In the United States, nearly one in three have weak numeracy skills versus a cross country average of one in five.

OECD, “OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills,” OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264204256-en> (retrieved December 2, 2013).



OCLC holdings

On May 4, 2013, the number of holdings in WorldCat exceeded 2 billion. It took the OCLC cooperative almost 34 years, from August 26, 1971 to August 11, 2005, to put 1 billion holding symbols in WorldCat. It took only 7 years and 8 months to add the next billion.

OCLC, “Annual Report, 2012-2013,” www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/publications/AnnualReports/2013/2013.pdf (retrieved December 2, 2013).



Banned challenges increased in 2013

“In November, the Kids’ Right to Read Project [KRRP] investigated three times the average number of [book challenges], adding to an overall rise in cases for the entire year, according to KRRP coordinator Acacia O’Connor. To date, KRRP has confronted 49 incidents in 29 states this year (2013), a 53 percent increase in activity from 2012. During the second half of 2013, the project battled 31 new incidents, compared to only 14 in the same period last year.” On the bright side, KRRP says it has also seen an increase in “challenged” books returned to the shelves following their involvement in the incidents.

“Kids Right to Read Project: Book Challenges Increased in 2013,” *Shelf Awareness* for Wednesday, December 18, 2013, www.shelf-awareness.com/issue.html?issue=2152#m22578 (retrieved January 8, 2014).



Website usability

“The total cognitive load, or amount of mental processing power needed to use your site, affects how easily users find content and complete tasks.” The Nielsen Norman Group, a computer interface design firm, recommends avoiding visual clutter, building on existing mental models, and offloading tasks to increase usability of your website.

Kathryn Whinton, “Minimize Cognitive Load to Maximize Usability,” Nielsen Norman Group, December 22, 2013, www.nngroup.com/articles/minimize-cognitive-load (retrieved January 8, 2014).

Gary Pattillo is reference librarian at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, e-mail: pattillo@email.unc.edu