

JISC launches an open education pilot project

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Mandy Garner, [The University of Europe: accessible to all](#), *The Guardian*, undated but published on January 16, 2009. Excerpt:

Universities in Europe are looking to embrace a new form of learning, called open content, which could blow away the division between university students and the rest of the population.

In the UK, the Joint Information Systems Committee (Jisc) and the Higher Education Academy are launching a £5.7m pilot scheme to investigate the impact of open content and to look at issues of how to contextualise existing online material so anyone can make sense of it. Several European academics are already experimenting and the European Commission has expressed interest.

Malcolm Read, executive secretary of Jisc, says he wants to find out how many lecturers are willing to put their course material up for open debate and how difficult it will be to contextualise the material. Read thinks open content will boost the profile of university teaching, widen participation and raise standards, as the public will migrate to the best material. The pilot will fund individual lecturers, subject areas and institutions.

Read has had discussions with the European Commission and says he would be "very surprised if they did not start funding work in this area very soon". Allied to this is the fact that more and more European universities are offering some courses in English, which makes them more accessible internationally....

Another open-access facility creating a buzz in the world of elearning is Mooc — Massive Open Online Courses. These are super-sized open education courses....