



# ARC8 Expert Group Inclusive Learning and Teaching in a Digital World:

## **A view from the UK**

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# Higher Education and Digital Learning in the UK: The status quo



- **The Open University** (established 1969)
  - Currently, ~170,000 students (one of the largest in Europe).
  - Designed for students unable to attend campus universities .  
(e.g. people who did not ‘succeed’ in school, people who are in work, people who have disabilities, people who are carers).
  - ‘Open’ means ‘open to anyone whatever their qualifications.’
  - The first online courses were launched in 1998 (pg) and 1999 (ug).
  - **OpenLearn** (launched 2006) has had 80 million visits.
  - **FutureLearn** (launched 2013) hosts courses from 100+ universities worldwide, which have been taken by ‘millions’ of students.



# Higher Education and Digital Learning in the UK: The status quo



- **Other UK universities and online learning**
  - Over the past decade, almost all other UK universities (~100) have launched online courses.
  - Currently, there are (according to UCAS):
    - >300 online undergraduate courses (from 42 institutions), and
    - >1,250 online postgraduate (from 130 institutions).
  - **JISC** (launched 1993)
    - The UK's higher, further education and skills sectors' not-for-profit organisation for digital services and solutions.



# Higher Education and Digital Learning in the UK: The status quo: during COVID



- **Office for Students**

- Before the pandemic 58% of students and 47% of teaching staff had no experience of digital teaching and learning.
- By December 2020, 92% of students were learning either fully or mostly online.

- **Online learning mostly involved:**

- PDFs;
- Videos;
- live and recorded online lectures; and
- lecture slides.



UK Office for Students

# Higher Education and Digital Learning in the UK: The status quo: during COVID



- **Also involved:**

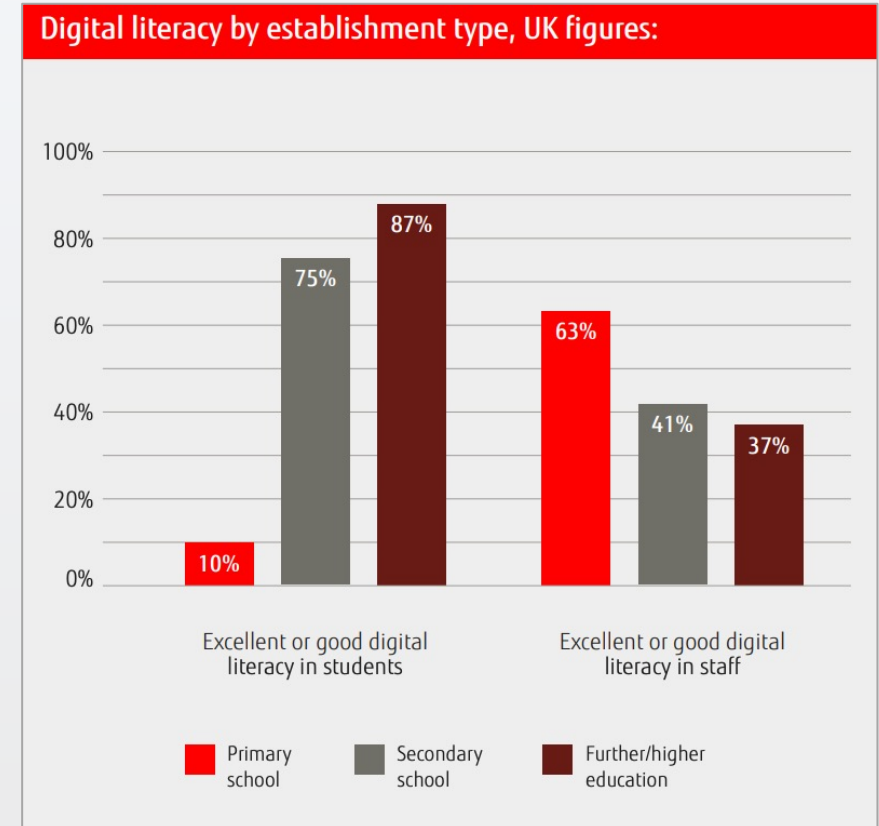
- online placements;
- digitally simulated scenarios;
- science experiments conducted with remote-controlled lab equipment;
- online master classes and performances for music students;
- digital exhibitions connecting portfolio students with industry experts and employers;
- virtual writing cafés;
- AI-driven adaptive learning technologies;
- and many others...



# Higher Education and Digital Learning in the UK: The risks



- **Costs**
  - £27,750 for an undergraduate degree;
  - ~£18,000 for an OU degree.
- **Access to technology**
  - 12% aged 11-18 years have no Internet access at home ([www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)).
- **Digital literacy**
  - The digital literacy of staff, not the students.
- **Poor pedagogy**
  - Instructionalism.
  - Prioritising content over learning.



**Research report: UK. The road to digital learning.** Intel and Fujitsu

# Higher Education and Digital Learning in the UK: The opportunities



- **Artificial Intelligence** for:
  - learner assistance
  - curriculum design
  - augmenting teaching
  - supporting health and well-being
  - facilitating teacher-based assessment



- **Open Educational Resources (OER)**

- Around the world, there are millions of OER. But therein lies their problem: how does a learner find the right OER to help their learning?
- Projects like X5GON aim to help.

