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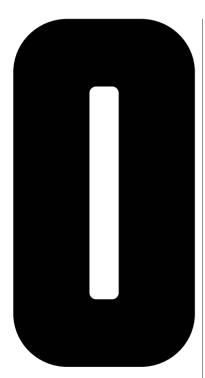
104 PAGES OF IDEAS TO FUTURE-PROOF YOURSELF & YOUR BUSINESS

JAMES DYSON ON THE YEAR OF THE ROBOT

SAUL KLEIN ON THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

CARLO RATTI ON DRIVERLESS FUTURE CITIES

PLUS 101 MORE IDEAS THAT WILL CHANGE THE WORLD

EDUCATION SWITCHES ON

Online education platforms face a big problem: completion rates are low. In 2015 a global network of educators and students will usher in a new age in the quest for knowledge.
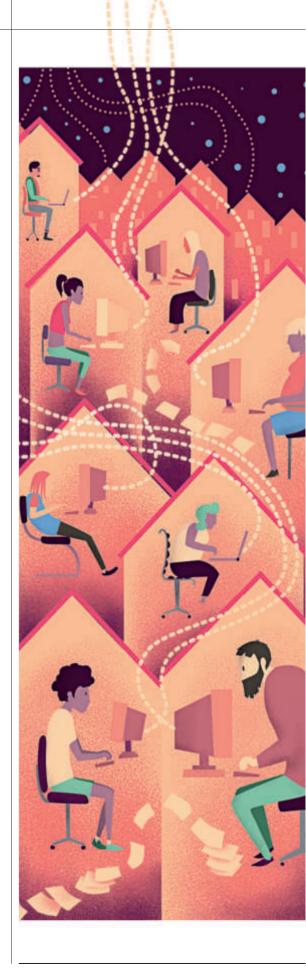
By **Lior Frenkel**

ONLINE EDUCATION PLATFORMS now allow anyone with an internet connection to enrol in more than 900 online courses offered by some of the best academic institutions in the world. Their purpose is to provide top-class, affordable education to all who seek it. In reality, however, students on these massive open online courses (MOOCs) have exhibited very poor completion rates. In 2015, owing to a specifically offline innovation, successful online education will finally materialise.

There are currently tens of millions of students enrolled on online courses, but completion rates usually range between five and ten per cent. Creative "solutions", such as quizzes, games, progress meters and badges such as those introduced by Udacity, the MOOC platform cofounded by Stanford professor Sebastian Thrun, have not significantly alleviated the situation.

In 2015 we will discover that better results will come from adding an offline component to online education. Coursera, the world's largest online-education platform, has already launched an offline network of "learning hubs" situated in dozens of cities across the globe. Students gather together to watch lectures, discuss the material and tackle assignments as a group. As a result, completion rates are over 30 per cent – edX has achieved similar results through its Offline Meetups project. This, however, is just the beginning.

"The new ed-tech needs new pedagogy," says Jacob Hecht, CEO and cofounder of Education Cities, which focuses on turning educational systems into a central growth instrument for the cities in which they exist. The organisation has developed a new approach to teaching – the Education Team Model – which is based on two principles: first, each student doubles up as a

teacher. Each is encouraged to identify and build on their strengths. Second, each team works towards a shared, measurable goal. The teacher, in this model, functions as a coach. Their job is to help team members find their strong points, to facilitate co-operation and to find a balance between team members.

Education Cities' pilot programme launched in 2014 in collaboration with the Israeli Ministry of Education. It involved 15 groups of students between the ages of 13 and 18, from across Israel. Students enrolled in the Australian Open University's "Introduction to Astronomy" course and Georgia Institute of Technology's "Mobile Robots" course and studied according to the Education Team Model. Those with good English-language skills were responsible for translating material into the team's native language, those with good maths helped with formulas, and so on. Each class then competed against the others and a weekly progress chart was generated, in view of which the teams' learning strategies were adjusted and improved. The results were impressive: a group of Israeli high-school students achieved an 83 per cent completion rate while attending a university-level course taught in a non-native language.

Hecht, with entrepreneurs Tal Maimon, Roi Zikorel and Michael Shurp, is now establishing a network of MOOC hubs, to be maintained by practitioners of a novel "Moocster" profession. The Moocster's role is to found and train education teams according to Hecht's model. In 2015, the pilot will branch out into India, Bulgaria and Spain. Hubs will be set up in public spaces, such as libraries, and in workplaces.

"In 2015 we could establish a whole network of students and teachers," says Hech. "We're well on our way to building new strongholds of life-long learning." *Lior Frenkel is cofounder of The nuSchool, an Israeli education startup*

IN-CAR ALARM

A consortium of European companies and research institutions, including the University of Manchester, will be road-testing HARKEN, an in-car system that monitors drivers for signs that they are falling asleep. Using a heart monitor in the seatbelt and sensors in the seat, it aims to detect if a driver is dozing off – and sounds an alarm.