


# Udacity

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## Udacity

	
<b>Type</b>	Online education
<b>Foundation date</b>	June 2011
<b>Website</b>	www.udacity.com <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Alexa rank</b>	7,074 (October 2013[2])
<b>Registration</b>	Required
<b>Users</b>	400,000
<b>Available in</b>	English
<b>Launched</b>	February 2012
<b>Current status</b>	Active

**Udacity** is a for-profit educational organization founded by Sebastian Thrun, David Stavens, and Mike Sokolsky offering massive open online courses (MOOCs). According to Thrun, the origin of the name Udacity comes from the company's desire to be "audacious for you, the student".

Udacity is the outgrowth of free computer science classes offered in 2011 through Stanford University. As of 30 September 2013[2], Udacity has 25 active courses.<sup>[3]</sup> Thrun has stated he hopes half a million students will enroll, after an enrollment of 160,000 students in the predecessor course at Stanford, Introduction to Artificial Intelligence,<sup>[4]</sup> and 90,000 students had enrolled in the initial two classes as of March 2012[2]. Udacity was announced at the 2012 Digital Life Design conference. Udacity is funded by venture capital firm, Charles River Ventures, and \$300,000 of Thrun's personal money. In October 2012 the venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz led the investment of another \$15 million in Udacity.

Thrun's work on Udacity was noted by *The Guardian* in a list of people championing open internet.



Udacity co-founder Sebastian Thrun, 2006

## Courses

The first two courses ever launched on Udacity both started on 20 February 2012, entitled "CS 101: Building a Search Engine", taught by David Evans from the University of Virginia, and "CS 373: Programming a Robotic Car" taught by Thrun. Both courses use Python.

Four more courses began on 16 April 2012, encompassing a range of ability and subject matter, with teachers including Steve Huffman and Peter Norvig. Five new courses were announced on 31 May 2012, and marked the first time Udacity offered courses outside the domain of computer science. Four of these courses launched at the start of the third "hexamester", on 25 June 2012. One course, Logic & Discrete Mathematics: Foundations of Computing, was delayed for several weeks before an email announcement was sent out on 14 August stating that the course would not be launched, although no further explanation was provided.

On 23 August 2012, a new course in entrepreneurship, EP245 taught by retired serial entrepreneur Steve Blank, was announced. Four new specialized CS courses were announced as part of collaboration with Google, Nvidia, Microsoft, Autodesk, Cadence Design Systems, and Wolfram Research on 18 October 2012, to be launched in early 2013. On 28 November 2012, Thrun's original AI-class from 2011 was relaunched as a course at Udacity, CS271.

Udacity announced a partnership with San Jose State University (SJSU) on 15 January 2013 to pilot three new courses, two algebra courses and a statistics course, available for college credit at SJSU and offered entirely online. Three months later, the pilot was expanded to include MA006, MA008, and ST095, as well as two new courses, CS046 and PS001. On 18 July 2013, the partnership was suspended after more than half of the students failed their final exams.

## Course format

Each course consists of several units comprising video lectures with closed captioning, in conjunction with integrated quizzes to help students understand concepts and reinforce ideas, as well as follow-up homework which promotes a "learn by doing" model.<sup>[5]</sup> Programming classes use the Python language; programming assignments are graded by automated grading programs on the Udacity servers.

## Enrollment

Over the first several months of Udacity's existence, enrollment for each class was cut off on the due date of the first homework assignment, and the courses were re-offered each hexamester. Since August 2012, all courses have been "open enrollment"; students can enroll in one or more courses at any time after a course is launched. All course lectures and problem sets are available upon enrollment and can then be completed at the student's preferred pace.

Udacity had students in 203 countries in the summer of 2012, with the greatest number of students in the United States (42 percent), India (7 percent), Britain (5 percent), and Germany (4 percent). Udacity students for CS101 range from 13-year-olds to 80-year-olds. Advanced 13-year-olds are able to complete multiple, higher-level computer science courses on Udacity.

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## Certification

Upon completing a course, students receive a certificate of completion indicating their level of achievement, signed by the instructors, at no cost.<sup>[6]</sup> In addition, beginning 24 August 2012, through partnership with electronic testing company Pearson VUE, students of CS101 can elect to take an additional proctored 75-minute final exam for a fee of \$89 in an effort to allow Udacity classes to "count towards a credential that is recognized by employers".

Further plans announced for certification options would include a "secured online examination" as a less expensive alternative to the in-person proctored exams.

Colorado State University's Global Campus began offering transfer credit for the introductory computer science course (CS101) for Udacity students that take the final examination through a secure testing facility.

## Awards

In November 2012, founder Sebastian Thrun won the Smithsonian American Ingenuity in Education Award for his work with Udacity.

## References

- [1] <http://www.udacity.com/>
- [2] <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Udacity&action=edit>
- [3] <http://www.udacity.com/courses>
- [4] Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (<https://www.ai-class.com/>)
- [5] Udacity General FAQ (<http://udacity.com/faq>)
- [6] Udacity Blog: Finished your final? Get an official Udacity certificate (<http://www.udacity.blogspot.com/2012/08/tell-world-you-took-udacity-class.html>)

## External links

- Official website (<http://www.udacity.com/>)
- Udacity Blog (<http://blog.udacity.com/>)

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