

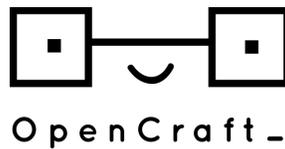


OpenCraft_

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Not yet submitted

Executive Summary

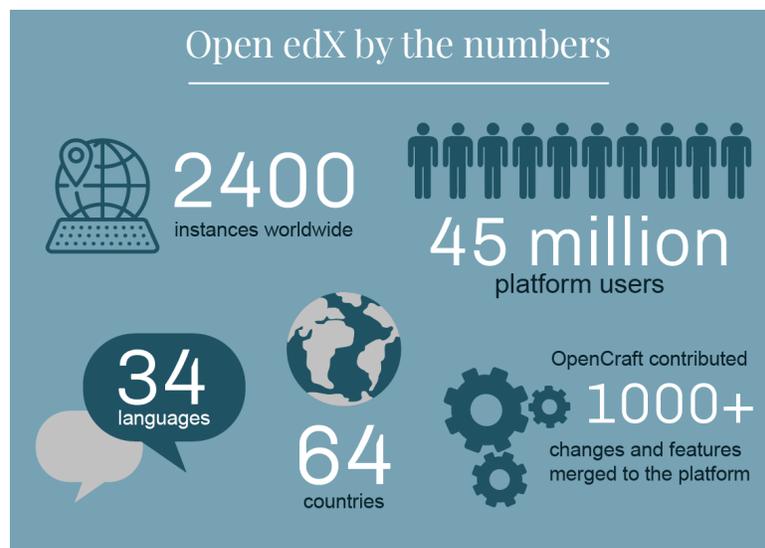


Company Overview

OpenCraft is a software development company that was founded in 2013 following the release of the Open edX open-source MOOC platform. We have had a close relationship with the edX organisation since the beginning of the Open edX project and have been one of edX's closest business partners because of our unparalleled expertise on the platform. Our values are **openness, quality, empathy, and commitment**. We are the most experienced team working on Open edX aside from edX itself, with more than 1,000 contributions to the platform. The Center for Reimagining Learning (tCRIL), which governs the Open edX project, has given more OpenCraft team members the status of [Core Committers](#) than any other team. This privilege grants members of the OpenCraft team merge and ownership rights to parts of the official Open edX codebase. This privileged status is granted to essential contributors to the Open edX ecosystem with demonstrated influence on the technical upkeep and direction of the platform. Currently, only edX engineers and official contractors have these rights. All team members are senior developers with extensive experience in all the technologies used by Open edX. OpenCraft believes in sharing and contributes regularly to open source projects - especially the Open edX platform.

We specialize in deploying, hosting and customizing the Open edX platform. We gained the trust of our clients through our proven commitment to delivering **quality** and **maintainable** products **on time**. We care about long-term maintenance, and the solutions we put in place are designed for the long run. Our ongoing costs remain stable because we factor them in advance. We prefer this approach to charging ever increasing maintenance fees over time (which, unfortunately, often happens in software development). Our prices reflect the actual work we put into maintaining our code and the effort spent on its quality, which is why our clients choose to work with us. We are the biggest features contributor to Open edX, and several members of our team are official core committers to the project. Our contributions to the platform are acknowledged each year at the annual Open edX conference.

Our clients benefit from our long-standing development partnership with the edX organization. We share edX's standards of code quality and have official code review for every platform feature we build. EdX has hired us for the development of key features of the platform, and has publicly recognized OpenCraft as one of the leading Open edX specialists in the community.



OpenCraft's commitment to quality has also enabled us to host, maintain and develop code for the Open edX instances of many prestigious colleges and universities. We also work with governmental institutions and private clients of all sizes. Over time, our approach also made us develop a specialty in taking over hosting, maintenance and development of Open edX instances that have been set up by other providers - we consider this a pleasant testimony to the quality of our work. An ever-growing number of our clients come through this channel.

OpenCraft is decentralized and operates on all continents except for Antarctica - allowing us to recruit the best talent, no matter where they are. We hire men and women from a vast array of cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. We have team members living in Germany, Australia, France, Ukraine, Peru, Pakistan, India, Brazil, Latvia, Slovenia, Canada, United States, and more.

Founder and CEO Xavier Antoviaque, administrative specialist Gabriel D'Amours, and Business Development Specialist Fox Piacenti handle business communications, while our senior developers handle technical discussions and reviews with clients with the help of our CTO Braden MacDonald. Developers assigned to a project participate in most discussions with stakeholders and handle project management, design, development and quality insurance. We communicate with clients frequently, providing updates on the work and regularly doing rounds of product reviews. We tend to favor asynchronous communications (using emails, documents and task management tools such as Trello or Jira) and thorough documentation over synchronous meetings, though we also have regular meetings with some of our clients.

OpenCraft supports a wide range of clients among varying types of organizations. We support higher education institutions, government and large corporate clients, but our solution extends and supports NGOs and smaller-scaled projects as well.



"In my opinion, no other Open edX provider can rival OpenCraft's deep level of knowledge of the platform, or match their skill in customizing it."

Rowan McVey, Cloudera

Development Lifecycle Philosophy

We manage all our projects using the Agile/Scrum methodology, working in 2-week development sprints and using Agile task management software (Jira). We choose this work methodology mainly because it allows our development team to quickly adapt to changes in the scope or timeline of a project without affecting the overall roadmap or budget. We don't do daily standups and our workflow is not pure standard scrum, though it has many similar elements. Our work methodology has evolved over time based on what works for our fully-remote, senior full stack team and our open source first workflow.

The vast majority of the code that we write is open source, under the same license as the original upstream edX repositories. New projects are made under open source licenses as well. Coding standards and best practices that we use are the exact same as used by edX themselves, e.g. https://edx.readthedocs.io/projects/edx-developer-guide/en/latest/style_guides/python-guidelines.html

How we work at OpenCraft

With a fully remote team, we work differently than most tech companies. To ensure success, it's important that our clients are comfortable with how we work.

We manage all our projects using the Agile/Scrum methodology, working in 2-week development sprints, and using Agile task management software (Jira, Trello, etc.). We meticulously plan all our work in advance, but also have firefighters to tackle emergency tasks when needed.

Because our team is fully remote, we favor asynchronous communication (email, Google Docs) to maximize efficiency. All communications are answered within 24 hours.

Using documents and email allows us to engage all of our team members to troubleshoot and solve any issues you may encounter, and helps build documentation for our projects. This enables us to do more, and more quickly than we would through workflows that are mainly based on meetings or synchronous discussions. Of course, we also hold meetings when necessary, such as monthly or bi-weekly planning calls with clients.

Our client onboarding process is straightforward. We assign clients with a senior developer as their main point of contact (we call this senior developer the "client owner"), and communicate important information, such as emergency contacts and access to tasks management tools. The client owner is responsible for coordinating project and budget management, and regularly communicates with clients. Our administrative staff and CEO handle contractual matters, finances, and billing.

OpenCraft's approach to feature contributions

Open edX is a community-driven project and the feature contributions it receives are essential to its success. As part of our model, we contribute most of the customizations we do on behalf of a client to the official stable version of the Open edX platform (also called 'upstreaming'). This means the code we write is of the same quality as edX's, and can be integrated to the main, public code of the platform in most situations.

Besides helping the community, there are several advantages to this approach:

- It minimizes maintenance and saves money over time. Instead of charging you for rebuilding the custom feature for each new version of Open edX, getting it in the main version means all the project developers, including edX, must maintain your feature.
- It maximizes quality. In order to integrate them in the main version, we have your custom features reviewed and improved by edX's code, product, and UX experts to ensure they meet the highest standards of quality.
- It improves the feature or product over time. Once a feature is upstreamed, members of the Open edX community can contribute and improve it on their own budget or time.

Company work profile

Please browse the [Projects](#) section of our website to see examples of work we have done. Here are a few:

Colleges and Universities

LabXchange

([platform website](#))

LabXchange is a science education platform funded by the Amgen Foundation and Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The platform is based on a highly customized Open edX instance and offers a rich and ever-expanding collection of world-class learning assets, including videos, assessments, and simulations. One of the key features of the platform is that users can freely combine assets together to create their own "learning pathways." These pathways can then be shared, remixed, studied, or assigned to learners.

Crucial to this project was the design of Blockstore, a new content storing service that will become a core element of Open edX. Blockstore facilitates a much greater level of content re-use, enables new adaptive learning features, and enables delivery of learning content in exciting new ways.

Both the LabXchange platform and the resulting new Open edX features (Blockstore, Content Libraries version 2, a new XBlock Runtime, anonymous access, and a new visual assessment editor) were primarily developed by OpenCraft, with substantial support from edX. This project has been possible because LabXchange, edX, and OpenCraft worked closely together and collaborated on every stage of the project from initial implementation planning through to development and launch.

Notre Dame University

Notre Dame is a prestigious private research university located in Indiana, US. Notre Dame hired OpenCraft to take over maintenance of their instance of Open edX, which included migrating the University's full setup under OpenCraft's stewardship and maintaining a complex set of customizations.

Harvard Graduate School of Education is one of the top schools of education in the United States. HGSE hired OpenCraft to assist them deploying a course about change management. We deployed an Open edX instance with a customized theme to match their branding and were contracted for course authoring work. HGSE also had OpenCraft develop and implement a brand-new XBlock for their course, called the Diary Xblock, which allows learners to write, save and edit text for evaluation and feedback. The course was very successful with more than 100,000 enrollments, and the Diary XBlock was very well received.

HMX - Harvard Medical School

[\(platform website\)](#)

HMX courses are designed to deliver essential knowledge important for a variety of health care career paths. Courses are led by Harvard's prestigious Medical School faculty, working in collaboration with a multi-disciplinary team of experts in biomedical visualization, assessment, and the science of learning to create a unique learning experience that is hosted on Open edX.

The Harvard Medical School initially hired OpenCraft for the setup of the ecommerce functionalities of HMX. Among their requirements was the need to offer courses that have a paid application process, also involving a separate platform for the application form. The main challenge was to develop a solution that both answered the clients' complex needs and stuck close to the main functionalities of Open edX. OpenCraft successfully delivered an ecommerce solution and have since been given the responsibility of managing HMX's scaled hosting infrastructure, including maintenance and version upgrades.

Arizona State University

[\(project website\)](#)

OpenCraft has been hired to take over deployment, maintenance and upgrades of ASU's Young Thinkers Program (YTP), a college and career readiness platform for Emirati youth developed by ASU and the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education (AGFE). The platform is designed for public high school and public university students and includes interactive modules in English and Arabic that will help Emirati youth develop skills in areas such as networking, writing resumes, public speaking, time management and digital literacy.

Harvard Kennedy School

[\(platform website\)](#)

Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government is one of the United States's foremost public policy and public administration school. HKS hired OpenCraft to deploy and maintain their Open edX-based Evidence for Policy Design Online Learning Platform (EPoDx). The blended learning platform, utilising custom data reports from Insights and the Analytics Pipeline, has been a success, bringing evidence-based teaching to more than 3,300 public servants and policymakers so far.

HarvardX

([platform website](#))

Harvard University hired OpenCraft to develop advanced learning tools through their HarvardX online learning initiative. We developed the Atlas XBlock, a visual tool that aggregates survey results and displays them on a world map, and also rewrote and improved Dalite, a tool for asynchronous peer instruction which identifies discussion arguments for students to revise or defend, enabling peer instruction at scale in online courses.

Australian National University

([see ANU courses on edX](#))

The Australian National University, Australia's foremost public university, hired OpenCraft to develop a project called the XBlock Reporting Tool. The tool improves reporting functionalities for XBlocks, allowing course instructors to get more data about learners' responses to problems, and to preview and download detailed reports. When completed, these improvements will be contributed to the next stable release of Open edX. OpenCraft also provides consulting services as needed for ANU's in-house deployment of Open edX.

Governmental institutions

Government of France (Ministry of Higher Education and Research) - France Université Numérique

([platform website](#))

France Université Numérique (FUN) is the French national platform to promote the use of massive open online courses. OpenCraft has helped FUN deliver an adaptive learning project which enabled the use of adaptive learning activities, accessible content, enhanced videos, and real-time interactions in MOOCs. We have also provided support for FUN's Open edX instance in terms of version upgrades and analytics.

Corporate clients

Cloudera

([platform website](#))

Cloudera is a Silicon Valley company that provides open source-based analytics software and training to data-driven enterprises. OpenCraft was tasked with the deployment, hosting and maintenance of Cloudera OnDemand, an Open edX-based learning platform which offers specialized courses for developers, analysts, administrators, and aspiring data scientists. We also deployed the Open edX Analytics API on the platform as well as SSO, the iOS mobile app, and other customization and integration work.

Le Monde / L'Obs - Rue89

Rue89 is a French news outlet belonging to L'Obs-Le Monde media group. Rue89 hired OpenCraft to deploy the first French MOOC about digital journalism. OpenCraft was responsible for the deployment and maintenance of an Open edX instance to host the MOOC, developing a custom theme to match the brand, enabling certificates, and setting up an analytics pipeline on their instance.

edX and feature contributions

As mentioned in our introduction, edX has given OpenCraft the status of [Core Committers](#) for the Open edX platform. This privilege grants members of the OpenCraft team merge and ownership rights to parts of the official Open edX codebase. We have worked in close collaboration with edX since the release of Open edX, and are actively pursuing a number of projects with edX as external development contractors. [Click here](#) for a list of our current development projects with edX.

Other projects:

Content libraries

OpenCraft led the development work for Open edX's Content Library feature, which allows instructors to create a library to build a pool of HTML components, problems, and video components for use in randomized assignments in their courses.

Single Sign-On

EdX hired OpenCraft to develop a large part of Shibboleth and SAML Single Sign-On support for Open edX, allowing users to authenticate on the platform using a variety of identity providers.

Drag and Drop V2 tool

Image Explorer XBlock

OpenCraft led the development work of the Image Explorer XBlock, a visual course component that prompts learners to explore an image containing hotspots and click the hotspots to display custom content.

A few client testimonials

"OpenCraft was a pleasure to work with. They helped through every stage of the process – from idea generation, to prototyping, construction, deployment, and testing. They were responsive to my needs and completed the work on time and on budget. OpenCraft knows edX inside out, both technically and organisationally. They are able to reach out to the right person when needed, which was invaluable to get features released on time for our edx.org courses."

*William Wisser, Sr. Director of Learning Technologies
Harvard Graduate School of Education*

"OpenCraft is fantastic to work with. From the beginning of our work together, they have been willing to explore ways we can customize our Open edX instance, making it fit to the (very specific) use case we have in mind. The high level of customization we've been able to achieve thanks to OpenCraft is critical to our ability to train policymakers around the world."

*Charlotte Tuminelli, Senior Training Manager
Harvard Kennedy School*

"OpenCraft's strong collaboration skills, excellence in their craft, and harmonic practices lead to significant contributions that are in consonance with the future direction of the edX platform. They play an instrumental role in the symphonic blend of the Open edX ecosystem, resulting in a profound resonance of the edX mission to provide quality education to the global community."

*Nimisha Asthagiri, Chief Product Architect
edX*

"OpenCraft has been an invaluable partner in making our vision for Cloudera OnDemand a reality. In my opinion, no other Open edX provider can rival OpenCraft's deep level of knowledge of the platform, or match their skill in customizing it."

*Rowan McVey, Program Manager
Cloudera*

"We were looking for a partner who shared our values on open source, knew the Open edX community well, and would deliver high quality service. Opencraft did just that and more. Their service was rock solid and were always willing to explore ways for the Open edX platform to provide more value to our university community. We could not have done it without them by our side."

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*Michael Green, Associate Director
Duke Learning Innovation, Duke University*

"Working with OpenCraft has been a key part of our development strategy. Their attention to detail and deep knowledge of the edX platform have been instrumental in bringing some of our innovations to market. Perhaps most importantly, OpenCraft's highly respected, active involvement in the Open edX community is a key benefit to anyone lucky enough to work with them."

Andy Parsons, CTO - McKinsey Academy, McKinsey & Co.

References

We're happy to provide client references upon request.