

## Training conference interpreters online: vision or illusion?

Kilian Seeber, Director, FTI Interpreting Department, University of Geneva, Switzerland

The education landscape has been profoundly affected by the technological advancements of the last decade: the advent of powerful yet intuitive consumer electronics coupled with affordable and almost ubiquitous connectivity has changed the way in which we communicate and interact, both socially and professionally. In the field of higher education MOOCs were hailed as the instructional paradigm of the future: a unique way to make learning more inclusive, accessible and affordable. Only a few years on, however, the initial hype appears to be all but gone. Only time will tell whether the concept of open online education was merely a temporary phenomenon, or whether it will re-gather enough momentum to rise from the ashes. For right now, one of the most fundamental questions remains: to which extent can the benefits of online education be harnessed in what has traditionally, perhaps inherently, been a field hallmarked by considerable investments in human resources and equipment? In my presentation I will attempt to critically assess some of the recent trends, highlighting not only the opportunities but also the challenges intrinsic to conference interpreter training, and exploring the boundaries between vision and illusion.

**Kilian G. Seeber** is a professional conference interpreter accredited to the European Institutions and the European Patent Office with ample experience in the fields of international arbitration, politics and diplomacy. As professor at the University of Geneva and director of the Interpreting Department he has been training conference interpreters as well as interpreter trainers at the highest level. His research interests include cognitive aspects of multilingual and multimodal processing as well as ethical considerations affecting the interpreting process. He has been involved in the development of online training platforms, blended learning courses and self-administered online training modules for conference interpreters.

Kilian completed his undergraduate training in translation and interpreting at the University of Vienna, did his graduate work in interpreting at the University of Geneva and his post-doctoral research in psycholinguistics at the University of York.