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YouTube CHANNELS AS SUPPORT MATERIALS IN DISTANCE LEARNING

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Absract

Video hosting and sharing website YouTube that was founded in 2005 is one of the social networking websites reaching a very high number of users. It is a sharing medium open to everyone, and users can upload contents. It is possible to open various channels whether official or personal from different themes in YouTube, and these channels can be reached directly or through membership. In addition to the channels classified under the categories of music, comedy, sports and technology, there are channels with educative contents as well. Almost half of the higher education students in Turkey are enrolled in institutions that provide education through distance education system. There are channels for the students who are enrolled in this system as well among YouTube channels. Among the 600 results found as a result of searching with "Açıköğretim-AÖF" (Open Education-OEF) key words, 11 channels were directly for the students in the system, and they provided open access with numerous videos. These channels will be examined particularly in terms of the characteristics of the videos they shared and their ratings, and will be evaluated in terms of the contributions they provided students in this study.

Keywords: Distance learning, open sources, YouTube, education channel, open education.

INTRODUCTION

Considering the position of information technologies today, online video sharing and access to these videos has become easier. The interest towards video sharing websites, access to these sites from mobile devices and storing facilities have increased.

It is possible to describe online videos as video content in the internet that is delivered to users through web and mostly depending on demands. Audience need to have internet access and suitable hardware in order to reach these contents. In addition, online video platforms use simultaneous streaming method. Audience can watch the videos through the internet without downloading them into their own computers through watching programs which are embedded in the web pages (Özel 2015: 292).

YouTube is one of the networking websites which has reached a huge amount of users. YouTube is a video hosting and sharing web site which was founded by three American former Paypal employees in 2005. The site which departed with the slogan of "Broadcast Yourself" was bought by Google Inc. in 2006. YouTube users have a facility to create their own channels. There are numerous video contents, accesses and categories in YouTube. Pure education contented videos are displayed in YouTube EDU category and these videos can be watched through various social networking sites (Karademir and Alper, 2011). As a video sharing network, YouTube facilitates everyone either as producers or consumers of information, and lets amateur users upload their own videos and makes it possible to share contents such as parts of series, films or clips that are broadcasted by traditional mass media tools. Popular videos that are broadcasted through YouTube can easily be viewed by millions of users in a few seconds. (Dondurucu and Uluçay 2015: 1063-4) By this way, participants mediate the creation of a new culture. Participant culture is a term used to express the shift in power relationships among content and media industry, and consumers thanks to more accessible digital technologies (Burgess and Green 2009:10).

2016 statistics of YouTube include data about the prevalence of the usage of it.

• Number of people who used YouTube: 1 billion 300 thousand.





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- 300 hours of videos are uploaded in YouTube every minute.
- An average of 5 billion videos are watched daily in YouTube.
- Each month, videos in YouTube are watched at an average of 900 million hours.
- There are 10.113 videos that have exceeded the 1billion- rating rate.
- More than half of the YouTube displays are watched through mobile devices.
- There are videos from 76 languages in YouTube.
- 4 billion dollars of Google's incomes come from YouTube.
- 6% of advertisement incomes of Google come from YouTube (cited by Hoş, 2016 from YouTube, Statisticbrain).

This site provides advantages for students considering collaborative learning and evidence-based discussions. The sites that are developed compatible with mobile devices provide students with opportunities of personalizing the education they receive in terms of their learning needs. (Yıldırım and Özmen 2012: 294) Moreover, learning goals serve as a common platform where people with same needs meet.

Main reasons of videos' being watched this much can be listed as;

- Their having an effective narrative language through graphics, animations and music,
- Their telling complex issues in a simple way.
- Their turning abstract issues into concrete ones.
- Audience's being able to react issues fast.
- Their creating an effective learning environment in which seeing and listening are effective.
- Their facilitating learners wit personal learning environments.
- Their being able to be watched again and in episodes. (Öztürk 2016)

High interest of users towards YouTube is connected with facilities provided by the site. Facilities provided for users by YouTube can be listed as follows:

- 1. Users can reach the videos or channels they want to watch through search engine. The results are listed in the page.
- 2. Videos can be used as open resources, and users can be informed about recently added videos through subscription system.
- 3. Some related videos next to the playing one are listed, and thanks to the "more videos" link, some more videos can be reached.
- 4. Users can make searches in a channel, and make their own watching lists.
- 5. There are view counter and like or dislike buttons below the videos. These icons make it possible for users to share their opinions on videos.
- 6. If desired, videos can be opened to user comments, and by this way, interaction among users and channel administrative becomes possible.
- 7. There are some buttons in the menu below the videos such as add, share, and more.

 *Add button helps to create a watching list, and *share* button enables users to share the video in various social networking media, with particular people or groups. As for the *more* menu, it has some sub-choices such as inform, statistics, subtitles and so on.
- 8. At the end of the right corner of the video player, there is a red button which facilitates users to select the language of the subtitles. YouTube automatically translates the audio of the video and subtitle appears when it becomes ready. With the help of this characteristics, students will be able to benefit from the videos regardless to their foreign language knowledge. (Yıldırım and Özmen 2012: 291) YouTube automatically translates the spoken language into English, and reflects it a subtitle. Facility of multiple languages increases information sharing. This is one of the aims of this medium. (Öztürk 2016).
- 9. YouTube has developed some applications for access from tablets and mobile phones. By this way, it aims to be reached every time and from everywhere.

Almost half of the higher education students are enrolled to an open or distance education program of universities. The leading institution of these universities is Anadolu University with its three faculties providing open and distance education with its own open and distance education system. The other universities that





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provide open and distance education in Turkey are Istanbul University, Sakarya University and Atatürk University. In addition to the facilities provided by the institution itself, students of open and distance education system receive various materials through the Internet. Web pages are created, forums are developed and various social media contents are offered to help students study their exams and support their lessons. Video sharing web sites are especially full of videos that serve as support materials. Research conducted with distance education students has shown that students use social networking sites actively. Zeytinoğlu and Banar (2014) found out in their study aimed to find out usefulness of social media as an education and instruction tool in the area of accounting that YouTube was the most frequently used social media component with a rate of 33,5%. In a study conducted with 2014-2015 academic year Open and Distance Education System students, the students were asked to state their primary aim to use the Internet, and 25% of them answered that hey used it for educational purposes (Anadolu Universitesi Açıköğretim Sistemi 2015:56).

Starting point of this study was to find out the visual materials provided for Anadolu University Open Education System students through YouTube considering the facilities the system have; identify the aim of these materials; and evaluate their possible contributions to students who are the users of these materials.

Aim

Main aim of the study is to analyze YouTube education channels offered by Anadolu University Open Education System in terms of their users. As a result of this analysis, the following questions were answered.

- 1. Who were the channels offered under the name of Open Education or abbreviated form OEF prepared by?
- 2. What are the contents of these channels, and what kind of contributions are aimed for students?
- 3. What are the resources of these videos? Are they open resources?
- 4. For which media were the videos that existed in online platforms prepared?
- 5. In what aspects did the channels reveal mobility in a period of one month?
- 6. What was the general overview of the related channels except for the samples?

METHOD

Study was conducted through scanning and content analysis methods. Both user-based and content-based approaches were used during the content analyses.

Population and Sample

Education channels that were reached through the search with key words, "Open Education-Open Education System" and "AOF (OEF)" from YouTube constituted the population of the study. As a result of these searches and scanning, 600 channels were found. The abbreviations "AOF" that was used in foreign languages were excluded from the population of the study. The channels that had expressions such as Open Education and OEF in their names, and had more than 10 subscribers or videos were included in the study. Thus, the number of the channels in the scope of the study were 11.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data gathered from the channels that would be the samples of the study and that required numerical and visual editing were recorded as offline files on 16th of September, 2016 in case of any changes in the Internet. Having completed coding instructions, examinations on videos were conducted through online watching method. In order to monitor the mobility in channels, some qualitative data were rerecorded on 17th of October, 2016.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the study were examined under the titles of general overview of the channels, content characteristics of videos, video resources, and mobility of channels.





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General characteristics of 10 channels in the scope of the study are shown in Table 1. Number of the subscribers, number of the videos, foundation date of the channel and identity of the channel are listed in the table.

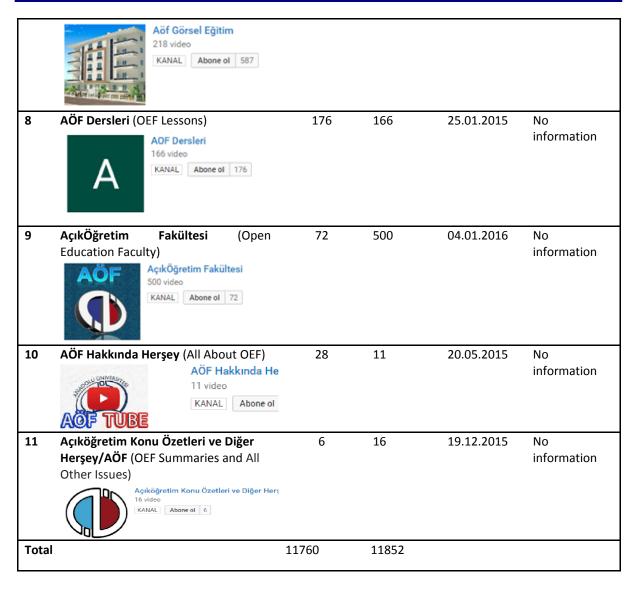
Table 1: General Description of the Channels

	1: General Description of the Channels				
No	Name of the Channel-	Number of Subscribers	Number of Videos	Foundation Date	Identity of the Channel
1	Hedef AÖF (Target OEF) Hedef Aöf 941 video Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim, İşletme ve İ Ders Videoları Görüntüleri. KANAL Abone ol 7.777	7777	941	15.01.2011	No information
2	Açıköğretim Sistemi-Anadolu Üniversitesi (Anadolu University Open Education System) Açıköğretim Sistemi - Anadolu Üniversitesi 8.975 video Türk yükseköğretim sisteminde 32. yılını tamamlaş Açıköğretim Sistemi, yaklaşık 1 milyon 400 bin	4483	8975	08.02.2016	A.Ü AÖS Official Channel
3	Açıköğretim Fakültesi (Open Education Faculty) Açıköğretim Fakültesi 54 video Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim Sis KANAL Abone ol 4.036	4036	54	14.10.2014	Official Channel
4	Açık Öğretim (Open Education) Açık Öğretim 141 video KANAL Abone ol 2.45	2455	141	01.09.2014	No information
5	Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim Fakültesi (Anadolu University Open Education Faculty) Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğre 350 video KANAL Abone ol 1.282	1282	350	23.02.2016	No information
6	AÖF (OEF) AÖF 480 video Ücretsiz Ders İzle. KANAL Abone ol 1.707	1707	480	04.01.2016	"Sanal Dersane" Private course
7	Aöf Görsel Eğitim (OEF Visual Education)	587	218	12.08.2013	No information





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As for the number of the subscribers, "Hedef AÖF (Target OEF)" had 7777 subscribers, and it was the channel with the highest number of subscribers. Official channels of Anadolu University Open Education System were at the second and third rank with 4483 and 4036 subscribers. The channels did not reveal any linear relationship with the years they were opened in terms of the number of subscribers.

Regarding the number of videos, the channel named "Anadolu University Open Education System" that was opened in early 2016 had the highest number of videos (8975). It was followed by "Hedef AÖF (Target OEF)" with 941 videos, and "Açıköğretim Fakültesi (Open Education Faculty)" with 500 videos.

As to the launching years of the channels, the first channel was "Hedef AÖF (Target OEF)" that was opened in 2011. It was followed by "Aöf Görsel Eğitim (OEF Visual Education)" that was opened in 2013, and the third channel was the first official channel of Anadolu University Open Education System. Second official channel of the system was launched at the beginning of 2016.

Identity of the channel might not be important for the audience; however, if the focus point is learner, the resource of the knowledge carries a special significance. "About" tab of YouTube channels were created to provide demos and information for users in this respect. Examining the identity of the channels from this perspective, 7 out of 10 channels did not have any information about their identity. The channels that stated their identity were two official channels of Anadolu University Open Education System and a channel of a





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private course. However, as it will be discussed in the following sections of this study, since the resource of the videos that were uploaded to unidentified channels was clearly known that they had been taken from Anadolu University Open Education System, this deficiency was disregarded.

Videos that exist in channels were evaluated in terms of their contents under the five categories including demos, lecturing, question answering, being informative or not, and other. Findings are shown in Table 2.

The highest rate of content in the videos was the question answering/problem solving videos that aimed to prepare students for exams of various lessons with 72%. Lecturing videos came the second with 26%. The rate of the informative videos for system students or the ones who plan to be system students that included guidance in terms of student profile, enrollment procedures, lessons choice, fee payments, and so on was 0,7%. The rate of introductory videos such as the ones prepared for the mediums of Anadolu University Open Education System, Second University in the system, and e-campus was 0,1% with a very low rate. As for the videos listed under the title of other videos, there was a video of draw results of a web page related to the channel and another one on consciousness-raising about cleaning and environment. These findings revealed that the most significant aim of the YouTube videos was helping students prepare for exams. Considering the users, they aimed to meet the needs and demands of students who had difficulty in exams and wanted to be successful.

Table 2: Content Characteristics of the Videos

Channel No	Name of the Channel	Number of Videos	Lecturing	Information	Question answering	Demo	Other
1	Açıköğretim Sistemi-Anadolu Üniversitesi (Anadolu University Open Education System)	8975	550	14	8406	5	
2	Hedef AÖF (Target OEF)	941	934	6	-		1
3	AçıkÖğretim Fakültesi (Open Education Faculty	500	500				
4	AÖF (OEF)	480	478			1	1
5	Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim Fakültesi (Anadolu University Open Education Faculty)	350	350				
6	Aöf Görsel Eğitim (OEF Visual Education)	218	217			1	
7	AÖF Dersleri (OEF Lessons)	166	166				
8	Açık Öğretim (Open Education)	141	58		83		
9	Açıköğretim Fakültesi(Open Education Faculty	54		54			
10	Açıköğretim Konu Özetleri ve Diğer Herşey AÖF (OEF Summaries and All Other Issues)	16	16				
11	AÖF Hakkında Herşey (All About OEF)	11		11			
Total		11852	3269 % 26	85 % 0,7	8489 %72	7 %0,1	2 0,02

Who these videos were prepared by is important in terms of their scientific competencies and contributions to students. Resources of the videos and familiarity of the resources are shown in Table 3.

In addition to the two of the channels' being official channels of the university, and in addition to its using the videos that were produced in its own studios, seven of the other channels were observed to broadcast videos





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that were made by Anadolu University. Expressing this in numbers, it could be seen that 11698 of 11852 videos, namely, 99% of videos were made by Anadolu University. The other channels' using of these videos without the permission or information of the university can be the subject of another study in terms of copyrights.

The only channel apart from official channels to state the resource of the videos as Anadolu University was the channel called "Hedef AÖF (Target OEF)". Although the channel stated the resource as TRT Okul-AÖF (Turkish Radio Television Education Channel in cooperation with Anadolu University Open Education System), it is known that the resource of the programs in that channel was Anadolu University.

Since the three channels that used the videos of Anadolu University carried logo of the University, they informed people indirectly about the resource. Two channels used videos without the logo.

Apart from official channels, the only channel that had videos belonging to the publisher was the one called "Açık Öğretim (Open Education) which was related to a private course institution called "İlk Umut Dershanesi (private course)". All of these videos were prepared in studio with lectures from field experts, blackboard usage and graphic supports in them. These videos were considered to be educative sets prepared by the institution for sale.

Table 3: Video Resources

No	Name of the channel	Number of videos	Resource	Resource identification	Online medium	TV
1	Açıköğretim Sistemi-Anadolu Üniversitesi(Anadolu University Open Education System)	8975	AnadoluUn.	Yes (Official)	Yes	
2	Hedef AÖF (Target OEF)	941	TRT Okul (An.U)	Yes With logo	Yes	
3	AçıkÖğretim Fakültesi (Open Education Faculty	500	Anadolu Un.	No With logo		Yes
4	AÖF (OEF)	480	Anadolu Un	Hayır No logo		Yes
5	Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim Fakültesi(Anadolu University Open Education Faculty)	350	Anadolu Un	Hayır No logo		Yes
6	AÖF Görsel Eğitim (OEF Visual Education)	218	Anadolu Un.	No With logo	Yes	
7	AÖF Dersleri (OEF Lessons)	166	Anadolu Un	Hayır With logo	Yes	
8	Açık Öğretim (Open Education)	141	İlk Umut	Yes	Yes	
9	Açıköğretim Fakültesi (Open Education Faculty)	54	Anadolu Un	Yes (Official)	Yes	
10	Açıköğretim Konu Özetleri ve Diğer Herşey AÖF (OEF Summaries and All Other Issues)	16	Anadolu Un.	False With logo	Yes	
11	AÖF Hakkında Herşey (All About OEF)	11	Uzman TV (another YouTube channel)	No With logo	Yes	
Total		11852				



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The logo of "Uzman TV (Expert TV-YouTube)" existed in the videos of the channel called "AÖF Hakkında Herşey" (Everything about OEF); however, there was no explanation nor link about it in the channel.



Although the videos of the channel called "Açıköğretim Konu Özetleri ve Diğer Herşey (OEF Summaries and All Other Issues) " belonged to Anadolu University, a special generic was added at the beginning of the video and a sub-strip called "Aöf Adaletçiler (OEF Egalitarians)" was put in the video.

Regarding the preparation aim of the videos in terms of the mediums they would be broadcasted and existed in YouTube channels, it was seen that seven out of eleven channels were prepared for online platforms, and four were prepared for television broadcasts. Within this framework, videos existed in nine channels and were prepared by Anadolu University worth discussing

regarding their production types and broadcasting mediums.

- 1. Television Programs: Most of the programs that were developed for lectures either in studio or outsource lasted for 20 minutes, and an episode in these programs lasted 40 minutes. They were TV programs prepared for "TRT OKUL" (Educational Turkish public television channel) launched in 2011 and TRT4 (Old educational Turkish public television channel) which was used before it. Since the system had various programs that had been prepared in years, they included different production types as well. These programs existed in YouTube channels apart from official channels.
- 2. E-learning videos: Videos aiming to support lessons and prepare students for exams have been produced for "Anadolum Kampüs", the e-learning portal of Anadolu University Open Education System. Lectures that



had been prepared in the form of presentations and broadcasted in two channels apart from official channels were out of date materials. Up-to-date videos are the ones that include unit summaries and last 5 – 10

minutes, and "one Question and one Answer" videos. These videos are broadcasted through "Anadolum Kampüs (e-learning portal of Anadolu University Open Education System)" and "Açıköğretim Sistemi-Anadolu Üniversitesi (Anadolu University Open Education System)" official YouTube channels as well.

- 3. Watch and Learn videos: these are one or two-minute-lasting videos that exist in "Anadolum Kampüs (elearning portal of Anadolu Univeristy Open Education System)". They were usually prepared as animations to inform and guide students. They are served under the title of "Watch and Learn". These videos are broadcasted in official YouTube channel called "Açıköğretim Fakültesi" (Open Education Faculty) as well.
- 4. It was observed during the research that up-to-date videos that existed in official channels of Anadolu University Open Education System did not exist in other channels. The videos in other channels were out of date videos that were prepared in previous years as e-learning materials and TV programs. Although most of these programs had been removed from broadcasting, there were some programs such as English program series broadcasted on TRT OKUL (Turkish Public TV channel).

Mobility of the channels that were in the scope of the study was observed in terms of channel administrators and users, and relationship between these two. In order to do this, number of videos and users, and view rates of these channels were identified on 16th of September, 2016 and on 17th of October, 2016, and were examined. Mobility of the channels is shown in Table 4.

Change in the number of videos was observed regarding channel administrators, and the only change in this respect was seen at recent official page of Anadolu University Open Education System called "Açıköğretim





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Sistemi-Anadolu Üniversitesi". 610 (5,1%) videos were added to channel in one month (See Table 4). The highest increase in the number of users and the highest rate of views were observed in this channel as well. The other 10 channels did not reveal any increase in the number of videos. As for the number of users, all of them except for one increased the number of their subscribers and all of them continued to be viewed by users. Total increase in the number of subscribers was 4986 (22%), and total increase in views was 1.262.327 (13%). Research period: The research was conducted during re-registration and add-drop period, and the last days of second university registrations. Considering this, justification for informative videos of four channels (see Table 2) might seem clear. However, the continuing increased views for all channels can be interpreted as user interests towards the channels, and this can be the reason for the high number of channels and videos broadcasted in YouTube.

Tablo 4: Kanalların Hareketlilik Durumları

Tablo	4: Kanalların H	iareketiiii	K Durumi	dii	1					
No. of Channel	Name of the Channel	Number of videos September 2016	Number of Videos October 2016	Increase in videos	Number of users September 2016	Number of users October 2016	Increase in users	Views October 2016	Views September 2016	Increase in views
1	Açıköğretim Sistemi- Anadolu Üniversitesi Open Education System-	8975	9585	610	4483	7.704	3222	3.514.689 3. Ü	883.972 ç kanal	369.283
2	Hedef AÖF(Target OEF)	941	941	0	7777	8.131	354	2.743.167	2.801.680	58.513
3	AçıkÖğretim Fakültesi (Open Education Faculty	500	500	0	72	124	52	6.533	7.996	1.463
4	AÖF (OEF)	480	480	0	1707	1780	73	730.054	749.070	19.016
5	Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim Fakültes i(Anadolu University Open Education Faculty)	350	350	0	1282	1.377	95	1.174.940	1.186.603	11.663
6	Aöf Görsel Eğitim (OEF Visual Education)	218	218	0	587	714	127	105.075	115.294	10.219
7	AÖF Dersleri (OEF Lessons)	166	166	0	176	247	71	31.839	37.903	6.064
8	Açık Öğretim (Open Education)	141	141	0	2455	2667	212	58.613	675.586	616.973
9	Açıköğretim Fakültesi (Open	54	54	0	4036	4812	776	1.392.025	1.559.315	167.290





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	Education Faculty)									
10	Açıköğretim Konu Özetleri ve Diğer Herşey AÖF (OEF Summaries and All Other Issues)	16	16	0	6	11	5	483	1036	553
11	AÖF Hakkında Herşey (All About OEF)	11	11	0	28	28	0	11.512	11.802	290
	Total %	11.852	12.462	610 5.1	22.609	27.595	4.986 22.0	9.768.930	11.030.257	1.261.32 7 13.0

And Others

There are various channels among YouTube channels with very few videos and subscribers considering the scope of the study. Some of these channels are "Açıköğretim Aöf (Open Education-OEF" with 4 videos but no





subscribers; "AÖF Sorular (OEF Qestions)" with 544 subscribers and 2 videos; "AÖFeöğrenme (OEF e-learning)" with no videos and subscribers, and "Açıköğretim Kulübü (OEF Club)" with 1 subscriber and 26 videos.

In addition to these videos, there were some channels opened under the name of some individuals and broadcasted the videos of Anadolu University without displaying the logo and referencing to

Anadolu University. Orkun Çağlar's channel with 331 videos, and Görkem Evren's one with almost 600.000 subscribers and 510 videos, and his other channels with almost 1.300.000 subscribers can be examples for such channels.

CONCLUSION

YouTube video sharing site includes various videos and channels for a mass of people who are in Open Education System or want to be in the system. Except for the official channels of Anadolu University Open Education System, almost all of the videos in or out of the sampling of the study were the former television programs or e-learning materials prepared for Anadolu University Open Education System for previous years. Although the main problem in this framework is related to copyright issues, it is out of the scope of this study. The potential problem for the users most of whom was considered to be students is the contents' not being upto-date. Course books are evaluated by field experts every year in Anadolu University Open Education System, and contents are updated if needed. In accordance with these changes, all learning materials are re-prepared as well. Anadolu University Open Education System shifted to credit system from relativistic system in 2012 – 2013 academic year, and contents of most of the courses were reorganized. Most of the television programs that existed in channels were produced during the period of relativistic system when the researcher of this study was responsible for production and direction of such programs as well. Thus, most of them were thought to have lost their currencies. These videos that existed in the web site of the university when they were being broadcasted have been removed from all of the official mediums of the University for these reasons. Video production processes have also been evolved in accordance with developing technologies. Therefore, since the



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television programs or e-learning materials that had been produced in previous years were produced with the technology of that period, they have also been out of date in terms of production types. As none of the videos included information about the year of production, from this framework, they might cause some negative impressions about Anadolu University Open Education System for they are related to the system. Most of the videos in these channels include video or strip advertisements. This was considered as an indicator of the desire of channel owners to earn money from these videos. The contents of advertisements shown in the videos related to Open Education can be the subject of another study to provide projections about possible users. The Internet world has a structure of providing invaluable facilities and services in the field of education to a high number of users in one side; on the other hand, it might turn into an uncontrolled mass of data. In order to utilize from these facilities, it is an important point for users to reach information through correct channels and valid resources.

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