2018 UCL honorary doctorate recipients
Digital technology: a vehicle for opportunity and social cohesion

On 5-6 February 2018, UCL will award honorary doctorates to three individuals: edX CEO Anant Agarwal, Mozilla Foundation President Mitchell Baker, and Sorbonne Professor and Humanum Chair Moulad Doueihi. What do they have in common? A powerful vision of how digital technology, particularly open source technologies, can benefit society, including universal access to knowledge, equal opportunity for all and changes in social cohesion.

Anant Agarwal: education for all
Since 2013, Anant Agarwal, of Indian nationality, has been the CEO of the edX online platform founded by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University (UCL was the first Belgian university to join edX). Since 1988, he has been a professor of electrical engineering and computer science at MIT. Also a successful entrepreneur, he co-founded several technology companies. As part of his vision for high-quality education that is accessible to everyone, he has long advocated for MOOCs (massive online open courses) and was one of the first to participate in the MITX platform project that became edX. He himself conducted the first edX MOOC on circuits and electronics, teaching 155,000 students in 162 countries.

More than a technology – a philosophy
The edX philosophy is offering high-quality education to everyone. edX, whose technology is open source, offers anyone with an internet connection free courses at the world’s best universities (fees apply only to certifications). edX also offers career-advancing micro-masters and certificate programmes that impart top expertise. By the numbers, edX is more than 10 million learners; more than 1,300 courses; 53 international founding members, including UCL, the only participating francophone Belgian university; and 58 contributing members.

His sponsors: Franck Verschuren, UCL professor, specialist in internal medicine and emergency medicine at Saint-Luc University Hospital. He teaches the UCL MOOC ‘Comprendre la respiration’ (‘Understanding respiration’). Contact: 02 764 16 36 franck.verschuren@uclouvain.be.
Françoise Docq, MOOCs project leader at the Louvain Learning Lab, UCL’s teaching innovation platform. Contact: 010 47 85 18 or 0496 77 07 88, francoise.docq@uclouvain.be.

Mitchell Baker: for a better web accessible to all
Mitchell Baker is president of the Mozilla Foundation, a non-profit that aims to promote openness, accessibility and innovation in the field of technology. Involved with Mozilla since its beginning, she is a fervent advocate for open web and open source and is considered one of the web’s pioneers. Under her leadership, Mozilla has attracted 230 million users in 100 countries.

Ms Baker joined Netscape in 1994: she persuaded the company to go public with its source code, then participated in the launch of the Firefox browser and the creation of the Mozilla open source project. In 1999, she became general manager of the Netscape division coordinating the Mozilla project (she was dismissed for a brief period, then reinstated, owing to differences over what she believed Mozilla should be – an open source project to make the web accessible to all and offer equal opportunities to all users). In 2003, she became president of the Mozilla Foundation and co-founded the Mozilla organisation in 2005, a non-profit that ensures Mozilla’s long-term success.

Why dedicate her life to open source internet? For three reasons: Ms Baker has always been fascinated by a network’s power and its capacity to drive an ambitious project by attracting individuals and hence expertise. And
that's the internet: a network anyone can connect to at any time. Second, for Ms Baker the internet has to be a medium of exchange that is intelligible and accessible to all and decentralised (free of hierarchy) despite its growth. Finally, witnessing volunteers join the Mozilla Foundation out of ideological principal is, for her, very gratifying.

Her sponsor: **Jean-François Remacle**, professor at the Louvain School of Engineering and researcher at the UCL Institute of Mechanics, Materials and Civil Engineering. **Contact**: 010 47 23 52 or 0473 90 99 30, jean-francois.remacle@uclouvain.be.

**Milad Doueihi: digital as a new culture that changes social interaction**

An American born in Lebanon, Milad Doueihi is a historian of religions in the modern West, a philosopher and the current holder of the Humanum Chair, which is dedicated to digital humanism, at the Université de Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV). His mission is to determine the implications of digital technology-driven changes in research practices in the human and social sciences.

Highlighting transformations induced by new information and communication technologies in our relationship to writing, knowledge, power and social relations, he was one of the first to think of digital not as a technology but as a new culture, and the first to use the term ‘digital humanism’. More specifically, Professor Doueihi considers how collective technology is changing our lives. He has published several essays that have established him as one of the leading experts and theorists on the subject.

His sponsor: **Aurore François**, co-manager of the UCL Year of Digital Technology, wears two hats as a historian and computer engineer. A professor of history methodologies and archive science, she also manages the UCL Archives Department. **Contact**: 010 47 49 05 or 0477 80 14 81, aurore.francois@uclouvain.be.