Detecting and addressing contract cheating in online assessment

Associate Professor Phillip (Phill) Dawson
Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

Webinar Hosts
Professor Geoff Crisp,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President Academic
University of Canberra
g.crisp[at]canberra.edu.au

Dr Mathew Hillier,
Macquarie University
mathew.hillier[at]gmail.com

Just to let you know:
By participating in the webinar you acknowledge and agree that:
The session may be recorded, including voice and text chat communications (a recording indicator is shown inside the webinar room when this is the case).
We may release recordings freely to the public which become part of the public record.
We may use session recordings for quality improvement, or as part of further research and publications.
Detecting and addressing contract cheating in online assessment

Associate Professor Phillip (Phill) Dawson
Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE)
Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

Slides and resources at: http://philldawson.com/ta-cheating
Many thanks to

Rebecca Awdry

A/Prof Wendy Sutherland-Smith

...academic integrity researchers and experts around the world...

...and the anonymous participants in our studies and workshops!
Some declarations before we go any further…

I support AfL & AI.

I think cheating is a symptom of broader problems.

I think universities have a responsibility try to prevent and detect cheating.

I receive research funding from ed tech companies (including Turnitin), but these are my opinions, not theirs.

My mum helped me contract cheat in year four.
To hell with suspense
Three things to take from this presentation

1. Contract cheating is a big problem.

2. We need to balance academic integrity and assessment security.

3. You can learn to detect contract cheating.
1. Contract cheating is a big problem.
- Students don’t find it, it finds them.
- A significant proportion of students contract cheat.
- Only a tiny fraction of contract cheating gets detected.
About 263,000,000 results (0.27 seconds)

australianhelp.com › buy-essay-online

Buy Essay Online - We Write The Best Essays in Australia
Our writing service is the best website to buy an essay from. We guarantee high quality standards, offering discounts and 24/7 online support for every student.
Rating: 4.9 - 49 reviews.

au.edubirdie.com › buy-essays-online

Buy Essay at Australian Writing Service - Au.EduBirdie.com
BUY AN ESSAY FROM AUSTRALIAN WRITERS. If you are a busy student loaded with tons of college papers - there is no other chance to get your paper done ...

Can I buy an essay online?

Can I communicate with my writer during the process?

Is buying an essay safe?

It is absolutely safe as you pay only when you receive the paper and feel content with what you get. All the payments are fully refundable and there are no extra charges. Your money is always kept safe in your personal system's balance as you wait.
Aussie Essay Writer - Custom Essay Writing Service Online
Need a custom essay writing service help? Check our qualified and experienced Australian writers online. Have your college essays written by our company.
Essay Writing With Discounts · Resume Writing · Application Essay · Resume Help

Essay Help - Professional Australian Writing Service
https://australianhelp.com/essay-help
★★★★★ Rating: 4.8 - 58 reviews
Get the best essay writing help for an assignment of any topic and urgency. We have experience helping students with any kind of essays. Let us assist you now!

Get the Best Essay | Top Essay Writing Service from Australia
Looking for the best assignment writing service for Aussie students? Get essay help from our writers!
Essay in Australia · Assignment Help · Assignment Writing Service · Order

Definition Essays will provide explanations of complex or abstract concepts or ideas. Thus, a law student might be asked to write an essay defining justice. These essays involve a lot of critical analysis, but we have an expert for
...research paper...

...due tomorrow...

...hate stats...

Someone’s zodiac sign can tell you a lot about them. It not only explains why they’re so freaking obsessed with The Container Store (hi, Virgos!), but it can also reveal how good they are in bed, what their wedding should look like, and, oh yeah, how likely they are to cheat.

According to a new survey conducted by EduBirdie, a custom essay-writing service, each zodiac sign has its own signature relationship tendencies—and let me just say, PTL I’m not into Leos! Check out the survey results for your and your partner’s signs below (*crosses fingers*).
YouTube deletes cheating videos after BBC investigation

By Branwen Jefferys and Edward Main
Education Editor and BBC Trending

6 December 2018

YouTube has deleted thousands of videos promoting academic cheating in the last week after a BBC Trending investigation.

YouTubers have been ignoring the site’s ban on essay-writing adverts
Cheating term-paper-for-pay businesses recruited customers through subsidized on-campus parties

The professional essay writing service for students who can't even.
Get your essay written starting at just $18.00 a page

Choose Your Writer
Universities report catching a tiny fraction of 'contract cheats'

Student surveys reveal 15.7% admit buying essays, which equates to ~370,000 cases

- **UK**: Students who say they have bought essays

- **Australia**, extrapolated from Bretag et al 2018
  - ~80k total
  - avg. ~2k per uni

---

Banning essays won’t save us. Authentic assessment won’t save us. Contract cheating can occur with any task type.

(Ellis et al, 2019)
Rapid turnaround times won’t save us. Contract cheaters can probably do it quicker than students.

(Wallace & Newton, 2014)
Exams won’t save us.
‘Third party cheating’ is likely more common in exams than assignments.
‘Third party cheating’ is likely detected less often in exams than assignments.

(Harper et al, 2020)
Remote proctoring might help, but vendors won’t let me test it out. Treat their claims with caution.

(Dawson, forthcoming)
2. We need to balance
  - promoting academic integrity
  - assuring assessment security
Fundamental values of academic integrity

- Honesty
- Trust
- Fairness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Courage

https://academicintegrity.org/fundamental-values/
International Day Of Action Against Contract Cheating

19TH OCTOBER
#defeatthecheat
#excelwithintegrity
#nocheatingatmajan

SAY NO TO CONTRACT CHEATING!

Contract cheating is when a student pays another person to write their assignment for them instead of writing it themselves.
Addressing contract cheating requires...

**Academic Integrity**
- Trusting
- Educative
- Proactive

**Assessment security**
- Detecting
- Punitive
- Proactive or reactive

Think ‘crime prevention’  ‘policing’ or ‘surveillance’

It’s a balance, not a dichotomy
Talk with students.
Contract cheating sites lie and even blackmail.

(Rowland et al, 2018; Yorke, in press)
Talk with students.

“You don’t always get what you pay for.”

(Sutherland-Smith & Dullaghan)

Listen to students.
Students’ perceptions of the likelihood of contract cheating (%)

- Reflection on practicum
- Viva
- Personalised and unique
- In-class task
- Small part of nested task
- Major part of nested task
- Relevant professional skills
- Integrate knowledge/skills vital to programme
- No ‘right’ answer
- Research, analysis and thinking skills
- Series of small graded tasks
- Heavily weighted task
- Short turnaround time

Assessment security: “measures taken to harden assessment against attempts to cheat; this includes approaches to detect and evidence attempts to cheat, as well as approaches to make cheating more difficult.”

(Dawson, forthcoming)
3. You can learn to detect contract cheating
   - Indicators
   - Training
   - Software
Can markers detect contract cheating?
(Dawson & Sutherland-Smith, 2018)

Can training improve detection rates?
(Dawson & Sutherland-Smith, 2019)

Can software improve detection rates?
(Dawson, Sutherland-Smith & Ricksen, in press)


Accuracy at detecting contract cheating (%)

- Not looking for it
  - e.g. Lines 2016; Medway et al 2018

- Looking for it

- Trained to look for it


False positive rate (%)

Not looking for it

e.g. Lines 2016;
Medway et al 2018

Looking for it

Trained to look for it

---


Can software improve marker accuracy at detecting contract cheating? A pilot study of the Turnitin authorship investigate alpha

Phillip Dawson\textsuperscript{a}, Wendy Sutherland-Smith\textsuperscript{a,b}, and Mark Ricksen\textsuperscript{c}

\textsuperscript{a}Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning, Deakin University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia; \textsuperscript{b}School of Psychology, Faculty of Health, Deakin University, Burwood, Australia; \textsuperscript{c}Turnitin LLC, Oakland, CA, USA
Trying to look for contract cheating is a good first step. Most of the indicators of contract cheating were task-specific.


Potential generic indicators of contract cheating

- reflection done poorly
- unusual mistakes
- metadata
- does not address question
- not using materials from class
- strange formatting
- reads as something by a generalist
- wrong task type
HACKING PAPERS: HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL PAPER (EVEN IF YOU NEVER DID THE READING)

One of America's Best Academic Ghostwriters Shares Top Tips & Strategies for YOUR Success

DELEUZIENNE
Training works if you have access to contract cheating assignments

Appendix A. Marker contract cheating detection workshop outline

**Intended learning outcome:** On completion of this workshop, markers should be better able to detect contract cheating in their particular unit/subject.

**Time:** 3 hours.

**Participants:** Experienced markers.

**Space:** Workshop-style room, with markers sharing a table with other markers from the same unit/subject.

**Required materials:** Four assignments per unit/subject, including at least one contract cheating assignment and at least one legitimate student assignment. Assignments are selected based on them being difficult to tell if they are contract cheating or not.

**Pre-work:** Markers to read each assignment and make a preliminary decision about if each is contract cheating or not.

**Workshop agenda**

1. **15 minutes:** Introducing the facilitators, the markers and the workshop

2. **15 minutes:** Markers reflect in groups on the experience of marking contract cheating assignments

3. **4 x 20 minutes:** Each table group discusses each of their assignments for 20 minutes per assignment, focused on deciding if each one is contract cheating or not, and why. Each marker takes notes about potential ‘Indicators of contract cheating’. After a decision has been made, markers are told if that assignment was contract cheating or not. Table groups then discuss and revise their potential ‘Indicators of contract cheating’. Then they move on to the next assignment.

4. **60 minutes:** Marker groups construct a shared ‘Indicators of contract cheating’ list.

5. **10 minutes:** Workshop close; brief reflection and Q & A session; thank participants; collect all copies of assignments and each group’s ‘Indicators of contract cheating’ list.

**Post-workshop:** Facilitators type up each group’s ‘Indicators of contract cheating’ list and email it to that marker group.

Viva had 100% detection rate

(Needs replication before we publish but it’s a good sign)

2020: Authentic online oral assessment - an examination replacement

Concerns about academic integrity and student engagement have been tightened with the rapid COVID-19 induced shift to online teaching and the need to use alternate assessments to that of traditional exams. This session explores an approach to interactive online oral assessment can be used to create engaging, authentic assessment experiences for students. Interactive orals are especially useful in the current COVID-19 context because they can be conducted online and offer a viable alternative to exams. The session will explore examples from the Griffith Business School at Griffith University and data collected from students on academic integrity. The use of evidence-based assessment design has seen benefits in enhanced student engagement, employability and academic integrity in undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Tomorrow! Reg http://taw.fi/30apr2020
‘Cheat-proofing’ every act of assessment is probably impossible and definitely a bad idea.

Focus on securing those acts of assessment that matter to the degree program outcomes.

Focus on developing academic integrity in the others.
Thank you!

Online learning good practice  TEQSA

The prevention of contract cheating in an online environment

Author: Associate Professor Phillip Dawson, Deakin University

Contract cheating refers to students getting someone else to do their assessed work (Lancaster & Clarke, 2017). While the term has become closely associated with students buying custom essays online, contract cheating can occur in any task type, and need not involve a formal contract or payment. In online learning it can be difficult to tell students have contract cheated, because it is hidden; anyone students working, and contract cheating assignments are submitted by the student rather than by the person they are supposed to be for the student. This guide details five myths about contract cheating and offers practical suggestions for how to prevent it through assessment design, detection, and partnerships with students.

Myth 1: Contract cheating is very rare

While the vast majority of students never contract cheat, the rate of contract cheating is high enough to warrant active attention. In one large-scale Australian survey, around 40% of university students surveyed self-reported that they had contract cheated (Bingel, Harper, Bruin, Blas, Wrenn, Rizkand, et al., 2019). The rate of contract cheating appears to be comparable at Australian Non-University Higher Education Providers (NUHEPs), with 7% of NUHEP students surveyed admitting to contract cheating (Bingel et al., 2020). A very different difference between students at the two types of institutions was that NUHEP students surveyed were twice as likely to use commercial cheating services compared to students at universities.

Myth 2: Contract cheating can be ‘designed out’ of assessment

Convincing-sounding arguments are sometimes put forward that contract cheating can be eradicated through assessment design. Approaches like authentic assessment (assessment that represents the real work of the profession or discipline), short summative tasks for labs, and replacing take-home tasks with exams, are common proposed solutions. These approaches do not reduce rates of contract cheating. Students can purchase authentic assessments just as easily as traditional assessments like essays (Bingel et al., 2019). Contract cheating services can now very likely deliver exams (Wahl & Nwosu, 2014). And exams do not protect against contract cheating. If anything, they may be the site of more contract cheating and more unreported contract cheating than take-home assignments (Harper, Bingel, & Rizkand, 2020). However, while assessment design cannot make contract cheating impossible. It can help improve detection rates and make students less likely to

Can training improve marker accuracy at detecting contract cheating? A multi-disciplinary pre-post study

Phillip Dawsona and Wendy Sutherland-Smithb

Slides and resources at: http://philldawson.com/ta-cheating
Three things to take from this presentation

1. Contract cheating is a big problem.
   - Students don’t find it, it finds them.
   - Only a tiny fraction of contract cheating gets detected.

2. We need to balance:
   - Promoting academic integrity
   - Assuring assessment security

3. You can learn to detect contract cheating:
   - Indicators
   - Training
   - Software

Slides and resources at:
http://philldawson.com/ta-cheating
Webinar Session feedback

With thanks from your hosts

Professor Geoff Crisp,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President Academic
University of Canberra
g.crisp[at]canberra.edu.au

Dr Mathew Hillier,
Macquarie University
mathew.hillier[at]gmail.com

Recording available
http://transformingassessment.com

Next session 30 April 2020

Authentic online oral assessment –
an examination replacement
Danielle Logan, Popi Sotiriadou and Rae Jobst (Griffith University, Australia)

Register http://taw.fi/30apr2020