

Chapter 19

Cheating in Exams with Technology

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ABSTRACT

Traditional methods of detection may no longer be wholly successful in fully preventing cheating in examinations. New strategies need to be considered and employed to better manage the advancement of technology use for illegitimate purposes. This paper investigates technology used to cheat in examinations, how such cheats are carried out, and how to prevent such methods of cheating. To show the full extent of the progression of cheating over the years, this report also documents some of the traditional methods of cheating. The devices which are used to cheat are investigated to see how they can provide an advantage to those who are taking examinations.

1. INTRODUCTION

The word technology means to study a certain discipline and it comes from the Greek word *technologia* meaning craft. Technology dates back to prehistoric times, when stone was used to make fire. It comes from the use of natural resources in order to make something useful. Cheating is an act of lying, deception, fraud, trickery, imposture, or imposition employed to create an unfair advantage

often at the expense of others. Cheating implies the breaking of rules. Cheating can take place at most levels of society including workplaces, sports and government. A common area for cheating to arise is in examinations (Broeckelman-Post, 2008). Cheating in exams has been occurring since the advent of written examinations but there are new concerns regarding the adoption of technological devices in the modern cheating process (Martin, 1994, 2005). Attempts to gain an advantage are not a new and modern phenomenon or indeed one

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which educational institutions have been unaware of since test and examinations were first employed (Harper, 2006; Bugeja, 2004; Woods, 2004).

One of the earliest studies carried out into cheating activities by students and the means by which Universities could attempt to combat the problem was conducted by Bowers (1964). The years between 1992 and 2002 were found to highlight the continuing problem of cheating behaviour among university studies and pointed to substantial increases throughout the latter years of the decade and into the new millennium. The rise in attempted cheating appears to be directly related to a number of important aspects such as the need to succeed in an ever increasingly competitive world and the attitudes which this increased completion elicits. In a recent study investigating attitudes toward cheating behaviour it was found that there was a significant age difference between those who viewed it as acceptable behaviour and those who did not. Younger people increasingly see cheating in general as a viable way to get ahead (Etter et al., 2006; Phillips & Horton, 2000). The advancement of technologies has broadened the ways by which people can achieve the goal of cheating and as far back as back as 2002 it was predicted that it would not be long before we became aware of students using their cell phones to search the web during an exam (Walker, 2002). A U.S. survey found that:

- 80% of the higher achieving secondary school students admitted to cheating in an exam.
- 51% of secondary school students did not believe cheating was wrong
- 95% of secondary school students who admitted cheating said that they had not been caught
- 75% of college students admitted cheating in an exam
- 90% of college students did not believe cheaters would be caught.

- 85% of college students said cheating was necessary to get ahead (Kerkvliet et al., 1999).

The traditional methods of cheating no longer meet the needs of those trying to cheat in exams. The reason for this is that more information is now required for an exam. Technology has made cheating in exams simply easier. This also serves as a temptation for students who might otherwise have been honest when taking the exam. There are also a multitude of sites with step by step instructions and different techniques for cheating (Bambi et al., 2009; Cooper et al., 2010). Examples include schoolsucks.com, cheathouse.com, EZ write.com, Geniuspaper.com, papertopics.com, http://www.teachopolis.org/justice/cheating/cheating_how_to.htm and <http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-cheat-on-a-test>. As technology advances, examination boards are finding it harder to keep up with the cheaters (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001; McCabe, 2003).

The amount of penalties handed out for pupils trying to cheat in their GCSEs and A-levels by smuggling in mobile phones in 2009 was over 4,400. This was a 6% rise from the previous year (Williams, 2010). Such increases are seen across the board with all of the techniques used to cheat involved. This in turn has prompted examination boards, schools and moderators to implement measures which will reduce the amount of cheating. This has become increasingly difficult due to the amount of technology available. Devices to stop such technology being used to cheat can be expensive and hard to implement in schools (Minch, 2004; Tatli et al., 2005).

Over 90% of all 11 to 21 years olds have access to a mobile phone and such phones are seen as “a vital tool for young people’s social lives”. Access to a personal computer was marginally lower than for mobile phones but still high and the teenagers surveyed here used both their mobile phones and personal computers to surf the web and e-mail (Haste, 2005). The importance of these

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