TEN YEARS OF CONTRACT CHEATING

DR. THOMAS LANCASTER

Keynote Presentation at
WA Forum on Contract Cheating
Thursday 13 October 2016
CONTRACT CHEATING

SCENE SETTING
Contract cheating

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Contract cheating is a form of academic dishonesty in which students get others to complete their coursework for them by putting it out to tender.[1][2][3][4]


My major focus for the past 10 years
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@DrLancaster
#contractcheating
With thanks to

ROBERT CLARKE

The world’s foremost contract cheating detective!

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-20298237
“The game is afoot”

The Adventure of the Abbey Grange

Arthur Conan Doyle
DETECTION ALONE IS NOT THE SOLUTION

https://www.flickr.com/photos/mccaughan/13633616994
CONTRACT CHEATING

TIME LINE

https://www.flickr.com/photos/mseeley1/17230241660
“The one charm of the past is that it is in past”

Oscar Wilde
The time line for my ten year journey exploring contract cheating
the company was started last fall by two brothers who hope to grow rich doing other people's homework assignments. Since then, they say, they have sold almost 10,000 term papers.
"[the company’s] original work is written by moonlighting faculty members, graduate students, technical writers and others."
all of the writers are college graduates and most have master's or Ph.D.'s
"the majority of students who buy from the company don't plagiarize. What they purchase is a photo static copy and they must retype it before it can be handed in. In the retyping they can throw in their own material."
Market in Term Papers Is Booming

New York Times

July 10, 1971

A university newspaper
November 23, 1971
Advertising found inside a university newspaper
#contractcheating – as seen in the 1970s
“Class would be at 9 a.m. Papers were promised for before class, and students would wait on the front steps of the building. The guy would come and call [the students’] names, handing out papers in front of the building!”
For years, educators have known about fraternity files and the exchange of papers among students. The assistance rendered by relatives and friends in the preparing of assignments has sometimes been met with academic oversight and even acquiescence.

The issues associated with contract cheating date back to the 1950s (and earlier)
Many of the academy integrity issues facing education are the same issues.
CONTRACT CHEATING

MY HISTORY
I found the assignment that I’d set on Rentacoder.
Rentacoder is no longer operational in its 2003 form, but there are other similar outsourcing sites around.
“I can't see any solution to that for universities, where the work is a commissioned and written new work.”

Wendy Sutherland-Smith
[Turnitin] failed to find papers written to order.

A paper written to order for Faber at $354 was immediately made available on the company Web site at half the price.

Another paper failed to arrive in time for the deadline.


"[Authorship attribution] techniques could be used to see if students have written a piece of work that they claim to have written. One way of doing this would be build up an archive of work from a given student over time."

Concern has been expressed that documents can be plagiarised by converting them into a foreign language and then reconverting them into English. There are services on the Web, such as babelfish.altavista.com that can do such translation.

Research work is ongoing into essay spinning and back translation.

The standard of purchased essays has improved. Technology developments of further concern.
CONTRACT CHEATING

THE PAST TEN YEARS
Over half of the 236 cheaters have previously requested between two and seven pieces of work. Clarke, R. and Lancaster, T., “Eliminating the Successor to Plagiarism? Identifying the usage of contract cheating sites”, in Proceedings of 2nd International Plagiarism Conference, Gateshead, United Kingdom, June 19-21, 2006

24.5% of EssayBay postings analysed from the Business discipline
Over 50% of students willing to cheat if risk of detection is low


Purchased assignments can be cheap.

Average Freelancer academic purchase of $101 USD ($133 AUD)

From a sample of 336 outsourced jobs
Purchased assignments can be completed quickly.

"For every contractor awarded a job, there are an average of 10 others offering to complete it."

Purchased assignments can be of high quality!

Enhanced marketing funnels

Writers now operating their own individual businesses.
Cheating has moved offline
CONTRACT CHEATING

THE NEXT TEN YEARS
What can we predict for the future?
Increased specialisation of services
Emotional marketing edge
Australian test finds robot essay assessors on par with human teachers

Contract cheating services guaranteeing marks

The Register
December 1, 2015

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2015/12/01/software_essay_marking_equal_to_human_essay_marking
Use of PR Companies To Press Agendas
Contract cheating sites presenting their offer as legitimate
“I was not predicting the future
I was trying to prevent it”

Ray Bradbury
Need to channel authentic assessment, just like they do in art.
Reframe the language of cheating?

plagiarism        copying

contract cheating  ?????
Work with students to promote academic integrity and develop solutions.

http://www.dusa.org.au/Advocacy-(1)/Contract-Cheating
International Day of Action Against Contract Cheating
October 19, 2016

#defeatthecheat

#excelwithintegrity

I don't contract cheat because ... I'm smarter than that!

#defeatthecheat  #excelwithintegrity  #ucsd
The challenge of *defeating* contract cheating is one that we can achieve.
thank you

#contractcheating
#defeatthecheat
#excelwithintegrity
References For My Main Contract Cheating Publications


A selection of the talks archived on my SlideShare account (the slides from today's keynote presentation are also available on SlideShare)

http://www.slideshare.net/ThomasLancaster
Contact Dr. Thomas Lancaster

Available to support contract cheating activities, deliver staff training, present research seminars and generally promote academic integrity

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Twitter: @DrLancaster

General Resources:
http://contractcheating.com

Contract Cheating Special Interest Group
(originally supported by the Higher Education Academy):
https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=CONTRACTCHEATING