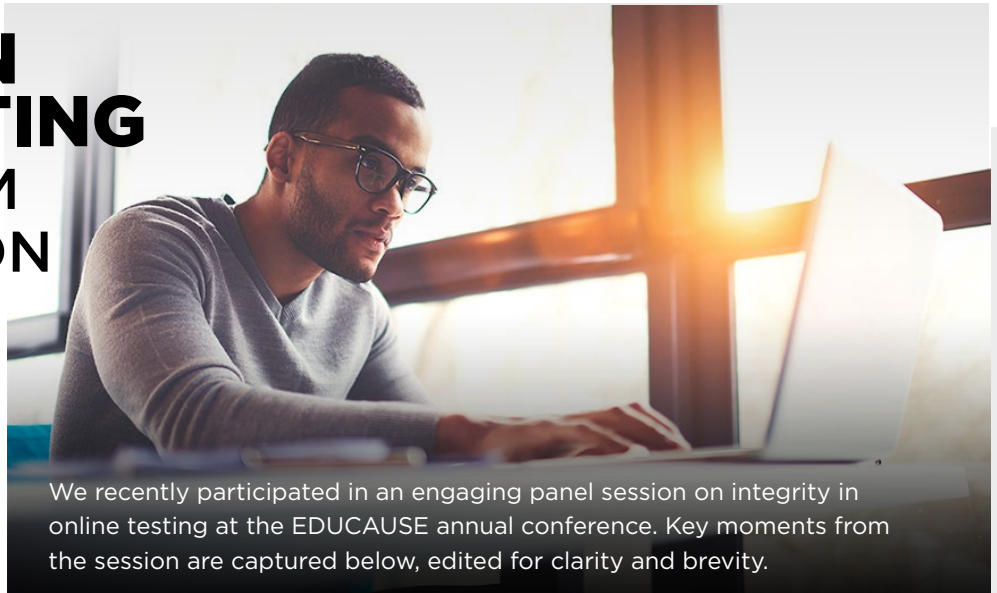


# INTEGRITY IN ONLINE TESTING EXCERPTS FROM A PANEL SESSION

A Discussion  
about Challenges  
& Solutions



We recently participated in an engaging panel session on integrity in online testing at the EDUCAUSE annual conference. Key moments from the session are captured below, edited for clarity and brevity.

## PANELISTS



**Jeremy Bond**  
Central Michigan University  
Interim Director of eLearning



**James Frazee**  
San Diego State University  
Sr. Academic Technology Officer  
& Director of Instructional  
Technology Services



**Jackie Crouch**  
University of Colorado -  
Colorado Springs  
Instructional Technologist,  
Canvas Trainer, & Quality Matters  
Certified Peer Reviewer



**Arie Sowers**  
Respondus, Inc.  
Senior Product Specialist

## HOW OUR INSTITUTION GOT STARTED WITH ONLINE TESTING

**Jackie:** We first moved to online testing within the nursing department, about nine years ago. There's so much content covered in those classes that devoting three-hour class periods to giving paper tests was problematic. ... But it was a snow day that ultimately forced the issue. I got a call from an instructor saying, "I was supposed to give a test in class today. Can you help me get it online?" And I said, "Sure, no problem!"

**Jeremy:** Even though students were doing coursework online, they were taking exams the old-fashioned way. This means they were either visiting the university testing center, or students were finding their own proctors at other institutions, libraries, etc. ... Then our testing center closed - a "budget inefficiency" - and students were kind of objecting to the idea of having to go and be proctored elsewhere. ... They were doing all their studying online, but had to drive three towns over to take a test while a stranger watched them.

## PROBLEMS WITH ONLINE TESTING

**Arie:** You hear stories about students who pay others to take tests for them. Then there are the students who copy the test questions and share them with other students. ... The most common concern is students simply searching the internet for answers.

**Jackie:** The close proximity of students taking exams in a classroom can cause problems. ... The use of mobile devices to look up answers is always a concern.

## CHOOSING AN ONLINE PROCTORING SOLUTION

**Jeremy:** We started to take a hard look at what was available to us... What we were finding was that even in the rare cases where proctors were witnessing behavior they thought was suspicious, too many of these cases ended with the faculty member – who is ultimately responsible for the decision – saying, “Well, I didn’t see the cheating myself,” and then letting the student off. Some of the solutions we looked at were replicating this model, where a stranger is proctoring the student. We dismissed some options that just seemed to reproduce this problem.

The big outcome with Respondus Monitor was that it restored what I call the natural arrangement of things. The educator has everything needed to observe and make decisions about whether cheating has occurred. No, the video and data aren’t in real time, but that’s actually better in a number of ways.

## BUDGETING, AND WHO PAYS FOR IT

**Arie:** For online proctoring, it generally comes down to whether the institution pays for it, or the student. The higher the cost, the more often it gets passed along to the student.

**James:** In the California State University system and at San Diego State, our mission is all about access. Anything you put between students and their access to resources will be a challenge if there’s a cost associated with it. Any fees we charge have to go through our Campus Fee Advisory Committee, which is made up of students and university stakeholders. They’re reluctant to impose any new fees. That’s what drove us in this particular direction.

**James:** We fund Respondus Monitor out of our own ITS budget, just so faculty have more options ... The cost was affordable. A drop in the bucket relative to other enterprise class technologies on our campus.

**Jeremy:** Funding of this is not nearly as challenging as funding just about any other technology I can think of... Ultimately, we were able to centralize it. ... It’s paid for and treated as an enterprise solution. Fortunately, it’s not such a significant line item that it gets revisited in a way that others might.

## ROLLOUT TIPS AND ADOPTION

**James:** With all the services and tools we support, we have two main goals: they must be simple to use, and they must be convenient. Faculty want to think about their content, not the tool or service being used. ... Probably one of the most important things is to provide faculty with lots of examples, and share success stories. Success breeds success. If faculty see others who are using tools and having success, they are more likely to try it themselves.

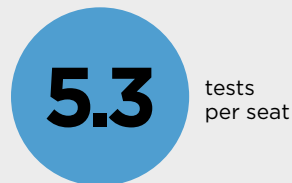
**Jackie:** The college for which we initially purchased Respondus Monitor began to use it. They were happy with it. Then word began to spread on campus that this was available. Other people started approaching the faculty resource center and saying, “Hey, can I use that for my online tests?” So, it became much more widely adopted. Now it’s really going like wild.

**James:** Simplicity and convenience were central in our decision. It needed to, first and foremost, be integrated within the learning management system. We didn’t want instructors or students to have to leave the learning management system. ... San Diego State had already been using Respondus LockDown Browser which prevents students from doing screen captures, or going to other websites. It keeps them literally locked into the exam. So, it was a natural progression for us to begin using Respondus Monitor.

**Jackie:** We were also already using LockDown Browser for proctored exams on campus. Then, one of our colleges with a fully online degree program began requiring students to arrange for proctored exams to meet accreditation guidelines. We had students across the nation and in other parts of the world taking these courses. Students having to arrange for a proctor was problematic – plus the cost, which was coming in at about \$30 per test for each student. ... So we made the decision to use Respondus Monitor for that program. It worked very well, the department was happy, and soon word about the tool began to spread around campus.

**Jackie:** For us it comes out of student tech fees, seeing as how it is an enterprise solution. Again, as Jeremy said, it is a nominal cost compared to most technology tools we are using. ... Last year at UCCS, we had 171 courses using Respondus Monitor. Again, its use is voluntary by faculty. We used about 3,200 seats and averaged about 5.3 tests per seat. On a cost basis, it came in about 46 cents per test session. That’s very cost-effective for the institution, and faculty are very pleased with the solution itself.

### Respondus Monitor Average Use + Costs at the University of Colorado - Colorado Springs



**James:** Provide faculty boilerplate text they can use in their syllabus... The tone and language you use is super important. In some cases, you can frame the use of these tools as a program or accreditation requirement – this can remove the accusatory, adversarial and negative tone. Focus on promoting student success.

Many students really appreciate the use of these tools because they work hard and don’t want other students gaming the system and cutting corners. You can emphasize that point by saying, “students are asking me to ensure these tests are fair. This is one of the strategies I’m going to employ. Here’s why...”

With this kind of technology, you need to have a practice test to make sure there’s no technical issues. You want this to happen in a low-stakes environment, before the first real exam. That’s essential.

Finally, I think it’s important to avoid holding online courses to a higher standard than our face to face courses. That’s a constant struggle.