

Respondus Preventing Cheating During Online Exams

Online examinations are now commonplace in higher education and K-12 domains, which can lead to concerns about exam integrity. Respondus, headquartered in Redmond, WA, is a leading developer of assessment tools and applications that help institutions prevent cheating during online exams, no matter where they are taken. “Even in proctored environments such as testing centers or classrooms, it’s relatively easy for students to cheat during online exams,” says David Smetters, CEO and founder of Respondus. “Students can quickly open another browser window and search the Internet for answers. Or they can copy exam questions and email them to their friends,” he adds.

Eight years ago the company introduced the application LockDown Browser, a custom browser that prevents students from printing, copying, going to other URLs or accessing other applications during an online exam. It essentially locks the student into the exam until it’s submitted for grading. Today, LockDown Browser is a core technology at 800 universities and school districts, used with over 20 million assessments annually. Through OEM partnerships, LockDown Browser technology is additionally licensed by national testing centers and homework platforms such as Prometric, Pearson MyLab, WebAssign, and others.

Instructors are sometimes hesitant to use online examinations because of integrity concerns. One of Respondus’ clients, East Carolina University addresses this issue with LockDown Browser. “LockDown Browser plays a key part in our online testing strategy and gives instructors peace of mind when giving online tests. It is easy to use, for both the instructors and students,” says Cindy Bowers, the Blackboard administrator at East Carolina University.

When the students take online exams in non-proctored environments, such as from home or work, entirely new challenges arise, explains Smetters. “You want to ensure that the right person is taking the exam and is not accessing unauthorized materials or devices during the exam,” he says. To address such matters, the

“**We help institutions transition to online testing by addressing the issues of integrity**”

company introduced Respondus Monitor in 2012, which is an enhancement to the LockDown Browser application. Respondus Monitor uses a student’s webcam to record the assessment session, making it possible for students to take online exams in non-proctored environments, at any time of the day. Since students know they are being recorded, they are less likely to use unauthorized resources, such as a phone or second computer. Instructors also have instant access to recorded videos, and can view data that points to potential problems.

Respondus Monitor runs in the cloud using AWS, and has the ability to support thousands of users simultaneously. Its licensing model allows instructors to use it with as many

exams as they like, with no concern about increased costs. Palm Beach State College, another client of the company, uses Respondus Monitor with their online courses. “It is extremely easy to use and eliminates the problems relating to collaboration and cheating in online tests. Plus it’s affordable, and our students don’t incur a fee,” reports Sid Beitler, Director of eLearning at Palm Beach State College.

LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor integrate seamlessly with an institution’s Learning Management System, such as Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle or Brightspace. A key part of the company’s strategy is to make its technology perform as a built-in tool of the LMS, which helps increase the rate of adoption by faculty. [UR](#)



David Smetters,
CEO & Founder