

# ASCILITE 2023

People, Partnerships and Pedagogies

## Understanding the temptation to cheat in online exams

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Online proctored exams have become a common experience for a significant number of higher education students. The rationale behind employing online surveillance revolves around the belief that these measures are essential for upholding academic integrity. However, discussions on assessment integrity often focus on comparing the motivations, conditions, and values of cheaters and non-cheaters. This binary approach potentially oversimplifies the complex nature of human motivation and behavior (Henderson et al., 2023). Cheating is influenced by a multitude of factors and motivations that can either encourage or discourage such behaviors (Brimble, 2016; Jenkins et al., 2022; Noorbehbahani et al., 2022). Merely comparing the two groups may overlook the intricacies that push students from one category to another. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on an underexplored group: students who were tempted to cheat but chose not to. These students can be viewed in two ways. Firstly, they represent a group at risk of cheating, necessitating research to develop targeted strategies supporting their integrity decisions. Secondly, they exhibit integrity despite the temptation, potentially offering insights into the nuanced 'tipping points' that go beyond existing binary comparisons.

This Pecha Kucha reports on a large-scale study conducted within a single institution that explores the implications of online exams and the integrity behaviours and motivations of three groups of students: those who did not cheat and were not tempted to do so, those who did not cheat but who were tempted to cheat, and those who cheated. The data draws on an anonymous and voluntary student survey conducted in both semester 1 and semester 2 of 2022. Institutional research ethics approval was granted. The data comprises 11,333 fully completed surveys and offers interesting, and sometimes counter-intuitive findings which can help guide institutional responses.

**Broad insights will be offered in the Pecha Kucha presentation.** This abstract offers preliminary findings based on ongoing analysis regarding the 28 motivating factors identified by the students that encouraged or discouraged cheating behaviours.

**Factors that encouraged cheating:** Both the tempted and cheated groups identified similar motivating factors, such as the fear of failure and the financial burden of repeating a course. Surprisingly, the students who cheated chose fewer encouraging factors than those who were tempted but did not cheat. The importance of these motivations was similar for both groups.

**Factors that discouraged cheating:** Regarding factors that discouraged cheating, all three groups (not tempted, tempted, and cheated) were asked their opinions. The non-cheating group listed more reasons and considered them more significant compared to the other two groups. The tempted group selected fewer reasons than the non-tempted group but more than the cheated group. However, the tempted and cheated groups rated the importance of these factors similarly.

The Pecha Kucha will expand on the above and comment on some of these somewhat counterintuitive results.

Keywords: academic integrity, cheating motivations, online exams, online proctoring, temptation

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