

Contract Cheating in Research

Associate Professor Cath Ellis
Associate Dean (Education), Arts & Social Sciences

Ms Bronwyn Greene
Director, UNSW Integrity

A student procures a third party (who knows about and benefits from the transaction) to produce academic work (usually but not always assessable work) on their behalf and then submits it to an educational institution as if it were their own work.



PhD/MRes Candidacy



Segments of Contract Cheating Problem

1 Friends and Family

- Parents
- Girl/boyfriend
- Mates

2 Bespoke writing sites

- Two-sided markets
- Writing purchase sites

3 Legitimate learning sites

- Discussion sites
- Tutorial sites
- •File sharing sites

4 Legitimate nonlearning sites

- Online labour markets
- Auction sites
- •File sharing sites

5 Paid exam takers

- Live (imposters)
- Virtual (via a phone line)

6 Pre-written essay banks

 Ready written on popular topics



Anonymous tip off

Thanks

Advertisement posted on US freelancer site Hi am a PhD student in the area of and my thesis title is about and now I want a professional writer to help me in writing the entire thesis. I need full time commitment and full professional writer in the thesis area. PLEASE DO NOT MAKE A BID IF YOU ARE NOT IN THE AND IF YOU ARE NOT EXPERTS IN THE THESIS WRITING.



About the Client

(4.32) 14 reviews

Australia

02:06 AM

97 Jobs Posted 49% Hire Rate, 14 Open Jobs

\$2,348 Total Spent 62 Hires, 2 Active

\$9.63/hr Avg Hourly Rate Paid 16 Hours

Member Since May 26, 2014

About the Client

** * * (3.71) 31 reviews

Australia

06:12 AM

114 Jobs Posted 53% Hire Rate, 1 Open Job

\$7k+ Total Spent 84 Hires, O Active

\$8.54/hr Avg Hourly Rate Paid 19 Hours

Member Since May 26, 2014







Anonymous tip off

Advertisement posted on US freelancer site

Investigation commenced with sequestering evidence

Computer, emails, lab books & physical materials

170 evidence items logged

Procurements

37 different freelancers used

22 professionals within research field

59 different names found in metadata

Across 11 Countries

Included fabricated & falsified data

Contracted Outputs

- 4 PhD Thesis Chapters
- 4 Annual Progress Review Reports
- 1 published book chapter
- 4 submitted journal manuscripts
- 2 Conference Presentations
- 3 published conference papers



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Writing purchase sites



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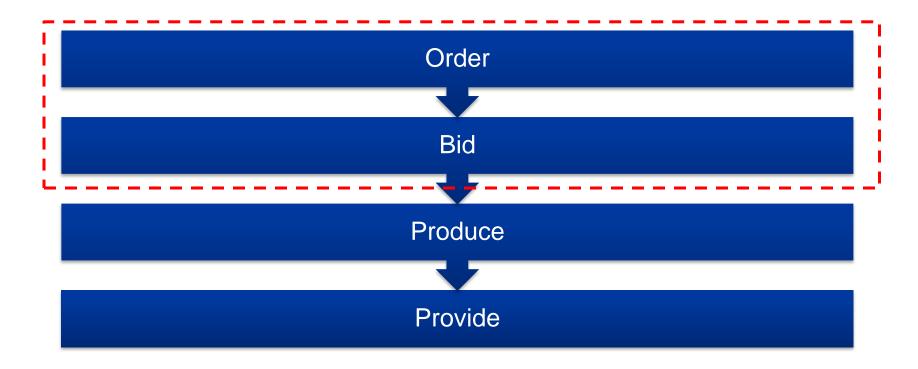
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What we know about these RSS orders

WE KNOW

That someone (a student) has been motivated to place this order

Roughly when the order was placed (but not precisely)

That money has been committed for the work to be done

WE DON'T KNOW

Who has placed the order or where they are studying

How much it cost

Whether or not the order has been filled

Whether or not the work has been submitted at an institution for assessment



Method

Harvested orders from 260 feeds, n=>500,000

Word search: eg. 'doctoral', 'dissertation', 'masters', 'research'

Selected a representative sample

Organised into a timeline of typical PhD activities



Proposal





Research Training



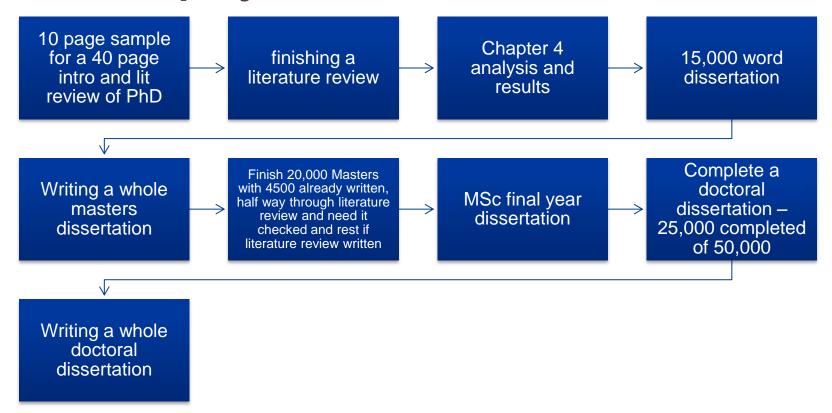


Research project...





Research project continued...

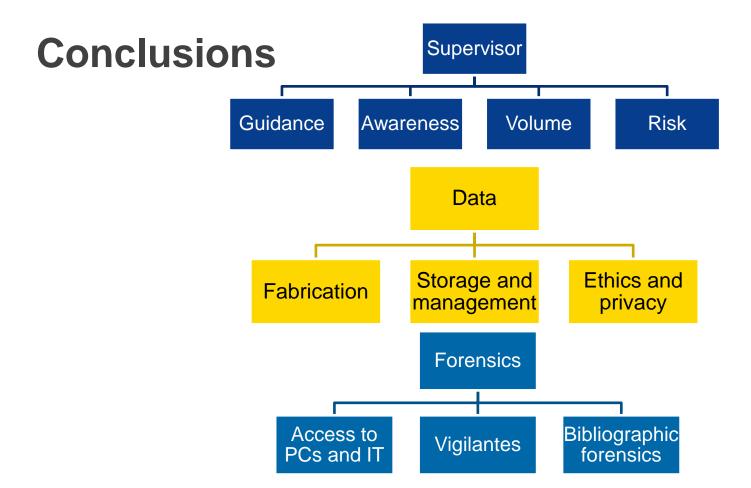




But wait, there's more...

Nominating research mentor for an award







Take aways

