



Security and Threat Update

Exam Security Measures and Special Investigations

2025

Security Trends

High number of deliveries of exams via online proctoring (OP)

- COVID
- Convenience
- Accessibility

Security realities

- We do not control the environment
- Unlimited time and resources
- Webcam limitations
 - Field of view between 50-70/aspect ratio 16:9
- An illicit industry now exists to aid errant candidates



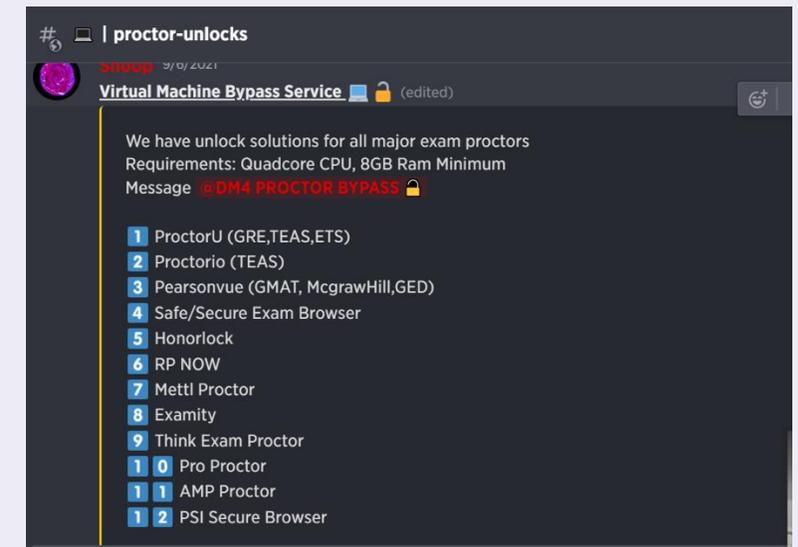
Exam Security Threats – Online Proctored

Threats to online proctored examinations

- Content theft/sale
- Proxy testing
- Increased security risks

No exam provider controls the environment

- Sophisticated illicit enterprises
- Creative and knowledgeable
- Aggressive and persuasive marketing
- Worldwide reach
- Impacts the entire industry



Exam Security Threats – Test Centers

“Traditional” collusion narrower in scope

- Small-scale: one or two TAs collude with candidates
- Larger-scale: control of one or more test centers

Threats to exam programs

- More limited and localized

Detection and remedial action

- Web monitoring
- Forensics
- Secret shops
- Law enforcement/intelligence techniques*



Test Centers – A Key Channel

Higher level of security

- Proctors on site

Threats to physical locations

- Errant candidates
- Insiders
- Organized criminal enterprises

Security realities

- Threat is smaller in scope
- Risk profile – can impact multiple clients

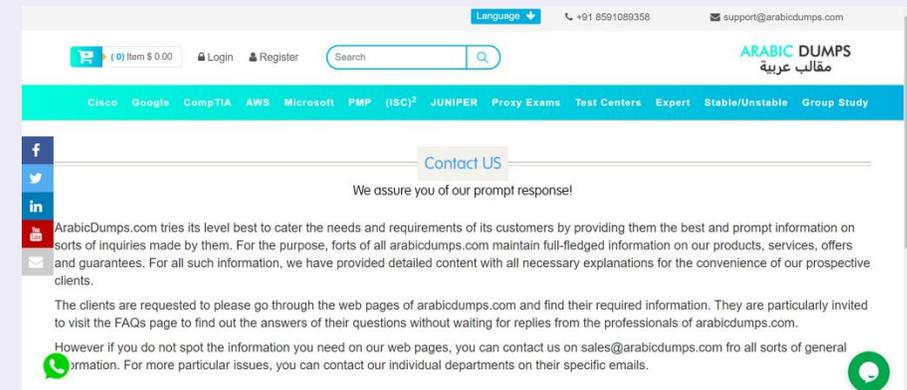
Compromise of test centers?



Threats to Exam Security (#1) – Content Theft

Subjects employ technical or physical means to harvest content

- Uses:
 - Personal – subject uses stolen content to pass
 - Instructional – subject distributes content to students
 - Commercial- subject sells content to any candidates who pay
- Commercial
 - Materials sold on “dumps” websites
 - Profitable illicit industry
 - Impact value of certifications



Threats to Exam Security (#2) – Proxy Testing

Physical means

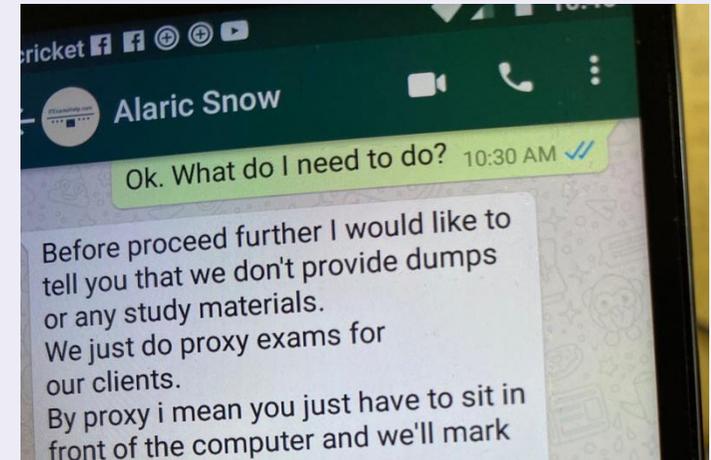
- Proxy tester arrives at the site, impersonates candidate*
- Proxy tester sits off camera, avoids room scans
- Proxy mills**

Electronic means

- Remote access software

Marketing

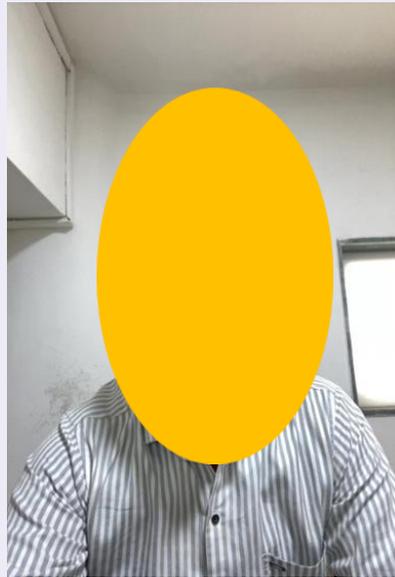
- Via social media (websites, chat groups, individual profiles)
- Direct messaging of likely candidates (LinkedIn and Facebook)
- Gaming platforms (Discord, Guilded)
- Social context – Friends or colleagues



Proxy Mill



Client 1



Client 2



Client 3



Conventional Exam Security Response

Traditional approach

- Tip Lines
- Psychometrics
- Forensic investigations
- Secret shops

Data analysis

- Understand that it happened, but not always how
- Usual remedies – revocation and bans



New Threats New Responses

Searching for a solution

- Anonymous subjects
- Remote, often outside U.S. jurisdiction
- Consumers of illicit services are our candidates



Conceptualizing the threat

- Proxy testing = wire fraud
- Content harvesting/resale = IP theft
- Broader criminal activities



A Solution: Law Enforcement Model

Criminal investigative procedures

- Refinement of intake
- Use of sensitive techniques (HUMINT)
 - Informants
 - Online undercover operations
 - In-person undercover operations
 - Intelligence collection*
- Candidate interviews
- Technical evidence and intelligence*
- **Joint investigations with law enforcement agencies**

These methods do not replace traditional measures



Errant Training Providers

Training schools

- A small number operate outside the rules
- Assisted misconduct

Techniques

- Distribution of exam content
 - Data forensics
- Proxy testing
 - Tips
 - Human Sources
 - NTL techniques
 - Greeter/Proctor capabilities
 - Undercover operations
 - Data forensics

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- Took my Azure AZ-140 exam on 27/Dec/2022 and passed with a good score. Totally 47 questions, including 1 case study with 6 questions + 33 questions + ...
- Wrote the SNCF 300-710 exam online recently. 61 questions, no Simulation/LAB questions, only one Drag and Drop question about standby Cisco FMC, few n...

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Pushing the Boundaries

Advanced techniques and technology

- Artificial intelligence (AI)
- Better utilization of data we already gather from candidate interactions
 - Registration
 - Check-in
 - During exam

Expanding the scope of traditional and law enforcement methods

- Geographic growth
- Investments in security professionals – other disciplines





Questions and Discussion