Assessing in the online environment

Online assessment, or ‘e-assessment’ is rapidly becoming part of our assessment landscape in universities. Increasingly we see online assessment used for a variety of purposes including:

- online quizzes that help students monitor their progress, check their understanding of key concepts, and help to prepare them for formal assessment tasks
- online discussion forums, wikis and blogs that enable students to discuss and debate key issues, develop understanding, undertake group work
- e-portfolios that enable students to progressively showcase artefacts, learning outcomes and reflections on achievements
- formal examinations conducted in invigilated conditions that contain options for multiple choice, true/false, short answer and ordering and matching questions
- digital submission, marking and return of assignments
- monitoring of academic integrity through the use of plagiarism detection software, Turnitin.

While clearly there are great advantages to e-assessment, particularly in relation to automated marking, there are a number of pitfalls and concerns, including:

- Can we be sure about the identity of the student?
- Will any students be disadvantaged through issues of access?
- What if there are computer crashes? Do we have a risk management strategy?
Web resources

*Online assessment*, University of Melbourne

This site provides useful general discussion about the key issues when considering online assessment.


*Online assessment*, University of Technology Sydney

This site provides very useful information about online examinations, including a case study within a Law context, and assessing online discussions, including a case study in facilitating and assessing online debates.