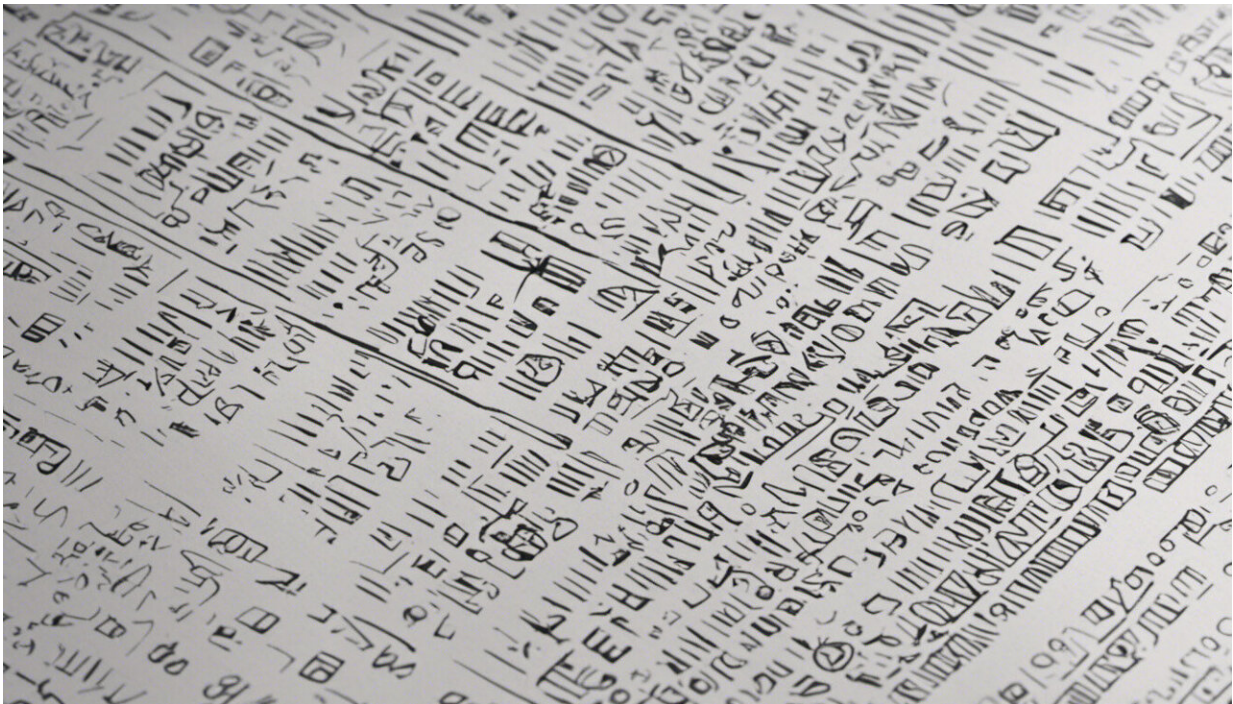


# Students are using 'smart' spy technology to cheat in exams

May 13 2016, by Ritesh Chugh

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Students at a medical college in Thailand have been [caught using spy cameras](#) linked to smartwatches to cheat during exams. They used wireless spycams in eyeglasses to capture exam questions, transmit them to associates elsewhere and receive responses through linked smartwatches.

But the entrance exam in question was cancelled after the plot was discovered and Arthit Ourairat, the rector of Rangsit University, [posted pictures](#) of the hi-tech [cheating](#) equipment on his Facebook page.

The cheating attempt has already been compared to Hollywood's classic spy dramas but it shows how easily such high-tech devices are available to those who seek to gain an unfair advantage in educational pursuits.

Unfortunately, it's a problem that will only get worse when devices such as smartglasses become cheaper and more readily available.

Smartglasses such as Google Glass have the capability to take photos, send information and also display information on the lens itself, eliminating the need to connect to a smartwatch.

## **Smartwatch ban**

It was around this time last year that universities globally started [banning](#) , or at least exploring a ban on, smartwatches in exams.

Smartwatches are considered an [aid to cheating](#) in exams because they give easy access to stored text and images, language translation, mathematical calculations and internet access.



Spy camera glasses used by the exam cheats. Credit: Arthit Ouraira/Facebook

Subsequent bans on smartwatches were also introduced by [school boards](#) for [Year 12 exams](#) in Australia.

But a blanket ban on all watches – traditional or smart – could be on the horizon, especially because it is difficult and impractical for exam invigilators to differentiate between the two in an exam environment.

## **Other gadgets**

It's not just smartwatches we need to worry about. A plethora of hi-tech cheating gadgets exist that would also not look out of place in a James

Bond or Mission Impossible film.

These are devices such as special glasses with a built-in transmitter and a [separate wireless earpiece](#), aimed at establishing a two-way secretive audio communication between people during exams.

There is a [device](#) marketed as a [Cheating Watch](#) that can store PDF, Word and other documents. But it also has a super-fast emergency button that locks other buttons and displays only the time when approached by any suspecting exam invigilator.

Many [other devices](#) are offered for covert cheating in exams through wireless audio transmission.

There is even an [Invisible Watch](#) that appears to display nothing when the watch is switched on. But when viewed with special glasses sold with the watch, the screen becomes visible and you can see any uploaded content, such as your exam cheat notes.

### **An open market**

Before you criticise me for giving away details of these devices, I should point out that there is a very open marketplace where they are being spruiked and sold as gadgets to aid cheating in exams. They are not hard to find.

Similar devices are also being sold on Amazon and eBay, companies that appear to claim no ethical responsibility for what is being sold on their platforms. Prices range from as little as A\$40 up to A\$600, depending on the features.

Although these devices could be used for legitimate purposes, the marketing of such gadgets to students for cheating in exams is an issue

that is plaguing [educational institutions](#).

Globally, educational institutions abhor the erosion of academic integrity and want students who are smart with gadgetry – not smart-cheaters. The dilemma facing exam administrators is deciding which devices to ban and how.

Similar to the ban on mobile phones in exams, any devices capable of storing, transmitting, receiving and displaying digital information should also be banned.

So, as a starting point, a ban on watches – traditional and smart – for now is the way forward.

In order to eliminate the problem of differentiating between watches in an exam environment, some [Australian universities](#) have already implemented bans on all wristwatches. Others across Australia and the world should follow suit.

As newer surreptitious technologies emerge, educational institutions will have to come up with better plans to combat these new ways of cheating, and devise solutions that could range from [banning devices](#) to [scanning for radio signals](#) as was done using drones in an [exam](#) in China!

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