



White paper

Online testing with remote proctoring

Benefits and challenges in a digitalised world



Foreword

The question universities ask about admissions and other high-stakes exams has changed over the past four years. It is no longer “should we digitalise the exam?” It is “under what conditions can we still trust the result?”

This shift was not brought about by the pandemic, but by generative artificial intelligence. The overwhelming majority of students now report using it, and the line between a legitimate aid and undisclosed misconduct has moved faster than institutions have managed to write rules for. The answer, here and abroad, is a return to supervised examination.

But a return to supervision does not mean a return to the lecture hall. An invigilator in a room sees the room; they do not see the screen, the processes running on the computer, or a device that can prompt a candidate without anyone noticing. The decisive difference today is therefore not between a face-to-face and an online exam, but between an exam whose conduct is documented and evidenced, and one where all that can be relied on is the invigilator’s impression.

This is where online testing with remote proctoring is at its strongest. And it loses none of what institutions turned to it for in the first place: no travelling, no lecture-hall capacity limits, and faster results.

Scio has been actively involved in standardised testing since the 1990s. We developed the ScioLink platform during the Covid-19 pandemic, and 151,000 online exams have since been administered through it; 10 university faculties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia have held their entrance examinations via ScioLink.

This document presents an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of online testing with remote proctoring. We do not avoid the questions this solution raises – privacy and data protection, comparability of results, and equality of opportunity. The first section describes what has changed, the second compares testing systems and explains how remote proctoring works, the third addresses the burning questions of online testing, and the last offers recommendations for institutions considering the transition.

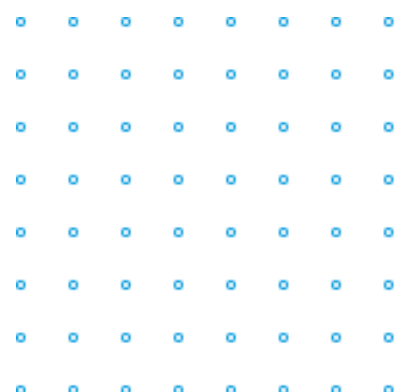


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Section 1

Digitalisation of education

Where we are in the digitalisation of education



Where we are in the digitalisation

Digitalisation of education has stopped being a trend and become infrastructure

The use of digital and online technologies in education is nothing new. Global investment in EdTech (educational technology) reached roughly \$7 billion in 2019 and, during the Covid-19 pandemic, jumped to almost \$21 billion in 2021.¹ The closure of schools in 2020 affected more than 1.2 billion pupils and students in more than 190 countries,² almost 1.7 million of them in the Czech Republic,³ and online delivery spread within months where it would normally have taken years.

What followed is as instructive as the pandemic itself. EdTech investment corrected sharply after 2021 – falling to \$2.4 billion in 2024, the lowest level in a decade, and remaining at a similar level in 2025.¹ The market that projections in 2019 drew as a straight line upwards did not behave like one.

What did remain is a change of habit. Online administration of exams stopped being an emergency measure and became one of the standard forms institutions routinely plan for. That is the lasting outcome of the pandemic period – not the size of the market, but the normalisation of the tool.

The real turning point in testing was not Covid, but generative AI

The fundamental change in the conditions for assessment was brought about not by the pandemic but by the spread of generative artificial intelligence. According to a survey of university students by the British Higher Education Policy Institute, 95% of them use some form of AI – in 2024 it was 66% – and 94% use it when working on assessed tasks. The share of students inserting AI-generated text directly into assessed work rose from 3% in 2024 to 12% in 2026.⁴

Using AI is not in itself the problem. Undisclosed use is. In an international survey of more than 4,200 students and educators, almost a quarter of students admitted submitting work created by artificial intelligence without saying so.⁵ Institutions are not yet equipped for this: according to the same survey, 26% of universities have a formal policy governing AI use, and only 28% of educators believe their university is ready to manage students' use of AI.⁵

The centre of gravity of control therefore shifts — from assessing the submitted result to the conditions under which the exam takes place. In admissions this is doubly true. A faculty has no history of the applicant's work against which to compare a result, and decides on the basis of a single performance. It has none of what a teacher can fall back on in continuous assessment, which makes the conditions of the exam matter all the more.

Universities are responding by returning to supervised examination

Institutions are answering with a shift back to supervised assessment. In 2026, Princeton University ended a 133-year-old practice of unproctored examinations and introduced compulsory supervision for all in-person exams.⁶ Other universities in the United States and the United Kingdom are moving in the same direction; the University of Melbourne and the University of Toronto are restricting unsupervised take-home work.⁷ Professional certification bodies are withdrawing the distance format for the same reason — among them ACCA, the world's largest accountancy association.⁸

The trend is clear: for high-stakes exams, assessment is returning to supervision. That does not mean it has to return to the lecture hall.

Digitalisation of education does not solve all problems

The above may give the impression that the digitalisation of education and the transition to online systems is an entirely positive development. Digital technologies can certainly improve the process of learning and qualification if they are used to address relevant issues (for example, specific obstacles that have arisen as a result of the global pandemic). Appropriate conditions should also be set for their effective use.

Digitalisation of education therefore needs to be thought of in a broader context and in relation to specific situations. The following section compares different testing systems and describes in more detail the specifics of online testing solutions.

Where online testing with remote proctoring is strongest

Against the misuse of AI, an online exam with proctoring has several properties a face-to-face paper exam cannot offer:

The device on which the exam is taken is itself under supervision. The desktop and the processes running on the computer are recorded, and access to other applications and to the copy-and-paste action can be restricted. The very channel through which generative AI would enter the exam is therefore the object of control.

Capture of the workspace from a second camera also covers the candidate's surroundings — precisely where secondary devices appear today.

The conduct of the exam exists as a recording, not as an impression.

Invigilation in a room produces an observation that is difficult to evidence afterwards. A recording can be reviewed again — both against the candidate and in their favour. The survey cited above shows that students have real concerns about being wrongly accused of cheating;⁴ the ability to return to the recording therefore protects both sides.

The strongest measure remains the content of the test. An exam that measures reasoning rather than retrievable knowledge is resistant to AI by construction. We discuss this in more detail in the chapter “Integrity and comparability”.

No measure provides a 100% guarantee of result integrity, and the demands on security will keep rising as AI develops. The difference lies in whether the institution knows anything about how the exam was conducted, and can evidence it.

Digitalisation solves nothing on its own

Digital technologies will improve the assessment process only if they are applied to a specific problem and under suitably arranged conditions. This applies to proctoring as well: deploying the tool without clear exam rules, without communication to candidates and without the ability to defend one's procedures creates new risk rather than certainty.

In the Czech context, general direction is given by the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy of the Czech Republic,[10] but concrete methodology for the use of AI in education remains with individual institutions. All the more reason for an institution to understand its solution and be able to explain it. The following section therefore compares different testing systems and describes in detail how remote proctoring works.



Section 2

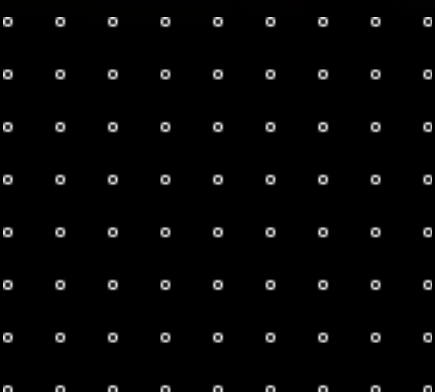
Online testing

Knowing why you are testing

Comparison of testing systems

How online testing with proctoring works

Specifics of online testing with proctoring



Knowing why you are testing

You need to be clear about why you want to test

At the beginning of the test development, it is first necessary to specify what you want to test and why. The specification of the test fundamentally influences the specific form of the tasks. For testing to make sense, you need to say how you want to use the test results, i.e. why you are testing. You need to define the objectives of testing. These may be different – comparison of test takers, comparison of schools, testing of students' knowledge, determination of applicants' knowledge, etc. The objectives of testing determine the process of test construction, test scoring and the choice of the appropriate testing system.

Tests can be divided into **high-stakes tests** and **low-stakes tests**. The results of high-stakes tests have important consequences for the test takers. High-stakes tests include university admission tests, secondary school exit tests, job application tests, retraining tests, etc. In contrast, the results of low-stakes tests do not have such far-reaching consequences. These tests can often be taken repeatedly and serve more as feedback. They include continuous tests of the level of knowledge as part of learning which do not have a major impact on the final grade.

There are several types of tests, such as various performance tests, oral exams, etc. In Scio testing, we specialise in written tests, i.e. tests that are administered on paper or on a computer. In this document, we will therefore focus only on this type of test.

Comparison of testing systems

Types of written tests can be divided into several categories, each bringing certain advantages and disadvantages:

Face-to-face digital test

A test taken on a computer or tablet at a test centre with live proctoring.

- + Maximum controlled environment, online tasks, instant automated scoring
- Price, organisation, inflexibility, capacity

Face-to-face paper-based test

A traditional paper-based test taken in a dedicated test room with live proctoring.

- + Maximum controlled environment
- Price, organisation, inflexibility, capacity

Online test without proctoring

A test taken online in the test taker's own environment without proctoring.

- + Online tasks, instant automated scoring, flexibility, price
- Without proctoring integrity

Online test with automated remote proctoring

A test taken online in the test taker's own environment, first with an automated initial check of the recording, then for specific cases proctored by live evaluators.

- + Degree of control, instant automated scoring, flexibility, easy organisation
- Need for additional check of specific recordings by evaluators, data collection and privacy protection

Online test with live remote proctoring

A test taken online in the test taker's own environment (e.g. at home) and proctored by examiners connected online.

- + Degree of control, possibility of interaction and feedback, instant automated scoring, flexibility
- Limit of proctoring capacity and objectivity, organisation

Online test with fully automated remote proctoring

A test taken online in the test taker's own environment with fully automated recording control.

- + Degree of control, instant automated scoring, flexibility, price, easy organisation
- Proctoring accuracy limit, no interaction between test taker and proctor, data collection and privacy protection

Different types of testing are suitable for different occasions

Online tests offer a number of advantages over traditional face-to-face tests. They are **flexible, scalable and more cost-effective, and results are available faster.**

Conversely, the main advantage of face-to-face tests over online forms is the greater control over the environment in which the individual completes the test. In online tests, control of the environment is handled by different levels of security.

Different types of tests require different levels of protection. Specific measures need to be chosen according to the context and importance of the test (e.g. high-stakes vs low-stakes test). For example, if the content of a high-stakes test cannot be retrieved, organisers may opt for a simpler security protocol to minimise the likelihood of test takers being expelled for minor inadvertent infractions of the testing rules. Nevertheless, no measure provides a 100% guarantee of result integrity. For some types of tests, however, compromised result integrity is more serious than for others. Table 1 compares the aforementioned types of tests.

	Face-to-face test		Distance online test			
			Without proctoring	With live proctoring	With automated proctoring	With fully automated proctoring
Controlled environment	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓	✓
Easy organisation			✓✓		✓✓	✓✓
Flexibility			✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Scalability			✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Cost-effectiveness			✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Online tasks		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fast results		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data collection	✓	✓		✓	✓✓	✓✓

How online testing with proctoring works

Online proctoring allows taking high-stakes exams remotely

Online testing with remote proctoring allows an exam to be taken without the need to travel to a venue. At the same time it ensures that the exam is conducted properly and that participants follow the rules.

Conditions are checked before the exam begins

Proctoring does not begin with the recording. Before the exam is launched, the application automatically verifies that the environment on the candidate's side complies with the rules — that the exam is not running in a virtual machine, that a single screen is connected to the computer, and that no applications are running which would give the candidate an unfair advantage. These are chiefly screen-sharing and remote-access tools, any other software able to display or capture the contents of the screen, communication applications and artificial-intelligence assistants. The screen is captured by the examination application alone; the purpose of the check is to ensure that nobody else gains access to what is on it. The exam cannot be started until these conditions are met.

This check also matters for the comparability of results: it ensures that all candidates take the exam in an equally defined technical environment.

The exam is captured by two cameras

During the exam a recording is made from the computer's main camera and from a second camera positioned to cover the candidate's workspace (typically a mobile phone), together with an audio recording and a recording of the screen including the processes running on the computer. Use of the second camera is a condition of taking the exam. It covers the area the main camera cannot see — the candidate's surroundings and any secondary devices.

The recording is first processed by automated analysis

After the exam ends, the recording is processed automatically. The software flags places in it that do not correspond to the exam rules. The output of this stage is not a decision on the validity of the exam but a prompt for human review: a flagged moment is a notification, not a verdict.

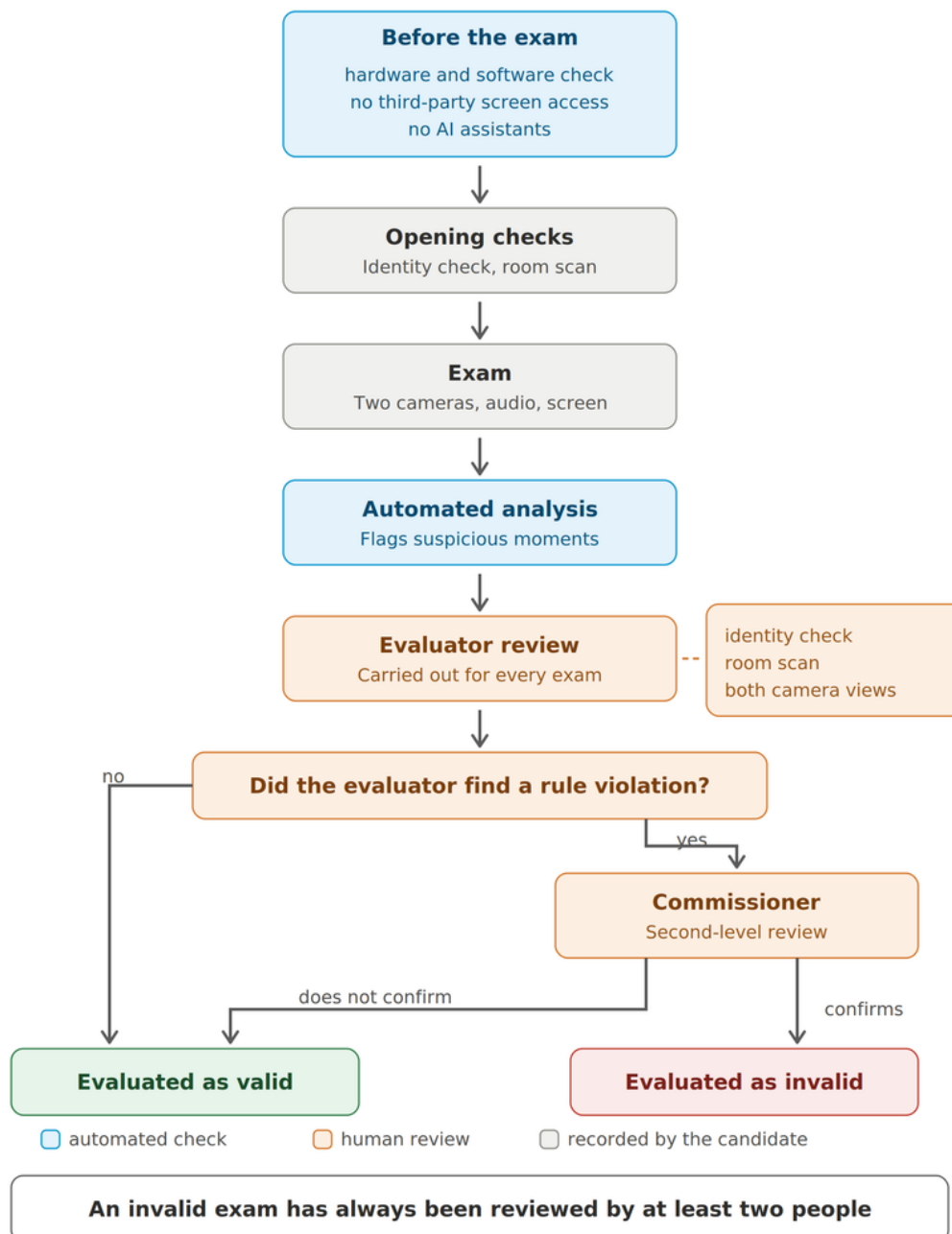
Every exam is reviewed by an evaluator, flagged or not

Automated analysis neither replaces nor filters human review. An evaluator goes through every exam, whether or not the software flagged anything. They verify the candidate's identity, check the room scan and assess the conduct of the exam as a whole – so they can also detect violations the analysis did not capture. For flagged moments the evaluator decides, by predefined criteria, whether a violation occurred; a flag may equally prove a false alarm.

Rule violations are confirmed by a second level of review

If the evaluator concludes that a rule violation occurred, the case does not end with their decision. It passes to a commissioner, who assesses the exam as a second level and either confirms or refutes the violation.

This yields a guarantee that matters to the institution: an exam can be marked as invalid only after at least two people have reviewed it – never automatically, and never on one person's decision alone.



Specifics of online testing with proctoring

The purpose and effect of online testing can be viewed from three perspectives, which should be combined when considering the content and form of the test:

1. information value of the results – provides information about test takers' abilities,
2. standardisation weight of the test requirements – sets the level of skills expected of a group of test takers,
3. wider societal effects – for example, making testing accessible to more groups of people.

1. Information value

Online testing allows multiple different tasks to be used

The online testing format expands the range of possible task types that can be used in the tests. **Multimedia elements** such as audio recordings, videos or animations can easily be included in the test. It is also possible to use **interactive tasks**, such as drag and drop actions (where the user grabs an object, for example using the mouse, and drags it to another location on the screen).

However, not all content may be easily transferable from paper to screen. The online format may be less suitable for some types of content, such as working with longer texts without the possibility of highlighting or drawing.

Therefore, the format should be considered in relation to the features of the proctoring software when preparing the test and used appropriately.

Automated scoring increases result integrity, but the uniformity of test taker conditions is imperfect and it is desirable to prevent cheating

The standardised form of testing guarantees a high degree of objectivity, but the reliability of the results also depends on the **process of completing the test** and **how it is scored**.

A highly controlled and uniform environment can be achieved in a face-to-face exam where the possibility for participants to break the rules and cheat is limited. However, in the online form of the test, the conditions of the individual test takers will not always be completely identical, so the question arises to what extent the completion process can be controlled to guarantee result integrity. More on this topic and the possibility to prevent cheating in online tests is presented in the chapter "Integrity and comparability".

The online form of testing allows the use of automated scoring, which, compared to scoring in traditional testing, is resistant to human error on the part of the evaluator and to indistinct markings in the record sheet, which may be difficult to read by machine.

2. Standardisation of the ability to work in a digital environment

Online testing confirms the value of the institution's ability to modernise and be flexible; in relation to test takers, it signals the requirement to be able to work in a digital environment

By providing online testing, the institution is signalling its ability to implement modern solutions and its willingness to accommodate test takers with its flexibility. In addition, the online form places an additional requirement on test takers: the ability and willingness to work in a digital environment.

Some institutions perceive this requirement as desirable (for example, the vice-dean of the Jessenius Faculty of Medicine at Comenius University in Martin believes online testing should test not only knowledge but also technological competences of applicants).¹¹

However, given that access to technology and the internet is out of reach for certain sections of society, the question of the fairness of this requirement arises (for a more detailed insight into this issue, see the chapter "Equality of opportunity and access to education").

3. Social impacts

Online testing is accessible to more groups of people

With its flexibility, online testing can be one of the tools that make education or applying for a job more accessible to applicants from abroad, working people, parents with young children or people in a restrictive living situation. On the other hand, if it is without a face-to-face alternative, it may not be accessible to social groups that do not have the necessary technology or the appropriate environment (for a more detailed insight into the issue of inequality and online testing, see the chapter "Equality of opportunity and access to education").



Section 3

The burning questions in online testing

Integrity and comparability

Data collection and privacy protection

Equality of opportunity and access to education



Integrity and comparability

Online testing often raises concerns about the integrity of results and their comparability with face-to-face testing.

For online forms of testing, the question arises whether it is adequately comparable to traditional testing, especially in the completion process and in result integrity. The environment for online testing (1) is never completely uniform, which may reduce the level of standardisation, and (2) is not completely controlled, which may create opportunities for cheating and call into question the integrity of the results.

Uniformity of the online exam environment can be achieved by clearly communicating the exam rules and by monitoring compliance. In a completely unproctored test, the test takers have a greater opportunity for cheating than in a proctored, face-to-face exam – and indeed, according to a meta-analysis of result comparability, test takers' performance on an unproctored online exam is significantly better than on a traditional face-to-face exam.¹² However, when security features are included in the online exam, the difference between the two types of testing is evened out.

Result integrity can be improved by combining several different measures depending on the needs of the test:

PREVENTIVE SAFETY FEATURES

Information about the effects of cheating, statutory statements that the test taker must acknowledge before the test, and notification of the possibility of an additional control test have no observable effect without remote proctoring, according to the literature.¹³ By far the most reliable preventive measure of result integrity is the very **content of the test** – variation in performance in the transition to online testing will be minimal if the test requires complex critical thinking and if answers cannot be easily retrieved.

LIMITING SAFETY FEATURES

Limiting tools can include a time limit combined with the requirement to complete the test by all test takers simultaneously. It is also possible to restrict access to certain applications or actions (for example, copy and paste).

OBSERVATIONAL SAFETY FEATURES

Observational tools can track connected devices or unauthorised activity on the computer, or analyse mouse movements or keystrokes. **Audiovisual proctoring** checks the uniformity of the environment during testing, as well as the test takers' identity and behaviour. **Result evaluation** may flag suspicious patterns (for example, groups of identical answers or suspicious improvements).

Data collection and privacy protection

Online testing with remote proctoring works with very sensitive data, such as personal data, video footage of test takers in their homes, and screen and keyboard activity. Legal regulation of such situations may vary in different legal systems, but when processing of personal data takes place, it should be ensured that it is as ethically sound as possible and that the test takers' privacy is protected.

Basic data protection rules

The protection of privacy, data and intellectual property can be handled in different ways, depending on the legal environment. However, there are a few principles that should be followed in online solutions:

Protection of test content and intellectual property:

- test development and administration is conducted in a secure environment,
- access to the content is restricted to authenticated persons only,
- any copyright infringement is monitored and reported, even for outdated versions of the content.

Protection of test taker data:

- only the most necessary data about the test takers are collected,
- storage and transmission of data are secured against loss, damage, leakage and theft,
- access to test taker data is restricted to authenticated persons only,
- staff are trained to handle data responsibly,
- data are not misused and the purpose of data collection is legitimate and clearly stated,
- data are kept only for a limited period of time,
- communication to the test taker about their rights and data collection is clear and transparent,
- data collection does not take place without consent.

Equality of opportunity and access to education

Digital solutions in education, testing and certification can make learning, qualifications or admissions more accessible to more groups of people, including disadvantaged people. Similarly, online testing can play an important role in increasing access to education.

However, digital solutions are not a panacea in this regard – it also depends on the content of the course or test itself and the support available to participants. Tests in general can disadvantage certain groups of test takers, for example directly in the test questions. It can influence education policy in a way that replicates existing inequalities. For example, online courses show that the MOOC (massive open online course) format is much more likely to be chosen and completed by participants who already have one university degree than by participants with no prior higher education experience.¹⁴

Making a test or certification available through an online format to some groups of people may also put others at a disadvantage, for example those who are not used to the digital environment or do not have the necessary technology.

It is therefore necessary to consider which groups of people the online form of the test is intended to reach and to know their specific conditions.

For some social groups, for example, a stable connection or their own computer with a webcam may still be an unattainable luxury.

In a number of such cases, however, the face-to-face alternative does not make the test any more accessible. Conversely, in other cases – for example, a compulsory exam or a major high-stakes test – the exam without a face-to-face option and without offering to lend the necessary equipment or provide facilities would be unfair to people who do not have access to the necessary equipment.

According to World Economic Forum data from 2016, the degree of electronic equipment usage has been on the rise globally, but with continuing regional and income disparities (the global average for electronic equipment is 60%, in sub-Saharan Africa only 30%, in Latin America and the Caribbean 73%, in Europe and Central Asia 80%, in North America 90%; in the population with high income 90%, with upper middle income 73%, with middle income 57%, with lower income 21%).¹⁵

In the Czech context, the PAQ and IDEA think tank recorded a 50% improvement in the equipment of pupils for online learning in just six months of the Covid-19 pandemic. The equipment ratio of children of parents with a university degree to those without a higher education remains 2:1, although the number of unequipped pupils has fallen in both groups.¹⁶

How to start with online testing

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Conditions for a successful transition to online testing

Online testing brings many advantages. New technology has the potential to bring many improvements if it is used as a tool to solve relevant problems and if there are the right conditions for its effective use. However, implementing new technology purely out of pressure to “follow the trend” can result in a significant investment without demonstrable positive impact. If it is in the institution’s interest to implement online testing, it is necessary to create the **appropriate conditions** for the adoption of the new technology and to follow a **predetermined plan**.

Conditions for adoption of new technology – test type

Different test types require different solutions. For example, the degree of assurance of result integrity will vary depending on what decision the test score is used for. High-stakes tests will require a higher degree of security against cheating or otherwise misleading results than medium and low-stakes tests. The form of the test may also determine the degree of compatibility with the online format, which includes tools for a wide range of exams (for example, online tests were developed as early as the 1990s to test musical, medical or social skills¹⁷), but is less suitable for some types of tasks (for example, for working with long texts or for drawing tasks).

Institutional conditions

According to a McKinsey study¹⁸, the following institutions have a higher success rate in adopting new technology in education and testing:

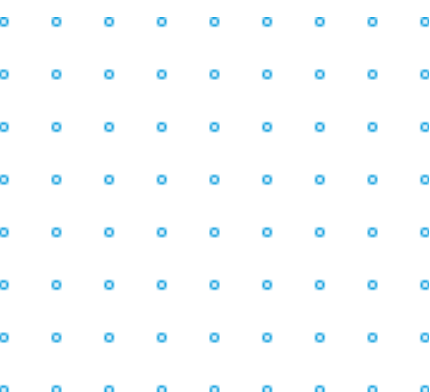
- 1.institutions where there is consensus on the goals of the new technology (statistically more successful institutions are those where all stakeholders are acquainted with the motivation for moving to digital or online solutions),
- 2.institutions that have taken into account the availability and affordability of technology,
- 3.institutions investing in support structures, such as providing the necessary hardware and software, as well as training and education on the technology,
- 4.institutions that agreed to measure success before implementing the new software, and implemented such measuring.

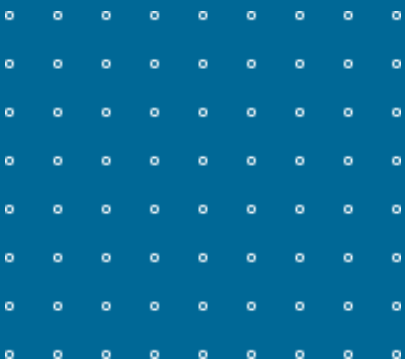
How to start?

Therefore, for the implementation of an online testing solution (with or without proctoring) to be successful, the organisation needs to proceed in a strategic way.

We recommend the following steps:

- 
 conducting an initial analysis of specific needs, current status and capacities,
- 
 creating a clear project plan that includes:
 - definition of the size and results of the project,
 - definition of the tasks and timeframe of the project,
 - definition of roles and responsibilities,
- 
 training of stakeholders (target users, administrators, managers, etc.),
- 
 clear communication about the project, i.e. explaining what is happening, when, why, and creating space for feedback,
- 
 regular measurement of success and evaluation of the project leading to further changes.



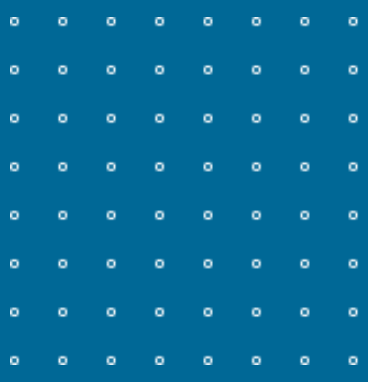


Conclusion

Demand for online education (including testing and certification) has been on the rise for a long time and this trend can be expected to continue. Online standardised testing solutions make admissions and certifications accessible to candidates with individual time or mobility constraints. For institutions, it brings flexibility by being independent of certain external circumstances (e.g. space or staff capacity) and saving time and resources spent on the preparation and organisation of testing. With appropriate security measures in place, full comparability between face-to-face and online exams can be achieved.

The transition to digital testing is certainly not easy. If organisations decide to implement it, they need to make an informed decision after considering the institution's conditions, the demands of the test and the potential risks.

However, if organisations make the transition to online testing strategically, online testing can save them resources, increase their attractiveness to candidates or test takers, increase their flexibility and modernise their organisation overall.





Scio has developed an online tool for digital testing – ScioLink. ScioLink is a secure **online tool** for administering exams and tests with remote proctoring, effectively providing:



**Test
creation**



**Test
administration**



**Remote
proctoring**

SCIOLINK IS NOW USED BY CZECH AND SLOVAK FACULTIES FOR ADMISSIONS:

Significant

saving of time for the administration of exams, thus also a reduction in the financial costs of admissions procedures

100+

faculties of universities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia have utilized Sciolink in their admission process

151,000

online exams conducted via ScioLink – this includes both faculty exams and Scio's National Comparative Exams



ScioLink's main features:

Testing	• Use of different types of tasks with the possibility of using audio and video content.
Ensuring validity	• Identification of the examinee by identity card. • Recording video, audio, desktop and running processes on the computer. • AI technology to detect cheating. • Records reviewed by trained human evaluators. • Video recordings of each testing kept for at least 1 month for review if necessary.
Security and privacy	• Technologically secure Microsoft Azure solution for data processing and storage. • Consistent internal records access policy to prevent data leakage due to human error. • Volume of collected data and records reduced to the minimum necessary.
Accessibility	• Application scalability allowing 100 to 10,000 simultaneous tests. • Offline mode ensuring that the test is not interrupted in the event of an outage. • Multilingual support providing assistance to test takers from different locations. • Onboarding before the exam to prepare examinees for the technical specifications and assure them that the process is correct.

For more information contact
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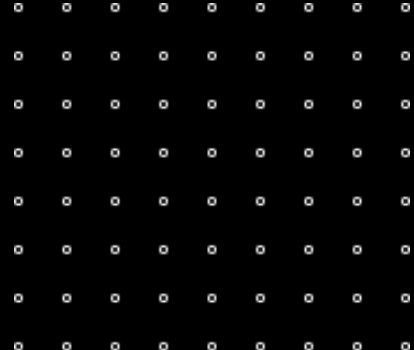
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