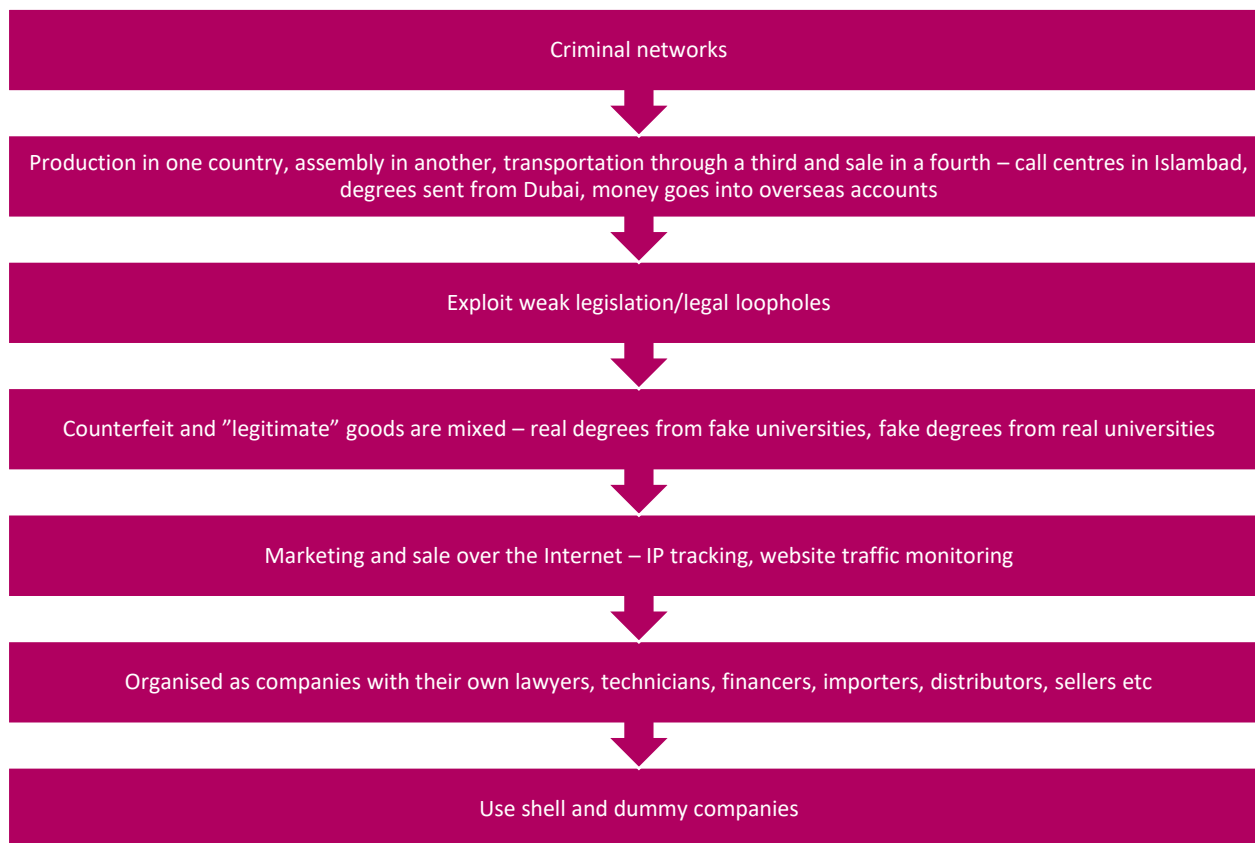


Higher education fraud – degree mills

- Fraud in higher education is as old as the universities are – University of the two Hams, Oriental University
- Even when the first modern degree mills emerged in the US, it was a local and physical activity
- Later, with correspondence and distance education, degree mills reached new customers worldwide
- Today, fraud in higher education is global and digital in character and generates enormous amounts of money. There are also, unlike only 50 years ago, links to economic and other crimes.
- Fraud in higher education is now on an industrial scale, impossible to monitor



How it works



What then, is a degree mill?



A provider of services on a market regulated by supply and demand



A diploma mill is an organisation or individual who issues and sells fake or worthless diplomas/transcripts without actually requesting that the recipient has studied for the qualification or even accomplished anything and without there being a recognised authority or organisation supervising its activities. *Source: The Swedish Council for Higher Education*

Fraud in higher education – the far from exhaustive list

Degree mills – the
commodification of higher
education

Accreditation mills – substandard
or non-existing quality assurance

Credential evaluation mills –
academic or professional
recognition of fraudulent or
unrecognised qualifications. This
is the most recent development
often linked to student visa fraud

Essay and term paper mills – “our
papers are 100% non-plagiarised”

Professional test takers –
claiming knowledge that is not
your own

AI services, ChatGPT – static
knowledge on repeat?

- Here, we haven’t even mentioned predatory journals or fraudulent scientific organisations, or fake databases

So what's the problem? – a short case study on A



- Founded in Karachi in 1997 as a provider of essays and term papers
- Has created well over 4,000 fake university, high school, accrediting agency and governmental agency websites since the start
- Revenues reached the 1 billion USD mark in 2015 – now probably 70 billion
- Exposed in articles in the NYT in 2015, but still operational. This is due to weak legislation and geopolitics.
- A competes, and cooperates, with "the other network" for market shares
- New websites are created every 2 to 3 months
- Links to other forms of crime

An A school sample



Student Login

About Us

HAYWOOD
CAROLINA

US President
Joe Biden

HAYWOOD UNIVERSITY
OF NORTH CAROLINA

Apply now at HWU and get
instant scholarship!

Joe Biden's Scholarship
Program

Apply Now

The other guys

- A loose network of schools operating out of Pakistan, Nigeria, UK, USA, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Mexico and Russia
- Sometimes competing, sometimes collaborating with A
- More in terms of “education” – in particular in management and pseudoscience



WORLD INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED UNIVERSITY

Degree mills = non-existing or invented knowledge

- A degree from a school created by A does not represent either learning or knowledge
- A degree from the other network usually represents substandard knowledge and superficial learning



Degree mill graduates, for admission:

degree mill graduates lack subject knowledge, partially or completely since the degrees are not based on actual learning or on pseudoscience. The potentially life-transforming experience of learning has been replaced by a product enabling shortcuts ("no coursework, no exams, no hassle!")



Degree mill graduates, for employment:

In addition to all of the above, degree mill graduates typically lack sufficient formal training in teaching and experience in good research practice. Curricula from substandard institutions is sometimes used in classes.

Essay and term paper mills = knowledge recycled

- Quite a lot is stolen from legitimate universities. Papers, essays, books, articles, private notes library log in details - essentially anything hackers can get their hands on

Providers operating out of for example China and Pakistan

Essayhelp.com, papertrue.com, essayhelp.org

If of good quality, most of the content is stolen. Papers of poor quality are often plagiarised and then rewritten in the same locations from where fake degrees are sold

These papers represent learning, knowledge and research, but of varying quality and above all, completely *detached* from the individual submitting it as their own.

These services are facing the danger of being replaced by AI.

ChatGPT, Gemini etc – knowledge(s) reassembled



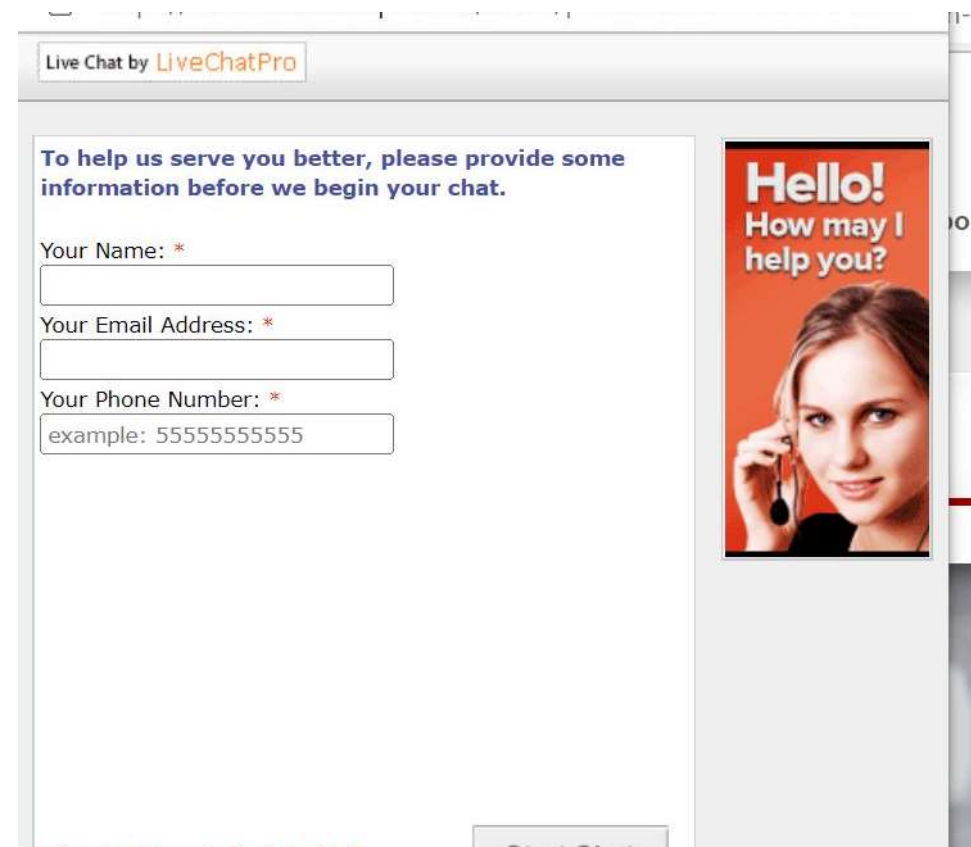
It is often claimed that AI services will disrupt the knowledge economy and change what is referred to as knowledge management.



This may all be true but a bot such as ChatGPT will create knowledge that is not only detached from individual learning, but also from context, in the sense that it will draw information from an infinite number of sources.



However, it may be a snake biting its own tail. The reproduction of static knowledge may be economically managed for ever, but if degree mills, term paper mills and AI have deprived individuals of the skills to learn, reflect on and show their learning, new learning will take place only with considerable difficulty.



Live Chat by LiveChatPro

To help us serve you better, please provide some information before we begin your chat.

Your Name: *

Your Email Address: *

Your Phone Number: *

example: 5555555555

Hello! How may I help you?



How to combat fraud in higher education

Through legislation – make commercial contract cheating illegal, protect legally terms like 'university', 'academy', etc. cf UK, Netherlands

Through collection and sharing of information – the ENIC-NARIC network, QA assurance agencies, GAIN, Global Academic Integrity Network, [Global Academic Integrity Network](#)

Through collaboration on a European and international level – the ETINED platform, [ETINED - Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education \(coe.int\)](#)

Thank you!
www.uhr.se