The AutoCAD® Detective:
Whose Line Is It Anyway?

As an instructor, you may not always be sure who actually created the AutoCAD® drawing file that a student submits. Techniques such as Cut-and-Paste, Copy, and Rename can make it all too tempting for students to take shortcuts. This presentation will explore several investigative techniques that an instructor can use to determine the genealogy of a particular file, and will showcase a utility that has been in use at BCIT for several years now, to ensure academic honesty.

BCIT employs an AutoLISP routine called "*NoCheat*", created under Open Source/ Creative Commons License by Bill Fane, a retired BCIT Instructor and a certified AutoDesk University Speaker. Every time a student initiates an Open, Save, CopyClip, Cutclip, Export, Wblock, etc etc command then "*NoCheat*" first silently adds invisible tags containing the current login name and the current time/date to every object in the drawing. It never tags the same object twice.

NoCheat performs one other bit of magic in the background. Whenever it is in "instructor" mode, checking a drawing, it also builds one or more selection sets. The name of each selection set corresponds to the login name of each person who has ever worked on the drawing. In summary, we now have a tool that allows you to determine exactly who created every single object within a drawing, and when. The use this program within your school's AutoCAD® course offerings, we can virtually eliminate cheating (within AutoCAD® realm!).

Lastly, we have anecdotal evidence that suggests the implementation of "*NoCheat*", has greatly reduced plagiarism in other classes, because students don't realize it is unique to AutoCAD®. They assume it also works in Word, Excel, etc.