COMPUTER-BASED TESTING – NEW PARADIGMS FOR DELIVERY

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Computer-based testing offers multiple advantages over paper-based examinations, including the opportunity to incorporate images, video, and audio files into tests, the ability to easily and accurately collect test statistics and interface with online grade books, the potential of utilizing testing techniques other than simple multiple choice questions, and options for additional precautions against plagiarism. In addition, the migration of national board examinations to a computer-based format suggests that medical students need to become familiar with this type of testing interface earlier in the course of their medical education. Unfortunately, most medical schools do not have the space resources to equip a dedicated computer-based testing facility with a sufficient number of machines to permit the simultaneous testing of an entire class of students in large preclinical courses. In this session, we will facilitate a discussion regarding various innovative options for delivering computer-based examinations outside of the fixed testing center paradigm. Included in the discussion will be the pros and cons of employing collegiate versus student owned computers, utilizing wireless versus wired networks, and the potential role for PDA's and other devices. We will describe our experience at the University of Iowa in developing a "virtual testing center" through which computer-based examinations are delivered via laptop computers in flexible auditoria that are used for both lecture and testing purposes.