Automatic grading and feedback



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Goals:

- E-learning system for questions with symbolic answer.
- Effective user interface for students and teachers on computer, tablet and mobile.
- Easy feedback teacher + student

In a physics class, exercises typically involve some practical problem to be solved. Often analytically. A typical question from the earliest part of the mechanics course as presented in OpenTA is given in the following lide.

Exercise example

Systemet givet av kraftparet M samt krafterna F_1 och F_2 kan ersättas med en resulterande kraft med en given verkningslinje. (Antag att $F_1 > 0$, $F_2 > 0$). Beräkna vridmomentet M samt storleken på resultanten av systemet givet att verkningslinjen för resultanten passerar genom O.



The difficulty in evaluating a students answer to this is that There are many equivalent responses that are correct and acceptable. An autocorrecting system must accept all correct answers.

Exercise example

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Form of a correct answer may vary

 $\sqrt{(F1 + F2 \cdot \cos{(\alpha)})^2 + (F2 \cdot \sin{(\alpha)})^2}$

 $\sqrt{F1^2+F2^2+2\cdot F1\cdot F2\cdot \cos{(lpha)}}$

 $\sqrt{(|F2| \sin{(\alpha)})^2 + (|F1| + |F2| \cos{(\alpha)})^2}$

 $\sqrt{(F1)^2 + 2 F1 F2 \cos{(\alpha)} + (F2)^2}$

This is the challenge which is surprisingly difficult to meet. The goal is therefore an exercise teaching platform that can properly evaluate mathematical content in questions, not only the usual numerical and multiple choice answers that are used as quizzes in many teaching platform.

The goal is to make the exercises fun and instructive for the students, and allow them to use the ``tools" that they use every day. I ie The platform should be adaptible usable not only on laptops but should be usable on tablets and mobile phones.

User interface is important for adoption





We first take a look at how a student sees the platform in our Mek1 course. First a login screen. In fact a launch in Canvas can also be used.

student	stud	ont
•••••		ent
	•••••	•••
Logga in		Logga in

After OpenTA is started, folders with assignments are presented. In this case some icons that indicate which problems are to be solved. Some icons have embellishments that we will come back to.

The following example comes from the Chalmers course in introductory mechanics.



The student selects a problem and is presented with on or several questions to be answered and an answerbox in which to type the answer.



3/86



Det ihåliga röret med längden L roterar runt en vertikal axel genom O med en konstant vinkelhastiget $\dot{\theta} = \omega$. En cylinder med massa m glider friktionsfritt inuti röret. Cylindern börjar på ett avstånd r_0 och har då farten v_0 längs röret. Beräkna magnituden av den horisontella kraften P som verkar på cylindern precis när den lämnar röret. Svara i termer av L, v0, m, omega och r0.



The variables that are permited in the answer is indicated and the answer is entered in a natural asciimath syntax. The program typesets the input durint input, which is not only useful for checking more complex formulas, but is also fun since the input looks quite a bit more elegant than the asciimath input form.



3/86



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The student attempts the answer by pressing "Send"

In this case the answer was not only incorrect but the units were wrong, something that OpenTA points out in the response.

≡ *r*student

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Det ihåliga röret med längden L roterar runt en vertikal axel genom O med en konstant vinkelhastiget $\dot{\theta} = \omega$. En cylinder med massa m glider friktionsfritt inuti röret. Cylindern börjar på ett avstånd r_0 och har då farten v_0 längs röret. Beräkna magnituden av den horisontella kraften P som verkar på cylindern precis när den lämnar röret. Svara i termer av L, v0, m, omega och r0.



On the next attempt, the student puts in the correct answer and gets a correct response back.



3/86



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The examiner can demand not only that the input answer is correct, but can indicate that the student should upload their calculations that led to the answer. In that case a camera icon is shown and eithere an image or pdf is uploaded by the students to complete the exercise.



Hinken i figuren släpps från vila med initiala massan M(hink och vatten). Vattnet flödar ut genom hålen med farten v, totala massflödet m' (båda hålen tillsammans) och vinkeln θ enligt figuren. Samtidigt drar en kraft F i snöret. Beräkna hinkens acceleration med positiv riktning uppåt i figuren.



A thumbnail of the upload is then shown.



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The previous slides shows OpenTA on a laptop screen, but the mobile format is sufficiently easy to use that many of the students use that instead of a laptop. An, the uploads can be done directly from the camera of the mobile.



The following slide shows what a student's OpenTA page, from the Neural Networks course Bernhard Mehlig is teaching, might look like after a week or two.

We note now the embellishments on the icons. Questions are catgorised as "Obligatory" (blue), "Bonus" (orange) or "Optional (no badge).

Due dates are listed, and green check mark indicates the answer was correct, and a green or red camera icon indicates an image was uploaded or missing.

Student can see their progress



Student can see their progress

exercise name	date due	com	plete and ontime	aut	ograded answers	im	age answers	Audit
OpenTA Syntax	no duedate	××		√×	unanswered	××	no image required	××
 Quiz (test your linear algebra and analysis) Analysis Linear algebra 								
Hermitian conjugate	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:24	~ ~	no deadline	××	no image required	×✓
Matrix determinant	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:17	~~	no deadline	××	no image required	×✓
Matrix product	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:19	~~	no deadline	××	no image required	×v
Matrix square	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:20	~~	no deadline	××	no image required	×v
Eigenvalues	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:20	~ ~	no deadline	××	no image required	×v
Eigenvectors	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:32	~ ~	no deadline	××	no image required	×v
Matrix exponential	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:50	~ ~	no deadline	××	no image required	×✓
Matrix inverse	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:39	~ ~	no deadline	××	no image required	×v
Non-diagonalizable matrix	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:40	~ ~	no deadline	××	no image required	×v
Matrix transpose	no duedate	~~	2020-09-02 at 08:44	~~	no deadline	××	no image required	×v
Homework 1								
One-step error probability (2020)	2020-09-18 at midnight	~~	2020-09-06 at 10:26	~~	12 days early	~~	12 days early	×✓
Recognising digits (2020)	2020-09-18 at midnight	~~	2020-09-05 at 12:48	~~	13 days early	~~	13 days early	×✓
Stochastic Hopfield network (2020)	2020-09-18 at midnight	~~	2020-09-05 at 19:40	~~	13 days early	~~	13 days early	×✓
True-False Questions (2020)	2020-09-19 at midnight	~~	2020-09-05 at 19:45	~~	14 days early	××	no image required	×✓
Homework 2			•					
3-dimensional Boolean functions (2020)	2020-10-09 at midnight	~~	2020-09-14 at 10:19	~~	25 days early	~~	25 days early	×✓
Linear separability of 4-dimensional Boolean	functions2020-10-09 at midnight	~~	2020-09-14 at 09:32	~~	26 days early	~~	25 days early	×✓
True-False Questions (2020)	2020-10-09 at midnight	をうくう		をうくう	unanswered	××	no image required	××
Two-layer perceptron (2020)	2020-10-09 at midnight	~~	2020-09-14 at 09:40	~~	25 days early	~~	25 days early	×✓
🗁 Homework 3			·					
Convolutional networks (2020)	2020-10-30 at midnight	~~	2020-09-20 at 20:47	~×	unanswered	~~	40 days early	×✓
Restricted Boltzmann machine	2020-10-30 at midnight	××		~×	unanswered	××	image missing	××
Tic tac toe (2020)	2020-10-30 at midnight	~~	2020-09-18 at 22:36	~~	42 days early	~~	42 days early	×✓
To be determined	2020-10-30 at midnight	××		~×	unanswered	××	image missing	жж
Instructions And Data Loading								

Teacher view.

The teacher sees essentially the same view as the student, but with some more badges on the exercise icon.



There are violet activity bar indicating how many student attempts there are on the particular question, green bar indicating how many have answered correctly and turned in their image, a blue bar indicating how many students have answered correctly, and an orange bar indicating how many students have tried but failed to answer the question.

The violet activity bar can be set to measure all activity, activity latest week, day or hour. Thus a teacher can see not only cumulative student progress but which questions are being worked on at at the time.



Recently submitted answers can also be read, and not only the latest, but also a number of tried attempts the student tried. The teacher can thereby find out common mistakes that students might be making.



More detail about a particular exercise is available. The time that submissions were made, typically hitting a peak just before deadline.

Late submissions are never rejected, they are always just marked late so the teacher has an option to accept them if they are feeling generous. 🗧 🥱 🎂 🖉 super

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Exercise XML & Assets Live edit Options Statistics Recent Regrade Audit

Ø ✿ openta-2020 [♣

Assets

0

Exercise file path: Stochastic Hopfield network 2019 Stochastic Hopfield network (2020)

0 4 0

Student view

Deadline: 18 Sep 23:59 🕐 Bonus

Write a computer program implementing a Hopfield network using Hebb's rule with $w_{ii} = 0$, and asynchronous stochastic updating with $p(b) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp(-2\beta b)}$ with the noise parameter $\beta = 2$. Use your computer program to answer the questions below.

Use N = 200 neurons and store p = 7 random patterns $\underline{x}^{(\mu)}$ ($\mu = 1, \dots, p$). Each bit $x_i^{(\mu)} = \pm 1$ with probability $\frac{1}{2}$. Feed the stored pattern $\underline{x}^{(1)}$ to the network and perform $T = 2 \cdot 10^5$ asynchronous stochastic updates.

Estimate the resulting order parameter $m_1(T)$. Repeat this experiment 100 times. Each experiment should be initialised by a new realisation of independently drawn random patterns. Average $m_1(T)$ over the experiments to obtain $\langle m_1(T) \rangle$.

To obtain credits for this task, you must upload the computer code you used to get all results you enter below, in PDF format. Use the upload button at the top of this page. All PDF files you upload here must also be combined into a single PDF file and submitted to URKUND, before the deadline (see instructions in General information).



Repeat the above task, but for p = 45. All other parameters are the same.

What is the value of $\langle m_1(T) angle$ for $T=2\cdot 10^5, p$ places.	$=45, N=200,$ and $\beta=2?$ State your result using three decimal
[0 attempts] 🕐	
0.138	4
0.138	
	A A



The examiner can also "audit" the student responses. I.e. go throught the student answers and uploads and override the automatic settings generated by the computer. We typically use this as spot-checks on the student submissions. In the next slide, a student submission is shown togher with comments to be transmitted to the student.

An exercise is accepted on the basis of a correct answer and a submitted image unless there is intervention by an audit by TA or teacher. Several TA's can share the task of auditing exercises. O FFM516

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Finally grade sheets showing who has done completed how many questions.

O FFM516

All

Optional

Filtors	Username	Obligatory	Bonus	Optional	Late	Total
1 111015		16	15	41	(1)	72
Text search		0	0	5	(0)	5
Filter on name and usern		7	0	21	(4)	28
Obligatory deadline		16	16	20	(0)	52
O No deadline		16	15	42	(0)	73
Answer		13	16	28	(0)	57
Answer & Image		15	16	19	(1)	50
Bonus deadline		12	0	6	(0)	18
O No deadline		6	2	26	(22)	34
Answer		0	0	0	(0)	0
Answer & Image		15	13	8	(2)	36
		16	6	13	(1)	35
		16	13	27	(0)	56
		16	16	44	(0)	76
		16	9	6	(0)	31
		16	16	37	(0)	69
		8	2	8	(8)	18
		16	16	22	(0)	54
		16	0	15	(0)	31
		12	4	18	(0)	34
		16	16	15	(0)	47



A teacher can also examine students work by entering OpenTA as that student. This is useful if an individual is having difficulties with either the physics or the OpenTA technology.





The OpenTA client, i.e. where the screen shots come from, is a "desktop app" written in Javascript using React.

The OpenTA server is based on Django, a framework based on Python3.

All packages are OpenSource.

Canvas and Moodle can be configured to use OpenTA as a tool.



OpenTA is designed as a learning tool, not as an examination tool. We encourage collaboration and trying answers multiple times.

Thus, we have not limited the number of responses and make no attempts to "lock down" access to other media. We do find, however that students work very hard for "Bonus" points and that has turned out to be an important motivation for the students to take the exercises seriously. The following courses at Chalmers and GU have used OpenTA.

The opinions from both teachers and students who have used OpenTA has been overwhelmingly positive.

Courses at GU and Chalmers

FFM516	Mekanik 1
FFM521	Mekanik 2
FFY143	Fysik 2
LFY073	Fortbildning fysiklärare
FKA081	Quantum mechanics
FFM234	Vektorfält och klassisk fysik
FIM770	Dynamical systems
FYP102	Mekanik A
FIM720	Neural networks
FFY012	Fasta tillståndets fysik
LGFY10	Fysik för gymnasielärare



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