

Plagiarism and cyber-plagiarism

A guide to selected resources on the Web

by Patience Simmonds

Plagiarism, plagiarism detection, and plagiarism prevention are issues of immense sensitivity and importance to people in all areas of education. They are also of great concern to middle and high school teachers and administrators, and faculty and administrators in colleges and universities. Librarians have also embraced the issue of plagiarism and realized the importance of linking it to the proper documentation of sources to teach users about the importance of knowing about fair use, plagiarism, and documentation.

Plagiarism has been around for centuries, but the Internet and the subsequent proliferation of information and technology have made rampant what was previously done in secret. People in all walks of life plagiarize, it is not limited to students.

The Oxford English Dictionary Online (OED Online) defines plagiarism as "the action or practice of plagiarizing; the wrongful appropriation or purloining, and publication as one's own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, etc.) of another."¹

In plain language, plagiarism is taking someone else's work and passing it off as one's own without proper acknowledgment or documentation. Plagiarism is also a moral, ethical, and legal issue. There are a multitude of resources available on the Internet to educate students about what plagiarism is, show them strategies to prevent them from plagiarizing, and present them with preemptive resources, such as academic in-

tegrity sites with honor codes to guide them. There are also many resources available for faculty to detect plagiarism and bring the problem under control. This article will try to present a comprehensive selection of some these sources, which will by no means be exhaustive.

Plagiarism awareness sites

Plagiarism definition and statements on plagiarism

- **Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT) at the University of Albany.** CELT's Web site provides tips to educate students and teachers about plagiarism, definitions, and strategies for avoiding plagiarism. It also has software available to detect plagiarism and provides a list of paper dealers. *Access:* <http://www.albany.edu/cehl/resources/pedagogy/plagiarism.html>.

- **Helping Students Avoid Plagiarism.** This site, which links to the University of Maryland's College's Effective Writing Program, has tips and general guidelines to resources. *Access:* <http://www.umuc.edu/ugp/ewp/plagiarism.html>.

- **Plagiarism: Definitions, Examples and Penalties.** Designed for a chemistry class at the University of Kentucky, this site provides definitions and examples of plagiarism with subsequent penalties for committing the offense, but the information can be applied to any subject area. The information is still relevant, but the site has not been updated since December 1998. *Access:*

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<http://www.chem.uky.edu/courses/common/plagiarism.html>.

- **Plagiarism—The Do's and Don'ts.** This site from the University of California-Davis provides guidelines to what plagiarism is and ways to avoid it. *Access:* <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/avoid.htm>.

- **Plagiarism: What it is and How to Recognize and Avoid it.** The information for this



site is taken from the "Student Code of Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct" handbook at Indiana University-Bloomington. It provides students with information and strategies for avoiding plagiarism with examples of proper paraphrasing. *Access:* <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>.

- **Purdue Online Writing Lab.** This site presents information on avoiding plagiarism and shows circumstances when documentation is necessary. It also provides a plagiarism exercise for students and shows a graph of deliberate plagiarism and possible accidental plagiarism. *Access:* http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html.

- **Southern University of Illinois-Carbondale (SIUC) Department of History's Statements on Plagiarism.** This site provides links to statements on plagiarism from the American Historical Association, the Modern Language Association, the American Psychological Association, and the SIUC Student Conduct Code. *Access:* <http://www.siu.edu/~histsiu/Plagiarism.html>.

- **Talking about Plagiarism.** A site that provides a description of suitable language, which faculty can include in their syllabus to make students understand what plagiarism is and emphasize good writing skills. It also gives teachers permission to use any of the content to create their own syllabi. *Access:* <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/technotes/workshops/talkingplag.htm>.

Academic integrity and honor codes

- **Center for Academic Integrity (CAI).** Affiliated with the Keenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University, CAI promotes academic integ-

riety among its members. It currently has a consortium of over 320 institutions and provides a list of colleges and universities with honor codes. CAI provides both institutional and individual membership for a fee. *Access:* <http://www.academicintegrity.org/>.

- **Johns Hopkins University Undergraduate Academic Ethics Board Statement on Ethics.** This site presents a comprehensive list of violations including plagiarism. Has a link to other colleges and universities with Web sites on plagiarism and other forms of academic ethical issues. It promises confidentiality for people who wish to report academic misconduct. *Access:* <http://www.jhu.edu/~ethics/statement.html>.

- **Academic Integrity at Penn State: A Statement by the Council of Academic Deans.** The statement, which was formulated in August 2000, states, "the primary responsibility for supporting and promoting academic integrity lies with the faculty and administration, but students must be active participants." Penn State requires there to be a statement on academic integrity in every syllabus. *Access:* <http://www.psu.edu/oue/integrity.html>.

- **Honesty and Honor Codes.** This article (found on *Academe Online*) by Donald McCabe, Linda Klebe Treviño, and Franklin H. Cook presents ideas on the relevance of honor codes and the importance of making students aware of their existence. *Access:* <http://www.aap.org/publications/Academe/02JF/02jfmcc.htm>.

Plagiarism prevention and detection resources and software

- **Cheating 101: Paper Mills and You.** This is an abbreviated version of the Teaching Effectiveness Seminar, presented by Margaret Fain and Peggy Bates of the Kimbel Library at the Coastal Carolina University, held March 5, 1999, and revised on March 10, 2003. This seminar's objective was to help faculty deal with classroom plagiarism. Other topics included Internet subject specific paper mills, detecting plagiarism, and detecting plagiarized papers. *Access:* <http://www.coastal.edu/library/papermill.htm>.

- **Cyberplagiarism Detection and Prevention.** This resource is available at the Teaching and Learning with Technology site at Penn State. It presents a basic definition of plagiarism and a list of articles on plagiarism culled from local and national papers. It also presents possible causes of plagiarism, detection strategies, and tools

and signs to warn the instructor about possible plagiarism; it also discusses Penn State's policies on academic integrity and plagiarism and allows professors to create plagiarism quizzes to test students' knowledge of plagiarism. *Access:* <http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cyberplag/>.

• **EduTie.com.** EduTie is an Internet plagiarism service founded in August 2000 that provides access to about 250,000 papers online. EduTie uses PlagiServ technology to analyze loaded papers for evidence of plagiarism. This is a fee-based service that provides free trials; its users include administrators, instructors, and students and it serves colleges and universities and K-12 school districts. *Access:* <http://www.edutie.com/>.

• **Essay Verification Engine (Eve2).** Eve2 is an Internet plagiarism detection resource for teachers that can be used in any school to detect and prevent plagiarism on the Internet. Eve 2 is moderately priced and appears to be cost-effective. It is said to be 80 to 90 percent effective in finding plagiarized materials. This is a one-time, fee-based service with free updates. Teachers can try it free for 15 days. *Access:* <http://www.canexus.com/eve/index.shtml>.

• **Glatt Plagiarism Services, Inc.** This site provides three different software programs to teach students about plagiarism, screen programs to detect plagiarism for faculty, and a self-detection program to detect plagiarism. This is a fee-based service with a mission "to deter plagiarism and encourage academic honesty." *Access:* <http://www.plagiarism.com>.



• **JPlag.** This software was developed by Guido Malpolh to detect academic dishonesty. The software not only compares the text of documents,



but examines program language syntax and program structure to detect stolen software parts. It

is free for use by instructors, but they are required to set up an account. *Access:* <http://www.jplag.de/>.

• **MOSS (Measure of Software Similarity).** This is software for determining similarities among computer programs such as Java, C, C++, Pascal, Ada, Lisp, or Scheme programs. Moss was invented in 1994, and is used to detect plagiarism in computer programming classes. Moss is free for instructors and staff of programming language courses. *Access:* <http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~aiken/moss.html>.

• **Plagiarism.org.** An online resource for detecting plagiarism designed for educators and created by the students and alumni at the University of California-Berkeley. Papers submitted to plagiarism.org are checked using turnitin.com, dubbed the "world's leading plagiarism prevention system." Plagiarism.org and turnitin.com are recommended for both high school and academic libraries, and are used in over 50 countries. *Access:* <http://www.plagiarism.org>.

• **PlagiServ.** This free service claims to be the largest, comprehensive local database of approximately 70,000 papers. PlagiServ allows educators to load students' papers in their database and it checks phrase by phrase for signs of plagiarism. The site also has a discussion board where people can discuss plagiarism related issues. *Access:* <http://www.plagiserve.com/>.

• **Turnitin.com.** Affiliated with plagiarism.org, turnitin.com considers itself to be "the world's most widely recognized and trusted resource for helping prevent Internet plagiarism." Turnitin.com boasts of "detering plagiarism for nearly 5 million educators and students worldwide." It is a fee-based service, but provides free trials. *Access:* <http://www.turnitin.com>.



• **WordChecksystems.** This keyword document checking software is used by educators to profile the documents of students. It identifies keyword use in documents and alerts the person searching when there are keyword matches. WordCheck comes in "Profiler Pro" and "Profiler Basic" formats. An institution can also get a site license for the software. It is a fee-based resource. *Access:* <http://www.wordchecksystems.com>.



Seminars, workshops, and comprehensive documents

• **Electronic Plagiarism Seminar.**

This very detailed document was prepared by Gretchen Pearson, public services librarian at the Noreen Reale Falcone at Le Moyne College. Pearson starts by looking at media coverage of the issue of plagiarism and has links to some plagiarism detection tools. She presents definitions of key terms relating to plagiarism, including copyright, intellectual property, and data. Pearson outlines some strategies for preventing and detecting plagiarism, provides links to guides for educators and students, and examines sites that provide both free and fee-based term papers. She also provides links to articles on plagiarism, anti-plagiarism, and plagiarism prevention and detection. *Access:* <http://www.lemoyne.edu/library/plagiarism.htm>.

• **Plagiarism.** This excellent and very detailed document was prepared by Sharon Stoerger, a librarian at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She looks at articles on copyright and intellectual freedom for instructors and students, and she discusses and provides links to plagiarism case studies, plagiarism detection tools, and term paper sites. Her paper provides a comprehensive and thorough examination of plagiarism. *Access:* <http://www.web-miner.com/plagiarism>.

• **Plagiarism in Colleges in USA.** Ronald B. Standler, an attorney and a consultant, prepared this comprehensive document, which is an examination of plagiarism from the legal standpoint. Topics discussed include plagiarism, law of plagiarism, copyright law, trademark law, fraud, and statutes about the sale of term papers. He also presents cases involving plagiarism in colleges, cases against commercial institutions, legal action against people who report plagiarism, and provides links to other excellent resources on plagiarism. *Access:* <http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm>.

• **Plagiarism Stopper: A Teacher's Guide.** This list was compiled by Jane Sharka with help from some school librarians in Illinois to attempt to guide teachers in dealing with student plagiarism. It includes tips on how to detect plagiarism, prevention and training, free detection tools, fee-based services, and list of paper mills. *Access:* http://www.ncusd203.org/central/html/where/plagiarism_stoppers.html.

Search engines and library subscribed full-text databases and plagiarism promotion

• **Google.** Google's advanced search tool is capable of acting as a plagiarism detection tool. It can locate keywords that appear in a research paper. Google also directs the user to other plagiarism detection services and resources with the Google Advanced Directory. *Access:* <http://www.google.com>.

• **Metacrawler.** Metacrawler is a meta-search engine, searching other search engines for phrases and keywords. *Access:* <http://www.metacrawler.com>.

• **Yahoo.** Yahoo places information into categories and subcategories. The search engine searches these categories as well as other Web sites for words or phrases. *Access:* <http://www.yahoo.com>.

Full-text databases in educational institutions are readily accessible to students. It is easy to cut and paste large parts of articles in a student's research paper. Sample full-text databases include: ProQuest, Lexis-Nexis Academic, ABI/INFORM, JSTOR, INFOTRAC, Project Muse, and Science Direct.

Paper mills and plagiarism promotion sites

Free papers

There are thousands of sites that offer free papers on the Internet. This is a very small sample of what is available to encourage plagiarism. Some of these provide no references or bibliographies and come with errors.

• **Anti Essays.** *Access:* <http://www.antiessays.com/>.

• **BigNerds.com.** *Access:* <http://bignerds.com/>.

• **Chuck III's College Resources.** *Access:* <http://www.chuckiii.com/>.

• **College Term Papers.com.** *Access:* <http://collegetermpapers.com/>.

• **School Sucks!** Provides term papers that can be printed. Term papers are free to print off the browser; downloading is available through a membership of \$15 per year or \$6.95 per month. *Access:* <http://www.schoolsucks.com>.

• **Term Paper sites.com.** *Access:* <http://www.temppapersites.com/>.

• **Virtual Essays.com.** *Access:* <http://www.virtualessays.com/>.

Papers for sale

• **A1 Term Paper.** This service maintains a database of about 20,000 pre-written papers. Pa-

pers are individually priced, and pricing is available in their online catalog. Custom-written papers are priced based on the difficulty of the subject matter. Prices range from \$19.95 to \$35.00 per page. *Access:* <http://a1-tempaper.com/>.

- **Cheathouse.com.** This subscription-based service requires customers to pay annual subscription fee. Cheathouse claims to have over 12,500 essays of varying qualities, and charges \$49.95 for one full year of access, \$14.95 for a month, and \$3.95 for a week. The site warns students about the dangers of turning in essays exactly the way they get it from the paper mills. Students are being advised to wise up to the dangers of being caught for plagiarism. *Access:* <http://www.cheathouse.com/>.

- **Genius Papers for Sale.** This is a subscription service for free papers that professes to have in store over 100,000 papers. The site also provides custom service. A custom paper requiring rush delivery costs about \$34 per page and a standard delivery, taking between seven and ten days, costs \$20 per page. *Access:* <http://www.geniuspapers.com/>.

- **Term Paper Highways.** This service provides professional technical custom services and charges as much as \$6.66 per page. *Access:* <http://www.papershighway.com/aboutus.htm>.

Links to bibliographies

- **Plagiarism: Exploring the Issues.** Compiled by Cindy Harrigan from the Patrick Power

("Widespread academic . . ." continued from page 383)

publish in alternative or electronic venues, but can't "in good conscience" recommend the junior faculty they mentor to do so.

- Many librarians view their position to be much less influential than faculty in solving the problem. It was reported that there is a widespread lack of understanding among the faculty as to how the library works, is affected by the crisis, and has to deal with the problems it creates.

- One interviewee mentioned significant success and enthusiasm when graduate students were approached and informed of the issues. This seems to be a more future-oriented strategy, with the library hoping at some point down the road the education will pay off.

- Institutional repositories may offer hope. However, a number of misperceptions and uncertainties remain regarding their value and implementation. For instance, some believe repositories will make valuable proprietary information available to the public.

Library at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This is a great bibliography, but it has not been updated since August 2001. *Access:* <http://www.stmarys.ca/administration/library/plagbiblio.html>.

- **Plagiarism: Keeping Up with the Cheats.** This great bibliography, prepared by John Royce, library director at Robert College in Istanbul, Turkey, includes articles and plagiarism detection and prevention resources. It alerts users to sites that are no longer active by leaving them in the bibliography, but shading them gray. *Access:* <http://vm.robcoll.k12.tr/~jroyce/plagbibl2.html#papers> at d Prevention.

- **Plagiarism in Cyberspace.** This Web site, titled "Plagiarism in Cyberspace: Sources, Prevention, Detection, and Other Information," was prepared in April 2002 by Laura M. Boyer at the California State University Stanislaus Library. It includes articles, book, links to articles on the Web, and news for faculty about plagiarism. *Access:* <http://www.library.csustan.edu/lboyer/plagiarism/plagiarism3bibliog.htm>.

Notes

1. Oxford English Dictionary. Ed. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press. 8 May 2003. <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00181778>. ■

- An interesting observation made by those being interviewed is that institutions will likely need to subscribe to both the traditional prestigious (more expensive) publications as well as the alternative venues for some time. The likelihood of doing a quantum switch is small, unless the alternative venues become robust and numerous enough that a punctual change can be made. This puts an extra financial burden on libraries to carry both the traditional and the alternative indefinitely.

- As might be expected, a number of those being surveyed expressed concern over the amount of publishing power held in the hands of so few publishers. Monopolistic practices seem to be common and appear to be increasing.

Although many of the observations reported above were derived from the qualitative responses, it is hoped that more quantitative responses will be presented in Toronto. ■



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