

Understanding & Preventing Plagiarism

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Part I: Understanding Student Plagiarism

A Trip to the Dark Side....

Presentation Overview

- I. How did we get here?* – Some factors contributing to student plagiarism
- II. “E” is for “easy”* – How e-plagiarism is done
- III. I think this one smells* – How to check out a suspicious paper

“If you steal from one author, it’s plagiarism; if you steal from many, it’s research.”

- Wilson Mizner (1876–1933), U.S. dramatist

Some Contributing Factors

- Idea that material on the internet is not intellectual property worthy of proper citation
- Lack of consistency among citation style guides, especially for online sources
- Ease in the online environment

- Students' misunderstanding of the concepts of collaboration, fair use, and plagiarism
- Students' tendency to procrastinate
- Students' "consumer mentality" – here to get a job vs. here to learn

Source:

Auer, Nicole and Ellen Krupar. "Mouse Click Plagiarism: The Role of Technology in Plagiarism and the Librarian's Role in Combating It." *Library Trends* 49.3 (2001): 415-432.

e-Plagiarism: How It's Done

- General Websites
- Paper Mills
- “Coles Notes” Sites
- Newsgroups, Listservs, Chat
- Online Library Sources

General Websites

There is something out there on virtually any imaginable general topic.

For example, let's look for information on “**child labour**”.

Paper Mills

There are many sites, offering a wide range in price (starting at \$0) and quality. Some examples:

www.cheathouse.com

www.academictermpapers.com

www.planetpapers.com

“Coles Notes” Sites

These study guides cover much more than Shakespeare. The major sites include:

www.sparknotes.com

www.cliffsnotes.com

Newsgroups, Listservs, Chat

These can be a quick and easy way to get a little too much help from “experts”.

A searchable Usenet newsgroup directory:

groups.google.com

Online Library Sources

8,000 e-journals, a dozen fulltext databases,
online encyclopedias, all free to students:

e-Journals directory: www.lib.unb.ca/eresources/e-Journals.php

Fulltext databases: www.lib.unb.ca/eresources/e-Reference.php

Paper Checking

- Turnitin.com
- Checking the “public” web
- Checking key library sources

Checking the “Public” Web

Plug a questionable and unique phrase from the paper into general search engines:

www.google.com

www.altavista.com

Checking Key Library Sources

Plug a questionable and unique phrase from the paper into the database:

CBCA & Business Source Elite via

www.lib.unb.ca/eresources/e-Reference.php

Bibliography for Instructors

Available at:

<http://www.lib.unb.ca/instruction/PlagiarismBibliography.html>

**Now let's
move over**

into the light.

**Joy will
talk about
*prevention....***

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” (Proverb)



Part II: Preventing Plagiarism

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Make Assignment Unique

- Provide highly specific topics. Change:
 - “The globalization of the fast-food industry”
 - “Employment Equity: do we really need it?”
 - “Implementing the Kyoto Accord”
 - “Marketing on the Internet”
- Change topics from semester to semester



Make Assignment Clear

- Be specific about expectations
 - Individual v collaboration?
 - This course only?
 - Explicit prohibition against uploading to paper mills
 - Require documentation of all help received
- Provide both oral and written guidelines on collaboration



Require Specific Components

- Sources from 3 books, 2 Web articles, 1 personal interview, 2 journal articles etc.
- Discussion of a specific book/article
- A graph or table of data collected by student
- A certain % of sources published in given time frame e.g. last year
- Response to specific idea discussed in class



Require Process Steps

- Break assignment into pieces with different due dates and marks (point-spreading) for sections in progress, e.g.:
 - Explanation of topic chosen
 - Research plan
 - Outline
 - Annotated bibliography
 - Draft(s)
 - Final version



Require Copies of Sources

- Require attachments of articles/Web pages/book pages cited or used.
- Have them highlight the words quoted or otherwise cited



Require Interaction and Feedback

- Peer-editing or quality circles
- Oral reports: in class or in office conference
- Metalearning (reflective) essay
 - Short in-class piece on most important thing learned, problems faced, research strategies followed, most fruitful research technique etc.



Other Individual Strategies

- Don't allow last-minute changes in topics
- Caution students to save notes and drafts
- Avoid short lead times for assignments
- Reduce importance of assignments that students perceive as "busy work"
- Have a healthy discussion of AI at the beginning of each term; teach referencing conventions
- Incorporate library instruction into course
- Require an integrity statement



Faculty-Wide Considerations??

- Provide resource for secure assignment submission and return
- Collaborate on staggering due dates
- Focus on learning/problem solving and take emphasis off grades
- Develop an honour code for students in collaboration with Business & MBA societies



References

- Harris, R. A. (2001). The plagiarism handbook: Strategies for preventing, detecting and dealing with plagiarism. Los Angeles, CA.: Pycszak Publishing.
- www.AntiPlagiarism.com. Accessed at 7:55 p.m., December 4, 2002.