Encouraging Academic Honesty through Anti-plagiarism Software

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Abstract

This article aims to introduce LIS professionals to plagiarism, its types, some famous cases and the numerous library web sites devoted to this important issue. Plagiarism by students and researchers in academic and research institutions is an old but ever growing problem. The proliferation of paper mills, full text databases, and World Wide Web pages has made plagiarism a bigger problem in academia. The easy availability of electronic information through Internet creates a challenge for librarians, who must be well informed not only to detect and deter plagiarism, but also to educate their users about its ill effects.

This article also enumerates reasons for increase in plagiarism cases, how to avoid plagiarism, do's and don'ts of plagiarism, and finally prevention and punishment for plagiarism. Use of plagiarism detection tools can not only deter but also assist faculty to combat this form of academic dishonesty. In this article various anti-plagiarism tools have been enumerated and the advantages and disadvantages of using these automated texts matching software's are discussed and analyzed in brief. The librarian's role in informing masses about ill effect of plagiarism is also highlighted.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Text Matching Software, Anti-plagiarism

1. Introduction

While academic dishonesty is not a new phenomenon, there is no agreement about why plagiarism is so prevalent in the academic world. It is broadly acknowledged that online plagiarism is really high because of the easy availability of information.[1] The exponential growth in scholarly publications, makes it harder for faculty and instructor to detect the plagiarized sources. Goggle as today is probably the most popular search engine and an effective tool to detect plagiarism on the Internet.

Today editors and reviewers of all scholarly journals look for the following for selection of a paper for its inclusion in a journal:

1. Originality – what's new about subject?
2. Relevance to and extension of existing knowledge
3. Research methodology – are conclusions valid and objective?
4. Clarity, structure and quality of writing – does it communicate well?
5. Sound, logical progression of argument
6. Currency of references
7. Compliance to the editorial scope and objectives of the journal

The academic honesty has nearly reaching its nadir at a few places. One can benefit from the booming online research-paper industry, which, with a click of a mouse and a credit card number, supplies students and researchers with a customized research paper. This can be easily accepted for publication by any journal with high impact factor.

2.   What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism (from the Latin "plagiare", meaning "to kidnap") is defined as "the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work". [2] Plagiarism means using another's work without giving credit. "Work" includes the words and ideas of others, as well as art, graphics, computer programs, music, and other creative expression. The work may consist of writing, charts, data, graphs, pictures, diagrams, websites, movies, TV broadcasts, or other communication media. The term "source" includes both published and unpublished sources. The underlined principal is to cite it.

According to the Merriam-Webster [3] Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward. In the United States, the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) [4] has oversight on research funded through the National Institutes of Health (NIH); the major sponsor of all biomedical research. India does not have a statutory body to deal with scientific misconduct in academia, like the Office of Research Integrity in the USA and hence cases of plagiarism are often dealt in ad-hoc fashion with different routes being followed in different cases. The Society for Scientific Values [5] is an independent body of scientists with the goal of upholding ethics in the Indian Scientific community. In absence of a statutory body to investigate academic misconduct, the society has been acting as an independent watchdog over the years.

3.   Types of plagiarism

Plagiarism can broadly be classified & distributed as four types:

1. Complete Plagiarism: A piece of work copied entirely from one or more sources
2. Copy and Paste: Available information off internet or electronic journals
3. Word Switch: If you copy a sentence or paragraph into your assignment and change a few words it will still be considered to be plagiarism
4. Self-plagiarism: Self-plagiarism is when you re-use your own previously written work or data in a new assignment and do not reference it appropriately

Plagiarism can be either intentional or unintentional. [6] Intentional plagiarism is buying or copying papers. It includes

1. Copying a friend's work
2. Copy and pasting a webpage to submit as your own. [7]
3. Ordering and downloading a paper from a paper mill. [8]
4. Sharing a paper via E-mail.
5. Buying or borrowing papers
6. Cutting and pasting blocks of text from electronic sources without documenting
7. Media "borrowing" without documentation
8. Web publishing without permissions of creators

Unintentional plagiarism includes

1. Careless paraphrasing
2. Paraphrasing a source without citing it.
3. Patchwork plagiarism
4. Poor documentation
5. Quoting excessively
6. Failure to use your own "voice"

4.   Why people Plagiarized?[9]

People in general plagiarize others work because of one or more of the following reasons:

1. Laziness
2. Lack of time / planning
3. Fear of failure
4. Competition (parental & colleague pressure)
5. Lack of knowledge
6. Lack of enforcement
7. Pressures to publish (for career advancement)
8. Desire for getting recognition
9. To influence others

5.   Some Instances of Plagiarism

1. Prof. B. S. Rajput VC of Kumaon University and colleagues in the field of Theoretical Physics, had to resign after being found guilty of copying from a paper published by a Stanford University scientist, in Physical Review.

2. C.K. Raju charged Michael Atiyah, former President of the Royal Society, UK, of plagiarizing or claiming inappropriate credit to some of his previously published ideas. [10]

3. H. Rangaswami and Colleagues from the group of Dr. Gopal Kundu have misrepresented data in a paper published in Journal of Biological Chemistry. The allegation was that they had rehashed the same set of data which they had published earlier.[11-12]

4. Prof. Kalyan Kumar and colleagues VC of North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology, NERIST, India has been literally copying works of other authors and presenting them in his names.

5. Article written by K. Muthukkumaran, T. Mathews, S. Selladurai and R. Bokalawela was reported to be a reproduction of an article published earlier in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) by David Andersson and others at the Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden.

6. A retired academic at Calcutta University, Mahimaranjan Adhikary, has been found to be indulging in Plagiarism, by the American Mathematical Society. [13]

7. Novel by Kaavya Viswanathan, a Harvard University undergraduate, was recalled, after it emerged that the book, How Opal Mehta Got Kissed, Got Wild, and Got a Life, contained many passages apparently plagiarized from two young-adult novels by Megan McCafferty, Sloppy Firsts (2001) and Second Helpings (2003).

8. Mashelkar has been accused by a British IPR expert Dutfield about verbatim copying of his 1996 paper in Mashelkar's 2004 book "Intellectual Property and Competitive Strategies in the 21st Century" which he co-authored with Shahid Ali Khan.

9. Science retracted publications made earlier by a South Korean researcher, Hwang Woo-suk on breakthrough in stem cell research.

6.   Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism [14]

1. Use your own words and ideas (Just practice)

2. Give credit for copied, adapted, or paraphrased material (use quotation marks & cite)

3. Avoid using others work with minor "cosmetic" changes

4. There are no "freebies."

5. Beware of "common knowledge."

6. One way to avoid plagiarism is reading something and putting it into your own words

7. Another way is to credit the author of what you read and not taking credit for it

8. At the beginning of the first sentence in which you quote, paraphrase, or summarize, make it clear that what comes next is someone else's idea [15]

7. Dos and Don'ts of Plagiarism [16-20]

One should follow some simple tips for avoiding plagiarism. These are:

1. attribute references
2. describe all sources of information
3. give acknowledgments
4. provide footnotes
5. use quotation marks wherever required
6. paraphrase the original, attributed work
7. for extensive quotations, obtain permission from the publisher of the original work
8. avoid self-plagiarism by taking permission from the publisher of the previous article authored by you
9. obtain permission for use of published drawings or other illustrations

What are the punishments for plagiarism? The onus is on all scientists to increase education and awareness of ethical issues pertaining to scientific publications. Allegations of plagiarism should be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and for an act of plagiarism appropriate action should be initiated. After being challenged by an authority the reactions of plagiarist are:

1. Silence.
2. Denial.
3. Evasion.
4. Rationalization. [21]

Plagiarism is a serious breach of research ethics that, if committed intentionally, is considered research misconduct. Plagiarism may result in serious sanctions, including public disclosure, loss of research funding, loss of professional stature and termination of employment. Plagiarism undermines the authenticity of research manuscripts and the journals in which they are published and compromises the integrity of the scientific process and the public regard for science. Plagiarism violates the literary rights of individuals who are plagiarized and the property rights of copyright holders. Violation of literary or property rights' may result in legal action against the individual(s) committing plagiarism. Although plagiarism has existed since the beginning of science, it seems to be increasing because the World Wide Web (Internet) facilitates finding and copying the work of others. [22]

As with any wrong doing, the degree of intent and the nature of the offense determine its status. When plagiarism takes place in an academic setting, it is most often handled by the individual instructors and the academic institution involved. If, however, the plagiarism involves money, prizes, or job placement, it constitutes a crime punishable in court. Some noteable examples are:

♦ University in Nigeria suspends their Dean (http://allafrica.com/stories/200801240190.html)

♦ Punjab University in Pakistan suspended their Director (http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/

default.asp?page=2008\01\27\story_27-1-2008_pg7_27)

♦ Durham University in UK suspended its Dean of business school (http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,2201833,00.html)

♦ Colorado University in USA suspended their ethics Professor (http://www.colorado.edu/news/reports/churchill/distefano062606.html)

♦ State University of New York removed their Director (http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-50945847.html)

8.   How to Prevent Plagiarism

Plagiarism is quickly becoming part of our educational culture. More and more students are turning to the internet for quick "shortcuts" around the rewarding but time-consuming work of writing research papers (http://www.turnitin.com/static/products.html). A large part of the problem is awareness of the issues. Often, students do not even know that they are plagiarizing, and those who do know are often unaware of the seriousness of the offense and its possible consequences. Another part of the problem lies in the factors that make students likely to plagiarize: poor research skills, attitudes toward grades and schoolwork, poor time-management skills, the perception that peers are cheating and skewed risk-reward assessments. Plagiarism can be prevented by addressing these factors.

The most important steps in preventing plagiarism are those taken to address its causes. The strategies addressed are:

1. become aware of the reasons plagiarism occurs
2. identify the different forms of plagiarism
3. integrate plagiarism prevention techniques into your system

8.1 Plagiarism Detection

Plagiarism detection can be either manual or computer-assisted. Manual detection requires substantial effort and excellent memory, and is impractical in cases where too many documents must be compared, or original documents are not available for comparison. Computer-assisted detection allows vast collections of documents to be compared to each other, making successful detection much more likely (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

8.2 Anti-plagiarism Tools

The most accurate way to detect plagiarism is to take a "fingerprint" of a paper - defined by structure, words, and content - and compare it with papers stored in an electronic archive or on the internet using Plagiarism.org (www.plagiarism.org) or turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com). The emergence of these software and web based services together with powerful computers and their ability to mine large electronic databases for instances of plagiarism promises to revolutionize the peer review process and raise the quality of published research everywhere.

To prevent plagiarism, software tools are developed that are referred to as anti-plagiarism software. There are a number of anti-plagiarism tools, most popular being Turnitin and plagiarism.org. Turnitin is the most popular Internet based anti-plagiarism software tool developed by iParadigms. To name a few other anti-plagiarism tools widely available on the Web are:

AntiPlagiarism 1.0	http://wareseeker.com/Business-Finance/antiplagiarism-1.0.zip/317091
Article Checker	http://www.articlechecker.com
Blackboard	http://www.blackboard.com
CopyCatch:	http://www.copycatchgold.com

CodeMatch	http://www.ZeidmanConsulting .com/CodeSuite.htm
Copyscape	http://www.copyscape.com
CopyTracker	http://copytracker.org CopyTracker
DOC Cop	http://www.doccop.com/
Duplichecker	http://www.duplichecker.com
Ephorus	http://www.ephorus.com
EssayFraud	http://www.essayfraud.org/
EVE2	http://www.canexus.com/eve/ download.shtml
Firefox	http://www.1hs.org/blog/?p=23
Glatt	http://www.plagiarism.com/self. detect.htm
Google	http://www.google.com
IntegriGuard	http://www.integriguard.com
iThenticate	http://www.ithenticate.com/static/ home.html
JCIS	http://mmi.tudelft.nl/
Jplag	http://www.jplag.de
LexisNexis CopyGuard	http://www.lexisnexis.com/copyguard/
Moodle	http://moodle.org
Moss	http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/ ~aiken/moss.html
My Drop Box	http://www.mydropbox.com
Numly	http://numly.com/numly/default.asp
Plaggie	http://www.cs.hut.fi/Software/Plaggie/
Pl@giarism	http://www.plagiarism.tk/
Plagiarism Checker	http://www.plagiarismchecker.com/
Plagiarism Detector	http://www.plagiarism-detector.com
Plagiarism- Finder 1.2.2	http://www.bluechillies.com/ details/20691.html
Plagiarismscanner	http://www.plagiarismscanner.com
PlagiServe	http://www.plagiserve,com
Safeassign	http://www.safeassign.com
SCAM (Stanford University)	http://infolab.stanford.edu/~shiva/ SCAM/plag.html
SeeSources	http://www.seesources.com
Scanmyessay	http://www.scanmyessay.com
Scriptum	http://www.scriptum.ca/
Sherlock	http://www.cs.su.oz.au/~scilect/ sherlock/

SID	http://genome.math.uwaterloo.ca/SID/
SIM	http://www.cs.vu.nl/~dick/sim.html
The Plagiarism Checker	http://www.dustball.com/cs/ plagiarism.checker/
Threads	http://edtech.wetpaint.com/page/ Anti-Plagiarism+ Software/thread
Urkund	http://www.urkund.se
WCopyfind 2.5	http://www.plagiarism.phys.virginia.edu/
WebCT	http://www.webct.com/service/ ViewContent
WordCheck	http://www.wordchecksystems.com/
YAP (University of Sydney)	http://luggage.bcs.uwa.edu.au/~/ YAP.html

9. Advantages and Disadvantages of using Anti-Plagiarism Tools

Some anti-plagiarism tools are Web-based and there is no need to download and install the software; some are freeware while others are shareware. Anti-plagiarism tools also help in saving time compared to that of scanning manually.

One of the major drawbacks of such software is that the emphasis is more on detecting plagiarism than on educating students. At times when teachers do not find any plagiarized information, they need to use search engines or software to cross check submitted assignments. Some software compares the submitted report with a database and leaves it at that. At times, this database is limited, and a paper could be plagiarized using documents beyond the parameters of a particular application. At times these software cannot distinguish between cheating done intentionally and mistakes done while summarizing, rephrasing etc.

The major disadvantages of using anti-plagiarism tools are:

1. It does not come free in most of the cases
2. Student data and student work are being made available to third parties
3. Detects only collusion among students, and cannot detect material downloaded from the Web
4. Students actually have to sit down to a test to fulfill the requirements
5. Formatting is lost in the checking procedure, so essays for marking have to be submitted separately from essays for checking
6. Sometimes unsystematic and labor-intensive, involves manual entry of strings.

10. Conclusion

The main reason why students and researchers plagiarize is because they do not understand what constitutes plagiarism. At present, there are no foolproof tools/techniques available to detect plagiarism but sincere efforts are being made in this direction and here LIS professional can play a vital role. It is true, that no one can prevent plagiarism but sincere efforts can be made to reduce plagiarism. The librarian role can be:

1. To develop Web pages, guides for proper citation and plagiarism
2. To offer checking services to its users and faculty
3. To educate the users and faculty, through library users training programes.

Six important and final steps to addressing plagiarism problem are:

1. Acknowledge the problem
2. Universally define plagiarism
3. Increase its awareness among masses

4. Prevent (Create an Academic Integrity Policy/ Adjust assignments)
5. Develop a method for catching/screening
6. Be a good role model

Acknowledgements

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