RUNNING HEAD: PLAGIARISM PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR THE

LIBRARIAN

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Introduction

This paper will explore the issue of plagiarism. I will look at the definition of plagiarism and its existence in the workplace, and more particularly, the K-12 and college setting and the effect of the Internet. I will consider the steps that administration, teachers/faculty, and students themselves can take to prevent plagiarism. Finally, I will focus on the important role of the school, academic, and public librarian in preventing this form of academic dishonesty.

Definition

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, plagiarism is: “...the act of taking the writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. The fraudulence is closely related to forgery and piracy—practices generally in violation of copyright laws” (“Plagiarism”, 2007).

Plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property.

The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file)..... Anyone who reproduces copyrighted material improperly can be prosecuted in a court of law.... Plagiarism can also be considered a felony under certain state and federal laws. For example, if a plagiarist copies and earns more than $2,500 from copyrighted material, he or she may face up to $250,000 in fines and up to ten years in jail (Plagiarism.org, 2007).
Plagiarism is a form of fraud, and in the academic setting it involves copying someone’s work; submitting a poorly documented or poorly cited paper; careless paraphrasing; cutting and pasting from the Web without attributing the source; recycling a previous paper; and taking credit for group work to which one did not contribute. Buying a finished project and submitting it as one’s own is also considered plagiarism (Schlessinger, 2004; Foss, 2006; Posner, 2007).

Plagiarism in the News

Recent Journalistic Event

CBS news anchor Katie Couric made news herself recently when accused of plagiarism in her “Notebook” column posted on the CBS website. Her essay concerned thoughts about the decreased use of libraries by young people, and several portions of it either very closely paraphrased or were verbatim the words of Jeffrey Zaslow from a recent Wall Street Journal article. After being notified of the issue, CBS pulled the essay from the website and apologized to Zaslow. The “Notebook” producer responsible for actually writing the essay was fired (Roberts, 2007).

Historical Events: Scholarly Works

Two cases have arisen of prominent historians being accused of plagiarism in the last few years. In 1987 Doris Kearns Goodwin published The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys. In 2002, a comparison showed many similarities between this book and Lynne McTaggart’s 1983 book entitled Kathleen Kennedy: Her Life and Times. Goodwin and McTaggart reached a settlement in 1987, with Goodwin literally paying McTaggart to keep the issue secret, even though Goodwin denied that she had plagiarized her work. As a result of the publicity, Goodwin ultimately resigned from the Pulitzer Prize Committee.
and left her position as commentator on the McNeil-Lehrer News Hour (Wiener, 2005; Thomas, 2007).

Stephen Ambrose was the best-known historian accused of plagiarism. He was a prolific writer in his 40-year career. In 2002, *Weekly Standard* writer Fred Barnes exposed plagiarized passages in Ambrose’s 2001 work *The Wild Blue: The Men and Boys who Flew the B-24s over Germany*. Barnes claimed that Ambrose copied passages from Thomas Childers’s 1995 book, *Wings of Morning*. Ambrose apologized, and said that he would use proper quotations in future editions of the book. Shortly afterwards, allegations concerning other works surfaced. Ambrose denied plagiarism while admitting that he had “copied words” which only “amounted to about 10 pages out of a total work of some 15,000 pages in print” (Hoffer, 2004, p. 177). A retired professor, Ambrose’s career would have ended had he remained in academia (Wiener, 2005; Hoffer, 2004).

**Plagiarism and the Internet**

Of course, it’s not only journalists, scholars, and professors who appropriate the words of others, and over the last decade, the Internet has made plagiarism even more tempting for students. In 2002, a Piper, Kansas high school biology teacher recognized plagiarized sections in the papers of 28 of her students, in part by using a 30-day trial of the plagiarism-detection software Turnitin. Christine Pelton had a strict academic honesty code and had even had the students (and their parents) sign a contract: “Rule number seven couldn’t be clearer: ‘Cheating and plagiarism will result in the failure of the assignment. It is expected that all work turned in is completely their own.’” (“Cheating”, 2002, para. 7)
Pelton failed the 28 students. However, the parents, the community, and the school board sided with the students. Pelton was forced to change the grades, and she resigned her position. This incident calls into question the understanding of both students and parents of the dishonesty in copying from the Internet (Minkel, 2002; “Cheating”, 2002).

In an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, an English instructor writes with dismay about a student who downloaded a paper from the Internet despite learning in the class about academic dishonesty. Laird (2001) warns of the ease with which students can copy from the Internet. She believes that Internet plagiarism is characteristic of our culture at large, and likens it to ordering pizza delivery. The Internet has made it easier for students to cut and paste others’ work and submit it as their own, as well as order papers from online paper mills. Many students have little compunction about downloading music from the Internet without paying for it (another form of theft), and that concept has been extended to downloading information (Francis, 2005).

*Paper Mills*

Term paper companies offering students papers at a price first appeared in the late 1960’s in Boston and Los Angeles. One can now find on the Internet hundreds of websites considered “paper mills” offering various types of papers for purchase. These companies often claim that they are research services.

One website, 1MillionPapers.Com, is a product of The Paper Store Enterprises, Inc. (“TPS”), which boasts several hundred websites itself with over 30,000 papers in its database. TPS claims that only its websites are “TPS certified” (inferring legitimacy and honesty). The homepage lists papers by category, with links to hundreds of other TPS
“help sites”. The database is searchable by topic; “plagiarism” yields 13 papers. The site gives the title of the paper, a one-line description, a hyperlink to a longer description, and another hyperlink to order the paper. Same day delivery is $9.95 per page plus free bibliography. TPS also charges $29.95 per page for custom research. This site almost seems like a legitimate reference resource. Following is a portion of the disclaimer posted at the bottom of the each page:

*Our research papers are created to be used as models to assist you in the preparation of your own term paper. Neither 1MillionPapers.Com nor any website owned by The Paper Store Enterprises Inc., will EVER sell a research paper to ANY student giving us ANY reason to believe that (s)he will submit our work, either in whole or part, for academic credit at any institution in their own name. !!!Plagiarism is a CRIME! IF YOU QUOTE FROM OUR WORK, YOU MUST CITE OUR PAPER AS ONE OF YOUR SOURCES . . . .The organization's rights to research, write, and globally-publish exemplary papers on the Internet are protected, Free Speech and shall continue unabated and uncensored…

(1millionpapers.com, 2007).

One wonders how to cite a paper-mill paper (?).

EthicsPapers.com is one of TPS’ services; it provides papers solely on the topics of ethics. Interestingly, a search for the term “academic integrity” yields 200 papers to purchase (EthicsPapers.com, 2007). Please see Appendix B for a selected list of other prominent paper mill websites.
Alongside the development of paper mills on the Internet has been the birth of plagiarism-detecting, paper-checking websites, the most well-known being Turnitin.com. Founded in 1997, Turnitin’s parent company is iParadigms LLC, which provides a similar service to publishers and newspaper editors, called iThenticate.

According to its brochure on the Turnitin website, “Turnitin’s plagiarism prevention system is the world’s most widely used solution to the growing problem of cut and paste plagiarism” (Turnitin.com, 2007). Turnitin is used in 90 countries by 9.5 million high school and college students, and claims that it reduces the incidence of plagiarism. Institutions purchase the service and its software checks submitted students’ papers against three databases: “a comprehensive Internet snapshot, a library of published articles, and a pool of millions of previously submitted student papers” (MacMillan, 2007, para. 6).

The service seems to have some merit, but it has also stirred some controversy. In March 2007 four students (two from Virginia and two from Arizona) filed a lawsuit against Turnitin.com in U.S. District Court. The suit seeks $900,000 in damages and claims that the service violates copyright laws by depositing students’ papers into its 22-million paper database without permission or attribution. These students specifically obtained copyright registrations for the six papers mentioned in the suit and submitted to Turnitin (Glod, 2007). Kevin Wade, a McLean, Virginia parent has developed a website called dontturnitin.com. This site delineates the problems Wade and other concerned parents see with the service, including the charge that “original, intellectual work product produced in a public school setting is being transferred to, archived by and utilized for
Plagiarism Prevention in the Academic Setting

Administration

Important in the academic arena is the establishment and enforcement of policies and codes that encourage honesty in the classroom. One author has recommended a series of steps that colleges and universities, in particular, should take concerning academic integrity. These steps include, in part, establishing an honor code which will be articulated to students at the beginning of their coursework; including expectations about honesty in course syllabi; involving students in creating honor codes and academic integrity processes; and a clear administrative process for enforcing an honor code (Scanlan, 2006).

Although the word “plagiarism” is not actually in the University of Denver Honor Code (see Appendix A), it embodies the concept of academic honesty. The code applies to the entire community—faculty, staff, administrators and students. The Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver requires that the Honor Code be present or referenced in each course syllabus. In addition, each new student must sign a form indicating receipt of the student handbook, which includes the Honor Code.

Teachers and Faculty

“In a strange way . . . term-paper mills forced colleges to reassess the educational process and to develop more careful assignments and assessment
techniques” (Dickerson, 2007). In the academic setting, teachers should be the main instructors and enforcers of anti-plagiarism measures. Teachers can prevent plagiarism by ensuring that students know what it is and why it is wrong; encouraging original and critical thinking; encouraging confidence in the students’ work; and ensuring that students know they are aware of paper mills and also paper-checking services (Francis, 2005).

The teacher can make plagiarism more difficult for the student by focusing on the research process more than the product (the paper itself). Evaluating parts of the process as the student goes through it is an invaluable way to do this. The student can focus on each step or task individually, get help as needed, and work through the process systematically. This reinforces research skills and encourages the development of critical thinking. This approach also gives the instructor the opportunity to see writing samples of the student—a good way to detect plagiarism later on (Foss, 2006).

Students

Students should also take responsibility for their own learning and participation in academic honesty. Following are some tips to help writers avoid plagiarism and prove that their paper is indeed original work:

- Keep all research notes
- Keep all draft revisions and print out your paper as you go
- Copy and/or print out information from the Internet (it may vanish)
- Get feedback from the teacher
- Cite correctly and ask for help when necessary.

(Foss, 2006)
The Librarian – School, Academic, and Public

This section applies primarily to school and academic librarians, but public librarians need to be aware of the concepts and resources as well, due to their interaction with students at the reference desk.

The librarian needs to work with school/college administration to encourage academic honesty. Wood (2004) writes:

Become a champion for the intelligent, ethical issues of information by knowing the definitions of academic integrity and dishonesty and by incorporating values into reference and instructional services, as well as by participating in the campus-wide and interdisciplinary debates on academic integrity (p. 240).

School and academic librarians should take initiative in defining academic integrity in an institution and/or a school district, and supporting consequences for violations (Minkel, 2002; Wood, 2004).

Grassian (2004) believes that the increasing epidemic of plagiarism is in part due to “information illiteracy.” Even at the college level, many students are not taught appropriate research methods and skills, the tremendous amount of information available through subscription databases, or even the importance academics give to peer reviewed articles. Students also often do not understand copyright and intellectual property.

School and academic librarians need to work with instructors. One suggestion is to “[d]evelop partnerships with many other departments and disciplines in order to model and teach the complex role that information has in our lives” (Wood, 2004, p. 240).
Librarians can help faculty understand how to recognize cheating—and specifically, plagiarized work. The librarian can and should be available to work with faculty to help create assignments that make cheating difficult, and that emphasize active learning and working with scholarly materials (Minkel, 2002; Wood, 2004).

Teaching information literacy is a proactive step in which both the teacher and the librarian can participate. In particular, school and academic librarians must be aware of measures that students can take to avoid plagiarizing. Teaching good research skills involves organization; appropriate quotation, paraphrasing and summarizing; and how to properly cite and document resources (Schlessinger, 2004).

Librarians can help to increase student awareness of cheating and plagiarism through the use of handouts, websites, and tutorials that encourage academic integrity and using information ethically. Again, information literacy involves teaching students to use databases and to think critically in the research process to evaluate the information retrieved. The librarian can encourage academic honesty in discussions in the classroom and at the reference desk (Minkel, 2002; Wood, 2004).

Students can be encouraged to organize their time and their notes and keep careful track of sources. Planning ahead eliminates the temptation to copy and paste at the last minute, and helps the writer to develop his or her ideas on the topic as well as his or her own “voice” in the writing. Quotations should be exact and only used to support an argument or highlight a powerful phrase. The paper should not be composed primarily of quotations—that is submitting others’ work rather than the writer’s own ideas.

Paraphrasing involves putting the information in one’s own words, and not just changing a few words here and there from the source. When summarizing, the writer uses
his or her own words to convey the main idea of a source. Appropriate documentation and citation involves always crediting facts and ideas according to whatever style is required (e.g., American Psychological Association). By being informed on the various styles and resources available for citations, librarians can help the writer understand and document sources appropriately (Schlessinger, 2004).

Librarians are also working on ways to help students research and write appropriately, and find and use information in an ethical manner. According to Grassian (2004), in addition to providing electronic reference services such as text messaging and discussion boards, librarians are developing proactive research tools linked to specific courses. Librarians can work with faculty by reviewing syllabi and suggesting ways to improve information literacy in the course, as well as offer courses on research and writing. Creative librarians can develop tutorials on research techniques such as TILT--Texas Information Literacy Tutorial--which is an open source tutorial sponsored by the University of Texas System Digital Library (Grassian, 2004).

Conclusion

Plagiarism abounds in the journalistic setting, in the workplace, in schools grades K-12, in academia by both scholars and students. The Internet has made it much easier and more tempting to cut and paste work for a paper from websites and databases, or to purchase pre-written papers from paper mills. A proactive approach to its prevention is preferable to spending time and energy trying to detect it on the back end.

In this regard in the academic setting, various constituencies play a role in preventing plagiarism, developing information literacy, teaching and reinforcing research
skills, critical thinking, and the student’s confidence in his or her own work. Administration can set policies and provide academic honesty codes that apply to faculty, staff, administration, and students in the academic setting. Once set, these must be communicated and then enforced by those in positions of power.

Teachers have a crucial role in deterring plagiarism by developing lessons in ways that reduce the possibility of plagiarism. Teachers also need to incorporate into the curriculum teaching research skills, affirming academic honesty, and developing information literacy in various ways. Once taught the student then has the responsibility to take charge of his or her own learning and having integrity in presenting his or her own work.

Finally, the librarian can play a major role in preventing plagiarism. He or she can stand for intellectual honesty and encourage administrations to enforce honor codes and policies concerning integrity in the classroom. The librarian can work with the classroom teacher or faculty member by reviewing lessons or syllabi and providing suggestions on incorporating strategies to improve information literacy and limit the possibility of plagiarism. After the fact, the librarian can also help the instructor by showing strategies to detect plagiarism, particularly “cut and paste” Internet copying. Although many of these recommendations apply primarily to school and academic librarians, the public librarian should also take this information to heart in providing services to students and the general public when searching for and developing resources for a paper or other project.
APPENDIX A

University of Denver Honor Code

Honor Code Statement

All members of the university community are expected to assume the responsibility of observing certain ethical goals and values as they relate to academic integrity. Essential to the fundamental purpose of the University is the commitment to the principles of truth and honesty. This Honor Code is designed so that responsibility for upholding these principles lies with the individual as well as the entire community.

The purpose of this Honor Code is to foster and advance an environment of ethical conduct in the academic community of the University, the foundation of which includes the pursuit of academic honesty and integrity. Through an atmosphere of mutual respect we enhance the value of our education and bring forth a higher standard of academic excellence. No member of the University community, including students, faculty, staff and administrators, shall act in any way that could reasonably be construed as an intentional misrepresentation or deception in academic or professional matters.

RATIONALE

The Code was developed following discussions among a broad range of constituencies within the University encompassing students, faculty, and staff. The Honor Code is a living document that will evolve with time. Both substantive requirements and enforcement procedures may be amended by the University to reflect experience gained from its implementation, in order to better foster and advance an environment of ethical conduct in the academic community of the University.

AUTHORITY

Any modification of this Honor Code, other than to the procedures governing its enforcement, must be approved by the Board of Trustees upon recommendation from the Provost. Modifications and variations in procedures governing enforcement of this Code are subject to the approval of the Provost. In addition, upon recommendation from a Dean or the Faculty Senate, the Provost, in his sole discretion, may permit individual units or divisions of the University to adopt and implement area specific descriptions of conduct violative of this Honor Code provided that such descriptions do not authorize conduct prohibited by or inconsistent with this Code.

ENFORCEMENT

The University of Denver Honor Code Procedures Governing Students" shall govern and be followed in the case of any student at the University who is accused of violating the Honor Code. The University's "Faculty Personnel Guidelines Relating to
*Appointment, Promotion and Tenure*" shall govern and be followed in the case of any faculty member who is accused of violating the *Honor Code*. The University's "*Employee Handbook of Personnel Guidelines & Procedures*" shall govern and be followed in the case of any non-faculty employee who is accused of violating the *Honor Code*.

(http://www.du.edu/facsen/honor_code.html)
APPENDIX B

A Selected List of Paper Mill Websites


http://www.top-term-paper-sites.com/
Lists the following three:
   Perfect Term Papers:  http://www.perfecttermpapers.com/


   Non Plagiarized College Term Papers:  http://www.non-plagiarized-termpapers.com/

CheatHouse:  http://www.cheathouse.com/

Term Paper Relief:  http://www.termpaperrelief.com/

Essay Town:  http://www.essaytown.com/
Quote:  “A paper . . . from Essay Town.com was passed through Turnitin undetected.”

Free Online Research Papers:  http://www.freeonlineresearchpapers.com/
(You have access once you turn in a paper)

Schoolsucks:  http://www.schoolsucks.com/
APPENDIX C

A Selected List of Websites Helpful for Preventing Plagiarism

Plagiarism.org: http://www.plagiarism.org

Turnitin.com: http://turnitin.com/static/home.html

The Owl at Purdue: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/

The Writing Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison:

Plagiary.org: http://www.plagiary.org/
Works Cited


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http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-228894

http://turnitin.com/static/home.html

http://www.du.edu/facsen/honor_code.html
