WEBWORTHY

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Plagiarism, Googling, and the Mouse:
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development would preclude cheating and plagiarizing as inconsistent with one’s identity.
... Third, we ask our students to perceive the dishonesty of their classmates as
something that causes harm to the many students who play by the rules.20

Certainly the positivist approach suggested by Professor Himmans
is vital in the long run. But in the meantime, it is just as
important to use the available legal and academic sanctions against student plagiarists
when they get caught. Honor codes and school policies against plagiarism must be
emphasized and enforced by both secondary and post-secondary institutions, and the
discipline meted out should be publicly disclosed
so that an example can be made of those who
have violated the codes or policies.21 Where the
academic institution has taken such disciplinary action, the accused plagiarist all too
often turns to the courts of law in an attempt to
avoid the loss of degree or, in the case of teachers, loss of job. Invariably, judges reject
the plaintiff’s efforts to have the court second-guess the academic institution’s procedures.

The publicity given to the numerous instances of famous or near-famous “adults”
that have been found guilty of plagiarism is highly salutary, both because it shows that
people do get caught and also because it allows us to see what a devastating effect committing
plagiarism can have on one’s life and career. Here’s a quick list:

- In late September of this year, Lawrence

Trine, a distinguished Harvard law prof-
essor, admitted that he had copied with-
out proper attribution portions of a 1974
book by Henry Abraham entitled Jus-
tices and Presidents.
- Notorious journalism scandals have re-
cently come to the surface, such as the
ones involving Jayson Blair (New York
Times), Jack Kelley (USA Today), and
Richard Judd (Harford Courant).
- Historians Stephen Ambrose and Doris
Kearns Goodwin used entire passages from
other publications in their books
without indicating from whence the
material came.
- Huang Zongying, an associate profes-
or of English at Peking University, was fired
after a Chinese graduate student brought
the misconduct to light.
- Roger Shepard, an Arts Professor at New
School U., resigned after admitting plagia-
rum. Portions of Meredith L. Claussen’s
book, Pietro Belluschi: Modern American
Architect, appeared in Shepard’s book,
Structures of Our Time: Thirty-one Build-
ings That Changed Modern Life without
attribution.
- In September 2004, Mostafa Imam, a
Saudi Arabia-based researcher, was ac-
cused of plagiarizing photographs of vari-
ous organisms previously published in
microbiology and other related journals.
- Shortly thereafter, Imam died of a fatal
heart attack.
- Tony-nominated playwright Bryan
Lavery has been accused of plagiarizing
passages from a 1997 New Yorker article
by Malcolm Gladwell about Dr. Dorothy
Otnow Lewis and her book Guilty by
Reason of Insanity. Lewis and Gladwell
say that a number of passages in Lavery’s
play “Frozen” are taken directly from
their own work.

In March of this year, the president of
Central Connecticut State University,
Richard Judd, was accused of plagiariz-
ing materials for an op-ed piece that
appeared in the Hartford Courant the previ-
ous month. A few days later, he
announced that he would retire at the end
of the school year.

Importantly, there are various legal weapons available to academic institutions to fight
plagiarism committed by the student or academic as well as the aiding and abetting
of such misconduct by online term paper mills. With respect to the latter, for example,
14 states have enacted laws that prohibit and, in most cases, criminalize the sale of term
papers, theses, dissertation, or other written material wherein the writer knows or should
reasonably have known that such written material is to be submitted by another person for
academic credit at any institution of higher learning in the state.23 Unfortunately, neither
academic institutions nor prosecutors have proven interested in pressing such cases.

With respect to the plagiarists themselves, academic institutions seldom press for legal
sanctions against the perpetrators other than internal disciplinary measures. Nevertheless,
sanctions under various legal theories are in fact available.24

In the end, teachers are the first line of
defense in both detecting and deterring pla-

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Webworthy has reviewed 330 Websites to date! Are you reading this intro? If so, we’d like to know if you find this column useful!
Email the editor at <pmrose@buffalo.edu> with your comments and any suggestions for improvement!

Webworthy is an ongoing project that provides a unique perspective on the web. Websites are selected for their depth of information, ease of access, and for their ability to be Internet-based.

Computers
Are you helping in the search for ET? If you’re not already using your desktop computer’s downtime to search for signs of alien life, IBM is recruiting volunteers to help crunch research problems which will aid society. The World Community Grid will begin with the Human Proteome Folding Project, and will move on to five or six projects a year. — http://www.worldcommunitygrid.org

Exhibits
Learning about 87 eminent physicists who excelled in the field from 1900-1976 might seem like just another biographical excision. Except these 87 persons are not named Albert, Robert, or Hans. Contributions of 20th Century Women to Physics profiles an international roster of scientists, including Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin who won the 1964 Nobel Prize in chemistry, and S. Jocelyn Bell Burnell who identified the first pulsars. Although the intro page still states 83, the subdiscipline categories include a total of 87 names. There were other women contributors to the field prior to and after 1976; however this group had the most documentation available and have been thoroughly researched. Also included are a photo gallery, historical documents from 1891-2000, and a section titled “In Her Own Words” with notable quotes from the subjects. My favorite, made by Hertha Marks Ayrton (1912) whose work on the electric arc was precursor to the field of plasma physics: “An error that ascribes to a man what was actually the work of a woman has more lives than a cat.” — http://cwp.library.uto.ca/

http://http://www.against-the-grain.com>

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Plagiarism, and there is much good advice available on the Web about how to do just that. For example, an excellent set of guidelines on "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers," prepared by Mr. Robert Harris in 2002 is available at http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm. The guidelines provide helpful and workable details on how to apply the general goal of "mark[ing] the assignment and requirements unique enough that an off-the-shelf paper or a paper written for another class or a friend's paper will not fulfill the requirements" so that only a newly written paper will suffice. 23

I do not know the extent to which your own academic institutions formally attempt to inculcate in their students, teachers, and researchers a deeper respect for book research versus online research as well as unfailing sense of academic honesty and integrity, nor do I know the extent to which your institutions consciously and intentionally include library professionals in either the broader challenge of teaching intellectual rigor or the process of detecting and deterring plagiarism. But if the institutions do not redouble their efforts to inspire academic honesty and if they do not include library professionals in these efforts, then specialists are leaving themselves on a collision course with the present trends towards lazy and dishonest scholarship. Addressing these issues is not a "luxury" that can be postponed until a better time, notes Professor Lawrence Hinman. "It is a short step from dishonesty in schools and colleges to dishonesty in business." 726

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Geology

Cold. Snow. Ice. Glaciers. Icebergs. Welcome to the cryosphere! If you live in Buffalo or Minnesota and want to know more about the world of cold, visit the National Snow and Ice Data Center out of Boulder, CO. View the curious formations sculpted by snow and ice, such as sastrugi (formed by wind) or ogives (alternating bands of light and dark ice). Experts can dig into more than 400 data sets of snow depths or satellite images then follow the gradual crumbling of the Larsen Ice Shelf in Antarctica. — http://nsidc.org/

Paleontology

When your 10 year old begins to hunger for more information about T. Rex, turn to the Paleobiology Database, maintained by paleontologist John Holm of the U. of California Santa Barbara. With more than 43,000 fosse collections' detailed data, the site offers a wealth of collective information which allows users to map collection sites, look at detailed profiles including lists of other remains, and ask "big picture" questions like tallying the diversity of forms since the demise of the dinosaurs. — http://paleodb.org

Endnotes

1. Bill is a partner in the Chicago-based law firm, Schiff Hardin LLP, and has been a frequent speaker over the years at the Charleston Conference. He is an Adjunct Professor at Chicago-Kent College of Law and the author of numerous books and articles on legal topics.


3. Id.

4. A case in point is reported in the Boston Globe for March 3, 2000, at B1 (sixty-three students in introductory computer science class at Dartmouth were charged with plagiarism on homework assignments).


8. Id.


11. The same search for "free term papers" on Google came up with 5,090,000 hits. By contrast, a search for "plagiarism detection" came up with only 36,000 hits on Google and a mere 7,107 hits on AOL.

12. Dane S. Clausen, director of the journalism and mass communication graduate program at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, quoted in V. Whitehouse & J. Nichols, "Inside the hallowed halls: how journalism schools are confronting student plagiarism," The Quill, August 1, 2004, No. 6, Vol. 92; Pg. 14.

13. One article makes the disturbing suggestion that some term paper mills "have ties to plagiarism detection software companies." For example, detection software companies, Plagiarism.com and EduFile (http://www.edufile.com) have connections to term paper sites like MightyStudens.com (http://www.mightystudens.com), EssayMill.com (http://www.essaymill.com), EssaysOnFile.com (http://www.essaysonfile.com) and TopEssays.com (http://www.topessays.com).


15. Id.


21. It would be surprising if any educational institution did not have such a code or policy. A quick Web search turned up numerous examples on line. It also turned up the curious anomaly of a one state university library Website that included both the school's honor code as well as an extensive list of hyperlinks to fee-based and "free" term paper mills. One wonders about the wisdom of providing such information. As one legal commentator observed when encountering a similar situation on another university library's Website, "while such information is not difficult to find, I consider it unethical to provide links to businesses that are explicitly violating the law," Ronald B. Standler, "Plagiarism in Colleges in USA" (2000), available at http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm.

22. See Chandelauri v. Georgetown Univ., 274 F. Supp. 2d 71 (D.D.C. 2003), where an American student of Indian descent sued Georgetown, alleging unlawful discrimination on the basis of national origin and retaliation after the university disciplined him for plagiarism. The court dismissed the complaint, concluding that plaintiff offered no evidence that the disciplinary hearing was not conducted in accordance with the procedures published in the university's honor code. Moreover, the honor code clearly set forth the definition of plagiarism, and the hearing board's decision not to exercise its disciplinary power to adjust the sanction was not a violation of the sanctioning guidelines.


25. One section of Mr. Harris' guidelines gives practical details on how to detect plagiarism. Rule number one is to "[l]ook for the clues." As you read the papers, he advises, look for internal evidence that may indicate plagiarism, such as mixed citation styles, lack of references or quotations, unusual formatting, off topic discussion, signs of datelessness, anachronisms, anomalies of diction, anomalies of style, and smoking gun blunders.