Plagiarism

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

**Plagiarism** is the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.

Within **academia**, plagiarism by students, professors, or researchers is considered **academic dishonesty** or **academic fraud** and offenders are subject to academic censure. In **journalism**, plagiarism is considered a breach of **journalistic ethics**, and reporters caught plagiarizing typically face disciplinary measures ranging from suspension to termination. Some individuals caught plagiarizing in academic or journalistic contexts claim that they plagiarized unintentionally, by failing to include **quotations** or give the appropriate **citation**. While plagiarism in scholarship and journalism has a centuries-old history, the development of the **Internet**, where articles appear as electronic text, has made the physical act of copying the work of others much easier, simply by **copying and pasting** text from one web page to another.

Plagiarism is not **copyright infringement**. While both terms may apply to a particular act, they are different transgressions. Copyright infringement is a violation of the rights of a copyright holder, when material protected by copyright is used without consent. On the other hand, plagiarism is concerned with the unearned increment to the plagiarizing author's **reputation** that is achieved through false claims of authorship.

Sanctions

**Academia**

In the academic world, plagiarism by students is a very serious offense that can result in punishments such as a failing grade on the particular assignment (typically at the high school level) or for the course (typically at the college or university level). For cases of repeated plagiarism, or for cases in which a student commits severe plagiarism (e.g., submitting a copied article as his or her own work), a student may be suspended or expelled. Many students feel pressured to complete papers well and quickly, and with the accessibility of new technology (The Internet) students can plagiarize by copying and pasting information from other sources. This is often easily detected by teachers, for several reasons. First, students' choice of sources are frequently unoriginal; instructors may receive the same passage copied from a popular source (such as Wikipedia) from several students. Second, it is often easy to tell whether a student used his or her own "voice." Third, students may choose sources which are inappropriate, off-topic, or contain incorrect information. Fourth, lecturers may insist that submitted work is first submitted to an online plagiarism detector. [1]
In many universities, academic degrees or awards may be revoked as a penalty for plagiarism.

There is little academic research into the frequency of plagiarism in high schools. Much of the research investigated plagiarism at the post-secondary level. Of the forms of cheating (including plagiarism, inventing data, and cheating during an exam), students admit to plagiarism more than any other. However, this figure decreases considerably when students are asked about the frequency of "serious" plagiarism (such as copying most of an assignment or purchasing a complete paper from a website). Recent use of plagiarism detection software (see below) gives a more accurate picture of this activity's prevalence.

For professors and researchers, plagiarism is punished by sanctions ranging from suspension to termination, along with the loss of credibility and integrity. Charges of plagiarism against students and professors are typically heard by internal disciplinary committees, which students and professors have agreed to be bound by.

**Journalism**

Since journalism's main currency is public trust, a reporter's failure to honestly acknowledge their sources undercuts a newspaper or television news show's integrity and undermines its credibility. Journalists accused of plagiarism are often suspended from their reporting tasks while the charges are being looked into by the news organization.

The ease with which electronic text can be reproduced from online sources has lured a number of reporters into acts of plagiarism: Journalists have been caught "copying-and-pasting" articles and text from a number of websites.

**Online plagiarism**

Since it is very easy to steal content from the web by simply copying and pasting, the problem of online plagiarism is growing. This phenomenon, also known as content scraping, is affecting both established sites and blogs.

Free online tools are becoming available to help identify plagiarism, and there is a range of approaches that attempt to limit online copying, such as disabling right clicking and placing warning banners regarding copyrights on web pages. Instances of plagiarism that involve copyright violation may be addressed by the rightful content owners sending a DMCA removal notice to the offending site-owner, or to the ISP that is hosting the offending site.

It is important to reiterate that plagiarism is not the mere copying of text, but the presentation of another's ideas as one's own, regardless of the specific words or constructs used to express that idea. In contrast, many so-called plagiarism detection services can only detect blatant word-for-word copies of text.
Other contexts

Generally, although plagiarism is often loosely referred to as theft or stealing, it has not been set as a criminal matter in the courts. Likewise, plagiarism has no standing as a criminal offense in the common law. Instead, claims of plagiarism are a civil law matter, which an aggrieved person can resolve by launching a lawsuit. Acts that may constitute plagiarism are in some instances treated as copyright infringement, unfair competition, or a violation of the doctrine of moral rights. The increased availability of intellectual property due to a rise in technology has furthered the debate as to whether copyright offences are criminal.

Self-plagiarism

Self-plagiarism is the reuse of significant, identical, or nearly identical portions of one’s own work without acknowledging that one is doing so or without citing the original work. Articles of this nature are often referred to as multiple publications. Typically, high public-interest texts are not a subject of self-plagiarism; however, the authors should not violate copyright where applicable. "Public-interest texts" include such material as social, professional, and cultural opinions usually published in newspapers and magazines.

In academic fields, self-plagiarism is a problem when an author reuses portions of his or her own published and copyrighted work in subsequent publications, but without attributing the previous publication. Identifying self-plagiarism is often difficult because of legal issues regarding fair use. Some professional organizations like the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) have created policies that deal specifically with self-plagiarism. As compared to plagiarism, self-plagiarism is not yet very well-regulated. Some universities and editorial boards choose to not regulate it at all; those consider the term self-plagiarism oxymoronic since a person cannot be accused of stealing from themself.

For authors wishing to avoid potential issues when authoring new papers, the authors are strongly encouraged to follow these "best practices":

1. Provide full disclosure — mention in the introduction that the new or derivative work incorporates texts previously published.
2. Ensure there is no violation of copyright.
3. Cite the old works in the references section of the new work.

Organizational publications

Plagiarism is presumably not an issue when organizations issue collective unsigned works since they do not assign credit for originality to particular people. For example, the American Historical Association’s "Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct" (2005) regarding textbooks and reference books states that there is no question about taking credit for someone else's ideas. Since textbooks and encyclopedias are summaries...
of other scholars' work, they are not bound by the same exacting standards of attribution as original research. However, even such a book does not make use of words, phrases, or paragraphs from another text or follow too closely the other text's arrangement and organization.

Within an organization, in its own working documents, standards are looser but not non-existent. If someone helped with a report, they may expect to be credited. If a paragraph comes from a law report, a citation is expected to be written down. Technical manuals routinely copy facts from other manuals without attribution, because they assume a common spirit of scientific endeavor (as evidenced, for example, in free and open source software projects) in which scientists freely share their work.


It is common for university researchers to rephrase and republish their own work, tailoring it for different academic journals and newspaper articles, to disseminate their work to the widest possible interested public. However, it must be borne in mind that these researchers also obey limits: If half an article is the same as a previous one, it will usually be rejected. One of the functions of the process of peer review in academic writing is to prevent this type of "recycling".

Public figures commonly use anonymous speech writers. If a speech uses plagiarized material, however, it is the public figure who may be cast in a bad light. For instance, Delaware Senator Joe Biden was forced out of the 1988 U.S. Presidential race (but remained in the U.S. Senate) when it was discovered that parts of his campaign speeches were plagiarized from speeches by British Labour party leader Neil Kinnock and Robert Kennedy.

**Etymology**

The Online Etymology Dictionary dates the word to 1621. A precursor, plagiar, is recognised from 1597. The Latin root, plagarius, means kidnapper, seducer or plunderer, 'used in the sense of “literary thief” by Martial' (the 1st century Roman poet). Plagium meant kidnapping, in turn derived from plaga, to capture or trap.

This account of the word’s origins is disputed by John E. Skandalakis who claims the term plagiarism was used by the ancient Greek writer Timae to describe actions of the philosopher Empedocles round 490-30BCE.

“At that time the Greek word plagios, which denotes obliquity, already had the sense of being ‘morally crooked, practicing double-talk’,” writes Skandalakis, arguing that this
meant the Latin word *plagiarius* did not then refer to plagiarism in the modern sense. Timae used the word *logoklopia*, theft of words or thoughts. Others also argue that in the society of ancient Greece, which used mimesis or imitation as a deliberate dramatic or rhetorical strategy, plagiarism would not have been the crime it has become.

**See also**

At Wikiversity, you can learn about: Plagiarism

- Academic dishonesty
- Contract cheating
- Credit (creative arts)
- Cryptomnesia
- Essay mill
- Fair use
- Journalism scandals (plagiarism, fabrication, omission)
- List of plagiarism controversies
- Multiple publication
- Plagiarism detection
- Scientific misconduct
- Source criticism

**References**

4. ↑ Online plagiarism strikes blog world. [http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2006/05/08/online_plagiarism_strikes_blog_world/](http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2006/05/08/online_plagiarism_strikes_blog_world/)
External links

- American Historical Association, "Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct" (2005)
- What is the price of plagiarism? A *The Christian Science Monitor* article
- The Assessment in Higher Education web site's plagiarism page contains links to a variety of resources (articles, books, cheat sites, etc).
- "Plagiary: Cross-disciplinary Studies in Plagiarism, Fabrication, and Falsification," journal
- Plagiarism and Academia: Personal Experience, Bruce Schneier
- The Plagiarism Advisory Service funded by JISC Provides advice and guidance to UK learning institutions.
- Columbia University Music Plagiarism Project
- Famousplagiarists.com Personal site by Plagiary.org journal editor John P. Lesko documenting plagiarists and their deeds.

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