

# **Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism**

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THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

*The Chronicle Review*

From the issue dated May 2, 2003

**Plagiarism: a Lie of the Mind**

By MAURICE ISSERMAN

In announcing his resignation as president of Hamilton College last fall, Eugene Tobin apologized for a number of instances in which he had used plagiarized material in speeches he had delivered in the nine years since assuming office. That the college's chief executive did not use the occasion to quibble over definitions of plagiarism, or offer extenuating circumstances to excuse his actions, is entirely to his credit. He did the right thing in resigning, and he did the right thing in the way he resigned. The incident, however, raised fundamental questions about

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# PORTSMOUTH HERALD

## Minister resigns because of plagiarism

By Associated Press

KEENE - The senior minister at the United Church of Christ in Keene has resigned after admitting he lifted parts of sermons from the Internet.

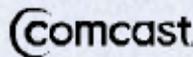
The Rev. Robert Hamm had been on an extended leave of absence following the announcement in January that he had plagiarized all or parts of several sermons. He resigned on April 25.

"I'm really grateful for the love and support of many fine people in the past 15 years and especially the last five months," Hamm said.



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# USA Today editor retires in wake of plagiarism scandal

Wednesday, April 21, 2004 Posted: 9:24 AM EDT (1324 GMT)

**NEW YORK (AP) --** The editor of USA Today, the country's largest-selling newspaper, retired suddenly Tuesday amid a scandal over fabrications and deceptions by Jack Kelley, one of the paper's star reporters.



Karen Jurgensen, 55, had been the paper's editor since 1999. Her departure came on the heels of a comprehensive report on the Kelley fiasco compiled by three veteran newspaper editors.

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# Basic Definition of Plagiarism

The word **plagiarize** actually comes from the Latin **plagiare**—to kidnap (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

When you plagiarize, you're taking (or kidnapping) someone else's work.

# U of M Definition of Plagiarism & Cheating

- Plagiarism - The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper attribution.
- Cheating - Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or aids in any academic exercise or test/examination. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- Fabrication - Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

**University of Memphis Code of Student Conduct**

<http://www.memphis.edu/studentconduct/misconduct.htm>

# Characteristics of Plagiarism

- Lacks guidance
  - Illegal/unethical
  - Inadvertent/Unintentional
- Inadvertent/Unintentional
  - Result of poor research methods
  - Illegal/unethical – also embarrassing
- Intentional
  - Illegal/unethical

Jane Hanolen's theory (as cited in Murray 2002).

Murray, B. Keeping plagiarism at bay in the Internet age. *Monitor on Psychology* 33(2). Retrieved April 21, 2004 from <http://www.apa.org/monitor/febo2/plagiarism.html>

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**Opinion**

**Plagiarism still plagiarism**

The British Broadcasting Corporation reported Sunday on the issue of student plagiarism, stating that many students use Internet sources without citation. Furthermore, the argument that citation of these sources is not necessary has permeated popular conception of what plagiarism is.

**Ideological diversity essential on campus**

Most college students begin formulating their political identities during the early years of their matriculation. Students, within their rights, expect an environment where academics encourage and nurture intellectual curiosity while fellow peers recognize and respect ideological diversity.

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## Doris Kearns Goodwin Admits Plagiarism

-- 1/28/2002

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Following the recent debacle with Stephen Ambrose confessing to using passages from other writer's volumes in [several of his books](#), fellow historian Doris Kearns Goodwin now admits that in 1987 she included entire passages in her biography *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys* that were lifted from works by Lynn McTaggart (*Kathleen Kennedy: Her Life and Times*, 1983). The plagiarism came to light when McTaggart noticed the material in Goodwin's book and contacted her. Goodwin asserts that it was a simple error, claiming she mistook McTaggart's material for her own notes. McTaggart received credit in later editions along with monetary compensation.

### bestsellers

#### Pre-publication

1. *Nighttime Is My Time*, Clark, Mary Higgins
2. *Reckless Abandon*, Woods, Stuart
3. *Islands, Siddons, Anne Rivers*.
4. *Therapy*, Kellerman, Jonathan
5. *Whisker of Evil*, Brown, Rita Mae

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# Common Examples of Plagiarism

- Downloading papers from commercial Web sites and turning them in as your own.
- Downloading pictures, bits of music, or parts of other people's PowerPoint presentations found on the Web into PowerPoint presentations that you are creating.
- Turning in as your own work a paper (or parts of a paper) that someone else wrote.
- Turning in as your own work a paper that you purchased or downloaded for free.
- Cutting and pasting (or otherwise copying directly) from articles, Web sites, or other sources without citing them.
- Paraphrasing or summarizing what you read without citing the source.

# How Could I Be Caught?

There are a number of ways to detect plagiarism:

- People can search the Web! All they need is to find a unique phrase that is in a paper to be able to find the original source online.
- People can read, and may recognize what you wrote as someone else's work.
- Plagiarism detection programs such as Turnitin.
- Other clues, such as a real difference in writing styles.

# What Do I Need to Give Proper Credit?

- The author(s) or editor(s) of the book, article, Web site, story, etc.
- The title of the work.
- Publication information (where published, who published, when published).
- Volume, issue, and page numbers (if applicable).
- Date obtained (if applicable).
- URL if an electronic source.

In other words, all the information that someone would need to find this work again!

# How Do I Give Proper Credit? By Citing!

- Use quotation marks and credit all sources any time you use another person's exact words.
- Credit sources whenever you paraphrase.
- Give credit to the original authors when you model your work on theirs
- Common knowledge need not be cited.

# How Much Can I Use?

- Err on the side of caution—if in doubt, put it in quotation marks or reword.
- Regardless of the number of exact words, always document the source when you are using another person's ideas.

# How Does Documentation Help to Avoid Plagiarism?

Documentation styles provide methods for citing uniformly:

- References
- Punctuation
- Abbreviations
- Statistics
- Etc.

<http://www.apastyle.org/aboutstyle.html>

# Common Documentation Styles

- American Psychological Association (Social Sciences)
- Chicago (History, some humanities)
- Turabian (Chicago Style for student writers)
- Modern Language Association (English/humanities)
- Council of Biology Editors (Science/Math)

**I am still concerned...**

**Ask your instructor for guidance!**