

Strategies for Preventing Plagiarism*

Miguel Roig, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology



*Some of the slides from this presentation are recycled versions –most with modifications- of slides disseminated in earlier presentations by the author.

The problem

- A large percentage of students (40% to 60% of students in North America) admit to cheating and to plagiarizing.
- These estimates do not include those who plagiarize inadvertently (15% to 20% based on my own earlier research).
- It is a world-wide problem that occurs at all educational levels.

The problem

- A significant percentage of retractions are the result of plagiarism and duplicate publication:
- A meta-analysis of surveys on plagiarism revealed that 2% of respondents admit to have plagiarized and another 30% report to have witnessed plagiarism of others.*
- A more recent meta-analysis estimates that 8% of published papers contain major plagiarism and 11% contain minor plagiarism.**

*Pupovac, V., & Fanelli, D. (2015). Scientists admitting to plagiarism: A meta-analysis of surveys. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 21(5), 1331–1352. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-014-9600-6>

**Pupovac, V. The frequency of plagiarism identified by text-matching software in scientific articles: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Scientometrics* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-021-04140-5>

Table 2
Retraction numbers and rates for the 20 countries with 5 or more retracted papers, 2008–2012

| Country | Number of papers retracted | | | Rate of retraction | |
|----------------|----------------------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | Total | Plagiarism | Duplicate publication | Plagiarism | Duplicate publication |
| United States | 199 | 17 | 26 | 8.5% | 13.1% |
| China | 143 | 24 | 42 | 16.8% | 29.4% |
| Japan | 57 | 2 | 13 | 3.5% | 22.8% |
| Germany | 55 | 0 | 9 | — | 16.4% |
| South Korea | 55 | 3 | 7 | 5.5% | 12.7% |
| India | 49 | 18 | 7 | 36.7% | 14.3% |
| United Kingdom | 30 | 3 | 5 | 10.0% | 16.7% |
| Italy | 24 | 16 | 2 | 66.7% | 8.3% |
| Australia | 19 | 4 | 1 | 21.1% | 5.3% |
| Netherlands | 17 | 2 | 2 | 11.8% | 11.8% |
| Iran | 14 | 6 | 3 | 42.9% | 21.4% |
| Canada | 13 | 2 | 2 | 15.4% | 15.4% |
| France | 13 | 5 | 1 | 38.5% | 7.7% |
| Turkey | 13 | 8 | 2 | 61.5% | 15.4% |
| Egypt | 12 | 4 | 1 | 33.3% | 8.3% |
| Spain | 12 | 2 | 1 | 16.7% | 8.3% |
| Brazil | 9 | 3 | 1 | 33.3% | 11.1% |
| Finland | 8 | 0 | 3 | — | 37.5% |
| Tunisia | 7 | 3 | 2 | 42.9% | 28.6% |
| Sweden | 5 | 1 | 0 | 20.0% | — |

Amos KA (2014). The ethics of scholarly publishing: exploring differences in plagiarism and duplicate publication across nations *J Med Lib Assoc* 102 87 91

A recent analysis of retractions of papers from 2013 to 2016 revealed that plagiarism was the most common form of misconduct leading to retractions for biomedical research papers in both high- and low-impact journals. The authors noted that “[P]lagiarism has steadily increased with only 35 papers retracted for that reason in 2013 (9.9%) and 161 in 2016 (45.5%). Plagiarism was also the main cause of retraction in 2016”.*

*Campos-Varela I, Villaverde-Castañeda R, Ruano-Raviña A. (2019) Retraction of publications: a study of biomedical journals retracting publications based on impact factor and journal category. *Gac Sanit*. Sep 14; piiS0213–9111: 30152–9, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.gaceta.2019.05.008>

The problem

- Many students (and some academics) are not aware of the full range of writing practices that constitute plagiarism nor of the seriousness of their infractions.
- Some journals, particularly low quality and, especially those considered ‘predatory’, do not seem to screen for plagiarism nor do they tend to respond to complaints of plagiarism in their published papers.
- There is no centralized way of keeping track of offenders, whether students or academics, so plagiarists keep reoffending.

Plagiarism: Taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own

Most students and, certainly, most academics KNOW what plagiarism is, but perhaps only in the abstract. This is likely one of the main reasons why plagiarism is such a common academic infraction

Intentional vs. unintentional plagiarism

- When plagiarism is intentional, it is often a function of various internal and external factors including:
 - Competition, pressure to do well, impending deadline.
 - Poor writing skills.
 - Procrastination.
- When it is unintentional, it is the result of lack of proper knowledge about the subtleties of ethical writing, such as proper paraphrasing and proper citation practices.

Some key strategies to prevention

- Instruction on avoiding plagiarism and for its consequences
- Plagiarism resistant assignments
- Plagiarism detection
- Consequences for offenders

The need for targeted instruction in the 'subtler' issues

- Knowledge of plagiarism is more than 'giving proper credit' or than 'conveying others' ideas into your own words'.
- Thus, detailed instruction in the subtleties of what constitutes original writing, proper attribution, etc., is key in preventing these transgressions.

Important topics of Instruction

- Use of citations and proper attribution
- The problem of common knowledge
- Paraphrasing and summarizing (a most common problem)

Related areas of concern:

- Collaborative learning/problem solving
- Recycling one's own previously disseminated work (i.e., self-plagiarism).

Informing your students about plagiarism

- Devise a plagiarism handout. Spend some class time discussing plagiarism and why it is important to avoid it.
 - Define plagiarism, but go beyond traditional definitions, such as: “Plagiarism is taking others’ work and presenting it as one’s own ...”.
 - Include examples of common forms of plagiaristic practices (e.g., inappropriate paraphrasing, inappropriate collaborations, failure to acknowledge assistance).

Common forms of plagiaristic practices

List prepared by Patrick A. Cabe, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

- Direct plagiarism--Material of substantive length is copied verbatim from the source without attribution or the use of quotation marks.
- Truncation--Material is copied verbatim from the source with the original shortened by the deletion or substitution of beginning or ending words or phrase.
- Excision--Material is copied verbatim from the source with one or more words deleted from the middle of sentences.

Types of writing practices considered plagiarism

List prepared by Patrick A. Cabe, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

- Insertions--Material is copied verbatim from the source with additional words or phrases (often qualifiers such as "very") inserted into the material from the original source
- Reordering--Material is copied verbatim from the source with (a) sentences in a different order, or (b) words or (c) clauses in a given sentence in a different order
- Substitution--Material is copied verbatim from the source with a synonym or phrase substituted for words or phrases of the original source

Types of writing practices considered plagiarism

List prepared by Patrick A. Cabe, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

- Change of tense, or of person, or of number--Material is copied verbatim from the source except that verb tenses have been changed (e.g., from present to past), or the person or pronoun has been changed e.g., from first to third person), or the tense of the sentence has been changed from singular to plural.
- Change of voice--Material is copied (essentially) verbatim from the source, with sentences in the active voice changed to passive, or vice versa.

Types of writing practices considered plagiarism

List prepared by Patrick A. Cabe, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

- Grafting--(a) Material is copied verbatim from the source with two or more simple sentences conjoined into a compound or complex sentence. (b) Material is copied verbatim from the source with part of two or more sentences from different sections of the original source joined to form a new sentence. (c) Words or phrases putatively original with the author are used to precede or follow material copied verbatim from the source.
- Patchwriting – Same as above, but from two or more different sources.

No matter how much instruction is offered, chances are that some students (and some academics) will plagiarize intentionally

Telling your students about plagiarism and its consequences

- Inform students about your school's/ department's academic dishonesty policy early in the semester.
- If your institution does not have a policy, develop your own policy. Specify sanctions for violations.

Telling your students about plagiarism and its consequences

- Consider announcing and using **RETROACTIVE** sanctions.
 - Some institutions will revoke a student's degree if it later comes to light that a thesis or dissertation has been plagiarized. This is more common for master or doctoral level degrees.
- Review your academic dishonesty policy again one or two weeks before a written assignment is due.

Telling your students about plagiarism and its consequences

- If in the past you have caught other students plagiarizing, discuss these cases (without identifying the individual students involved). Emphasize the seriousness of their actions and the negative consequences that occurred as a result.
- Your presentation must convey a ‘no nonsense’ message that you intend to preserve an atmosphere of academic integrity in your class and that violations of your policy will not be tolerated.

Offering plagiarism resistant assignments

- Change your paper topics every semester.
- Avoid 'generic' topics or traditional book reports.
- Insist on the use of primary sources (the distinction between primary and secondary sources can be difficult for students to understand).
- If possible, confine the sources available for student papers to papers that you already have digitally stored.

Offering plagiarism resistant assignments

Some examples for introductory and advanced classes

- Have students select two articles from a list of course-appropriate sources on roughly the same topic and ask them to summarize and ‘compare and contrast’ the papers at a variety of levels.
- For advanced classes do as above but use more sophisticated criteria, such as differences in study design, conceptual criticisms of thesis and/or of evidence presented.
- Provide a unique template of how you want your paper written.

Many of these strategies may not work if the paper is being produced by a 'paper mill' (i.e., essay mill)

Ad published in a local US newspaper:

If you pick a suitable writing service, you'll benefit a lot from this decision. It will allow you to focus on the areas of your interest while being less stressed out. Keep reading the article to discover the most reliable assignment writing companies.

■ **Top Sites Where You Can Buy an Essay Safely**

- [PaperHelp](#) — from \$10 per page, 3-hour delivery;
- [EssayPro](#) — from \$10.80 per page, 6 hours delivery;
- [ExpertWriting](#) — from \$10 per page, 3-hour delivery;
- [WriteMyPapers](#) — from \$12 per page, 3-hour delivery;
- [SpeedyPaper](#) — from \$9 per page, 6 hours delivery.

Below, you will find a brief overview of the best sites where you can buy essay that will be written according to your specific requirements on any topic.

Other preventive measures

- Early in the semester, get a writing sample from students. This sample can be used as a ‘base line’ showing the level of sophistication of individual students’ writing.
- Assign earlier due dates for papers. Such a strategy might give you sufficient time for you to determine whether a suspicious paper has been plagiarized.

Other preventive measures

Force students to read and revise their work

- Have students submit at least one typed/printed, early draft of their paper with substantive penciled-in corrections along with their final paper.
- When turning in their papers, students should include copies of all of the references that they use for their papers with the specific sections that they consulted clearly outlined.

Other preventive measures

- Limit the number of direct quotes that students can use in their paper (I do not allow any direct quotes).
- Students should **ALWAYS** submit an electronic version of their paper, along with the paper version, and they should be warned that papers may be checked for plagiarism and/or that the students themselves will be tested on the material discussed in the paper (see Cloze test).

Other preventive measures

- Particularly for traditional papers:
 - If possible/feasible, assign students a brief oral presentation of their paper. Test them on their sources.
 - Make sure that you insist that the paper include the most recent references.

The use of agreement contracts

- Have students sign and return a portion of the course outline in which they acknowledge receipt of your course outline, that they thoroughly understand all course requirements¹ and, specifically, that they are aware of what plagiarism is and what the consequences are for infractions. This strategy is a bit legalistic, but

¹Palladino, J. J. (1997). Pedagogical, ethical and legal issues in Grading (unpublished paper).

The use of agreement contracts

Sign and return to the professor by September 13th. Note: You may not be given credit for this course unless I have this portion of the course outline in my possession.

CHANGES: I reserve the right to change or add to assignments and make changes to this course outline, for good reason and with adequate notice.

I _____ have received a copy of the course outline for Introduction to Psychology (PSY 1000). I have read the course outline and have reviewed the expanded version at <http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~roigm>. I have been given an opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the course outline and understand and agree to the requirements of this course.

Student's signature: _____ Date: _____ Student No.: _____

The use of agreement contracts (or honor pledge):

Example below is from McGill University's Honesty Pledge

- Require students to sign an “**Honesty Pledge**” at the end of each term paper. The pledge might state, for example, *"I certify that the work submitted here represents solely my own efforts. I am aware of University regulations about, and penalties for, plagiarism."*
- For courses requiring collaborative work, change the first sentence to read as follows: *"We certify that both partners contributed equally to the work submitted here and that it represents solely our own efforts."*

DETECTION OF PLAGIARISM

Detection of Plagiarism

- Does the paper look suspicious? (differences in format, fonts, style)
- Does it ‘glow in the dark’*? (use of sophisticated writing)
 - Both of these clues suggest that material may have been copied.

*Expression used by Perilou Goddard (2001, Feb, issue of Monitor [p.23])

Plagiarism detection services

There are several commercially available products
For a recent review of some of these and their
effectiveness across several languages, please see:

Foltýnek et al. (2020). Testing of support tools for
plagiarism detection *International Journal of Educational
Technology in Higher Education*
17:46, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-020-00192-4>*

*This paper was co-authored by Tomas Foltýnek who is one of the speakers at this year's conference and Debra Weber-Wulff who has written about plagiarism detection and was a speaker at last year's conference.

Become familiar with the various search engines

- Google is a good ‘first source’ for plagiarism of text as well as for plagiarism of images. But, other search engines may find material that Google doesn’t tap.
- Become familiar with other search engines (e.g., Firefox, Edge) and their capabilities (e.g., enclose phrase in quotations, use Boolean operators such as “and” or “or”).

Limitations of Search Engines

- Using search engines can be time-consuming.
- Although an increasing amount of the primary literature (i.e., journal articles) are freely available ('open-access'), it is possible that the source of the plagiarism lies behind 'pay-walls' or password protected and, therefore, part of the "Invisible Web" that Google and most other search engines cannot access. This would be particularly likely with plagiarism found in journal article submissions.
- Therefore, search engines may be ineffective as detectors of some instances of plagiarism.

Detection of Plagiarism

- Use freely available software such as the Louis Bloomfield's* program to check student-to-student plagiarism or, if you have the sources of the student's paper in electronic form you can check the student's paper against the electronic sources.

* <https://plagiarism.bloomfieldmedia.com/software/>

WCopyfind 2.2

Old Document Files (compare only with new documents, not with one another) Right-click in Box for Menu of Actions

C:\DATA\PAPERS\confepap\Text Recycling abstract.doc

New Document Files (compare with old files and with one another) Right-click in Box for Menu of Actions

C:\DATA\PAPERS\confepap\Text Recycling.doc

Comparison Rules

Shortest Phrase to Match: 6 Words Fewest Matches to Report: 100 Words Shortest Text String to

Ignore All Punctuation Skip Non-Words Most Imperfections to Allow: 1
 Ignore Outer Punctuation Skip Words Longer Than 20 Characters Minimum % of Matching Words: 100 %
 Ignore Numbers
 Ignore Letter Case Use Word Map: C:\WCopyfind\Wordmap.txt Browse

Folder for the Report Files

C:\WCopyfind\Report Browse

Compare Documents Double-click on an Line to View Comparisons

| Total Match | Basic Match | File 1 | File 2 |
|-------------|-------------|--------|--------|
| | | | |

Run

Brief Report

Make Vocab

Close

- ✓ Sort on Load
- Browse for Documents
- Load from File
- Save to File
- Clear Selection
- Clear All

[Recycling portions of text from the same author/s' previously published papers in psychology: An exploratory study](#)

[Miguel Roig, Ph.D.](#)

[St. John's University](#)

OBJECTIVE. [The present study was conducted to explore the extent to which authors of journal articles use portions of text from their previously published papers.](#) **METHOD.** [Nine journal articles were selected as 'target' papers from an issue of a psychology journal published in 2002. Up to 3 of the most recent references written by either the senior author or a co-author of the target paper were obtained. Using a conventional scanner, each of the target papers and their associated references were converted to electronic text files. These files were then compared using a computer program designed to identify strings of words common to two text files \(i.e., target and reference\).](#) **FINDINGS.** [Only one of the 9 target papers was found to contain text strings from one of its references. For this target paper, at least 30 text strings of 6 words or longer were identified in one of the reference papers. No single sentence from the target paper, however, was found to be identical to any other sentence in the reference paper. To determine whether text recycling might occur elsewhere, the reference papers from each of the target articles were compared against each other. The new comparison revealed 6 separate pairs of articles that shared text in common with one another. An analysis of these instances of text recycling indicated a similar pattern of appropriation as described above. Furthermore, in 5 of the 6 cases, the recycled text was typically confined to "Subjects" and/or "Procedure" subsections of "Method" sections, though text strings having as many as 50 consecutive words were found to be identical in one set of papers.](#) **CONCLUSION.** [The results suggest that same-authored text recycling may not be uncommon, but when it does occur it is usually confined to complex methodological descriptions of a research design or procedure.](#)

Biography

Miguel Roig, received his Ph.D. in cognitive studies from Rutgers University in 1989. Since that year, he has been teaching at the Staten Island campus of St. John's University where he is an associate professor of psychology. Miguel has carried out research in various areas of psychology, including the study of correlates of paranormal beliefs and experiences and the study of cognitive styles of thinking. For the past

[Recycling portions of text from the same author/s' previously published papers in psychology: An exploratory study](#)

[Miguel Roig, Ph.D.](#)

[St. John's University](#)

Self-plagiarism occurs when an author uses his/her previously published data and/or text and includes this material in a new publication. Two well-known subtypes of self-plagiarism are "salami-slicing" and "redundant publication". Salami slicing represents situations in which a large data set from a complex study is broken down into two or more components and each is published as a separate paper. Redundant publication, on the other hand, refers to the practice of submitting what is essentially the same data/paper to two or more journals. Although many scientists consider both of these practices unethical, evidence suggests that both of these forms of self-plagiarism are more common than previously thought (Schein, 2001).

A more seemingly benign form of self-plagiarism occurs when an author merely appropriates portions of text from a previously published paper and uses these text segments with little or no modification in a new publication. While there is some debate as to the ethics of this third type of self-plagiarism (Hexham, 1999), there is reason to believe that it may be relatively common (Samuelson, 1994). Unfortunately, writing manuals don't always provide coverage of plagiarism (Roig & deJacquant, 2000) and those that do (e.g., Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 2001) do not generally address the milder form of self-plagiarism, though they do discuss duplicate publication. Moreover, while there is some evidence indicating that text appropriation from others' sources takes place (Roig, 2001), little (if any) evidence exists as to how common the practice of recycling one's own previously published text really is. To address this gap in knowledge, [the present study was conducted to explore the extent to which authors of journal articles use portions of text from their](#) own previously published papers that are cited in their reference sections.

[METHOD](#)

[Nine journal articles were selected as 'target' papers from](#) a recent issue of a psychology journal that publishes scholarly summaries of current

Detection of Plagiarism

- Use the Cloze test. Make copy of paper and delete every 5th word and insert 10 spaces, give it to the student for him/her to fill in the missing words. If it was a cut-and-paste job, fewer words will be filled in. Alternatively, delete every key term and insert spaces.
- There is no way to determine what percent of missed words suggest plagiarism, but the Cloze test may be a good technique that leads students to confess. 😊

Disciplining plagiarists

LESSONS FROM THE MUSIC INDUSTRY AND FILE-SHARING SITES

Music downloading was reduced by half and this change has been attributed to widely publicized cases of individuals who were sued this past summer.

Piracy

Minnesota woman to pay \$220,000 fine for 24 illegally downloaded songs

Recording Industry Association of America has largely adjusted its anti-piracy strategy to stop suing individual downloaders

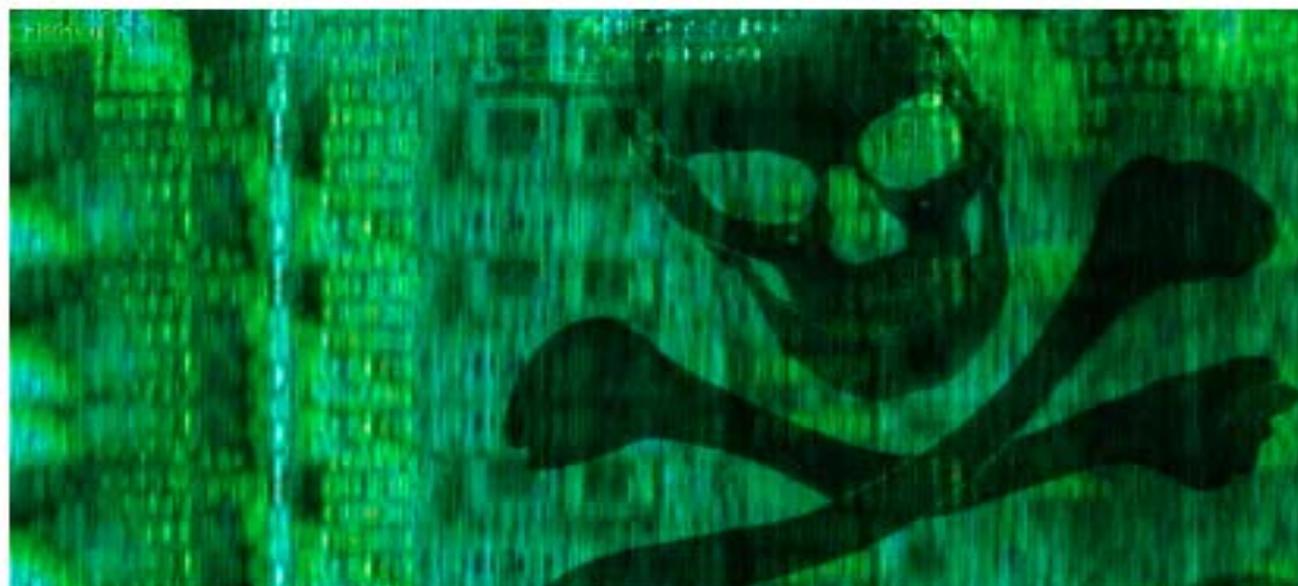
Amanda Holpuch

✉ @holpuch

Tue 11 Sep 2012 17:10 EDT



32



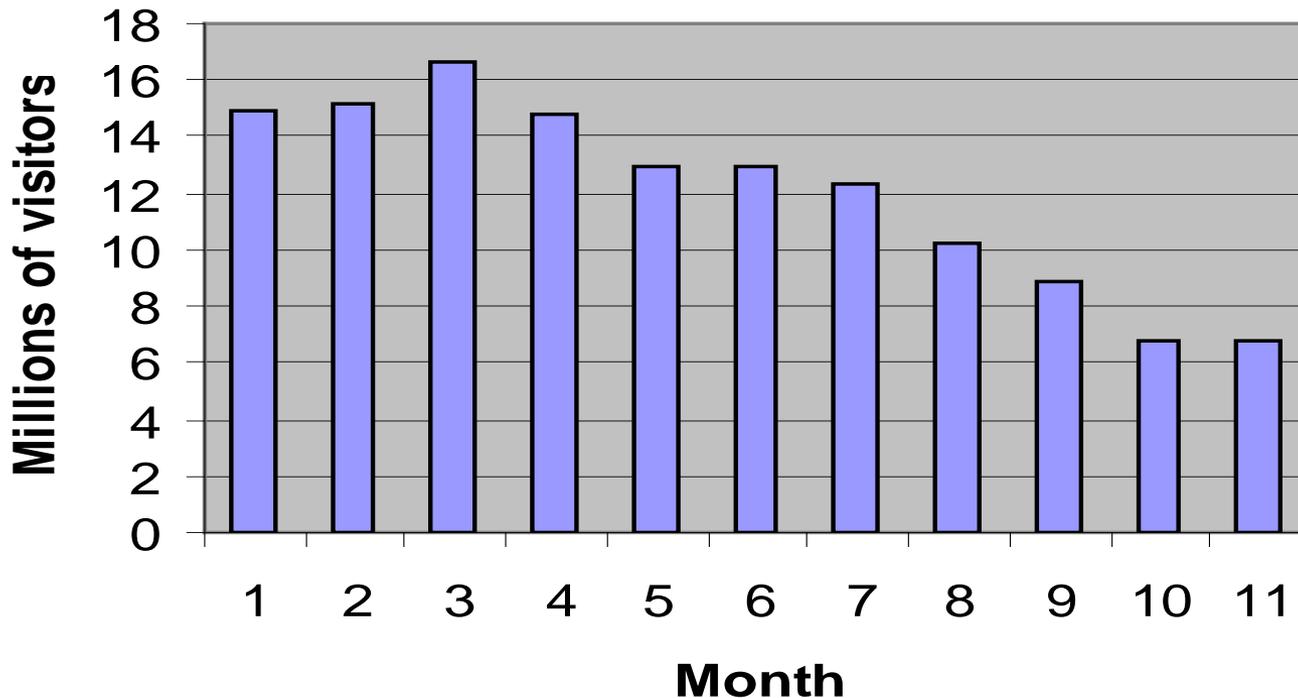
▲ Jammie Thomas-Rasset is set to pay \$9,250 for each work she downloaded. Illustration: Carol and Mike Werner/Alamy

A [Minnesota](#) woman, one of the last people to be individually prosecuted in the US for illegal downloading and file-sharing, faces a \$220,000 bill after a federal court ruling on Tuesday.

The federal appeals court reversed a district court's decision to reduce Jammie Thomas-Rasset's owed damages to \$54,000 from \$1.5m. [Tuesday's ruling \(pdf\)](#) sets the damages at \$220,000 and forbids Thomas-Rasset from making sound recordings available for distribution.

Data from survey of 1,358 respondents from
conducted by the Pew Institute*

No. of visitors to Kazaa since Jan, 2003



* Reported in the
January 5, issue
of the New York
Times

Legal sales of
digital tracks began
to increase in
August of that same
year.

Disciplining plagiarists

- Punishment should be commensurate with the crime and consistent with the academic integrity climate of your institution.
- Department/Institutional climate may need to change.

Disciplining plagiarists

- Especially if you work in a very litigious environment, as is the case in the US:
 - BE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES IN YOUR DEPARTMENT AND INSTITUTION.
 - When a case of plagiarism arises document the steps you've taken to deal with the incident.

Disciplining plagiarists/ Legal concerns

- In the US, the courts continue to see cheating and plagiarism as an academic problem and have tended to side with the institution's judgement (see Toma & Palm, 1999).
- Confidentiality of student records/academic performance may be an issue worth keeping in mind (e.g., submitting a paper to a web service without the student's permission, 'outing' a plagiarist).
- Toma, J. D. & Palm, R. L. (1999). The Academic Administrator and the Law: What Every Dean and Department Chair Needs to Know. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, Vol 26, No. 5, p.10

My own views on the causes of student plagiarism

Confusion/laxity over rules

- Plagiarism is sometimes due to confusion over rules of scholarly citation and source attribution practices (e.g., use of quotations, the notion that “Anything on the internet goes”).
- It can also be partly a function of an academic environment of a school/department where rules are not emphasized.

Poor academic skills

- A general lack of appropriate reading/writing skills amongst average students. In the US, “only 70% of all students in public high schools graduate, and only 32% of all students leave high school qualified to attend four-year colleges.”

<https://www.issuelab.org/resources/10740/10740.pdf>

Poor attitude toward education

- I believe that plagiarism occurs because students hold an attitude toward education whereby academic assignments are viewed, not as opportunities for learning, but as instructor-imposed hurdles to be overcome in the most economic way possible. Thus, many students are reluctant to invest the necessary time and intellectual resources to come up with a good academic product and some have the economic resources to simply purchase a paper from an essay mill.

It's not just the students

- In North America, there is considerable ambivalence amongst faculty as to how to deal with plagiarism and academic dishonesty in general (e.g., “I am not a police officer; students only hurt themselves”).
- Institutional administrations are not always supportive of faculty’s efforts in combating academic dishonesty.

OTHER IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS

Institutional Honor Codes

Academic Integrity Offices

Honor Codes

- Academic dishonesty occurs with less frequency at institutions with honor codes.
- Honor codes are very useful, but only if there is widespread agreement about its usefulness and a genuine commitment to honor.

Academic integrity offices

ADVANTAGES:

- If an instance of academic dishonesty is suspected, the office staff can assist faculty in investigating.
- They can be more objective enforcers of institutional sanctions (retroactively if necessary).
- They can train new faculty, TAs, etc. on proper proctoring, confronting instances of cheating, etc.

DISADVANTAGE:

- Institutional cost.

The ultimate challenge for instructors

To make students recognize the importance of good writing and reading skills. Students must be made to understand that success as a professional will depend, to a large extent, on their ability to read and write effectively

ONE FINAL

THOUGHT

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IS CENTRAL TO THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION OF A UNIVERSITY

“Academic integrity is a fundamental value of teaching, learning and scholarship”.

It must be treated with the same degree of seriousness as other forms of undesirable conduct. Unfortunately, too often, it is not treated with the seriousness it deserves.

Thank you – **Спасибо**

(According to Google Translate) 

Miguel Roig

St. John's University

300 Howard Avenue

Staten Island, New York 10301

Voice: (718) 390-4513

Fax: (718) 390-4347

E-mail: roigm@stjohns.edu

<http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~roigm>