

Honor Coding: Academic Dishonesty and the Rhetoric of Plagiarism-Detection Software  
(or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Turnitin.com)

Elizabeth Losh, University of California, Irvine

The metaphors used to describe a new technology tell much about how social actors imagine their roles in particular institutional dramas taking place in specific discourse communities. Charles Bazerman has emphasized the importance of such metadiscourse around the location of “knowledge spaces” and the situation of subjects within “symbolic environments” though the maintenance of standardized conventions about originality and imitation.<sup>1</sup> In the current scholarly-journalistic debate about plagiarism, these analogies are literalized in ways that have consequences for writing instructors and administrators who must also provide training in information literacy. Commercially licensed plagiarism-detection software can regulate the boundary between public and private discourse, yet the rhetoric about these services often relegates these discourse practices to mere technological instruments of detection.

Nonetheless, as this software is experienced by users, such systems manifest what Manuel Castells has called a “network society,” and thus connect discrete nodes representing participants, communities, and texts. A short-sighted emphasis on tool literacy from both supporters and opponents of plagiarism-detection software potentially marginalizes the work of librarians, information scientists, intellectual property activists, and others who bring valuable perspective to institutional choices about the use of surveiling technologies in writing workshops.

At U.C. Irvine, where I serve as a writing program administrator, subsequent chairs of the campus-wide Writing Board reached entirely different conclusions about plagiarism-detection software, after personal experiences with using the Turnitin.com service in their own classes. Yet each compared the software to other technologies of detection in making arguments about it. The first Chair, a faculty member from the School of Information and Computer Science, described plagiarism-detection software as being like “airport metal detectors, which we all must endure because we know there are some terrorists out there somewhere.”<sup>2</sup> The second Chair, a history professor who was also proficient in using electronic media in her teaching, took a dimmer view. She observed that the software “finds some false positives” and thus creates extra labor for academic subordinates engaged in “looking for false positives.”<sup>3</sup>

Both faculty members were early adopters of the technology, but they construed its purposes and functions very differently. Chair One thought that the primary purpose of the technology was to provide security and to deter wrongdoing. Chair Two thought that the software served chiefly as a diagnostic tool— albeit a fallible one – that could have little effect after the fact. Chair One located communicative actions in the public space of an airport; Chair Two situated discourse in the private realm of a laboratory or doctor’s office. By using the term “we,” Chair One indicated that faculty members were also potentially subject to scrutiny; at the same time he dramatically distanced himself from potential offenders, who were characterized as “terrorists” capable of subverting the safe exchange of persons and products as well as the general good. In contrast, Chair Two referred to an intermediate class of “TA’s” who must do the work of checking the accuracy of the software’s results, and she also acknowledged the implicit inequality of

both teacher-pupil and doctor-patient relationships. Unlike the “terrorists” depicted by Chair One, Chair Two focused on possible victims of “false positives.” The implication was that like random drug testing, famously lampooned by Barbara Ehrenreich in *Nickel and Dimed*,<sup>4</sup> plagiarism-detection software creates a pseudo-scientific bureaucracy that impinges on personal privacy and targets the most vulnerable citizens of a society.

It could be argued the design of the software itself promulgates attention-getting metaphors about detection. Turnitin.com, which was developed from 1994 to 1996 by graduate students at U.C. Berkeley, provides a color-coded “originality report” (from a safe “green” to an alarming “red”) for each student paper.<sup>5</sup> Suspect sections of text are highlighted, labeled with a possible source URL or e-mail of a fellow instructor, and assigned a relative percentage according to the total length of the paper. By using an algorithm that looks for matching word strings, the system draws on both Internet sources and a large proprietary database created by the aggregation of individual submissions of student work. With over seven million users,<sup>6</sup> it has quickly become the most profitable and widely used product on the market and has sought to expand its operations to peer-review and annotation services,<sup>7</sup> despite the fact that it still takes a human agent to distinguish between properly cited blocks of text and improperly attributed ones, or if plagiarism has been obfuscated by the use of synonyms or rearrangement of syntactical elements. Just as metal detectors and medical tests must be monitored by live experts, Turnin.com is far from being an automated system, and this argument has been used by both proponents and critics.

The turnitin.com company itself seems to prefer to use the metaphor of the “fingerprint” match, thereby fostering associations with detective work and law

enforcement organizations. The web page that constitutes their vetted “legal document” about privacy and copyright makes this analogy explicit.

To enable a work submitted to Turnitin to be evaluated for originality, the proprietary Turnitin system makes a "fingerprint" of the work by applying mathematical algorithms to its content. The fingerprint is merely a digital code, which relays the unprotectable factual information that certain pre-defined content is present in the work.<sup>8</sup>

The students’ writing is marked by a “fingerprint,” rather than a signature, as the manual but abstracted trace of the ephemeral physical presence of a unique individual. This mark is alienated from the actual written text, as it is created by the software rather than by the activity of the student. Just as a criminal in a police station is fingerprinted, so is an academic essay: “When a paper is submitted to Turnitin, it is fingerprinted using proprietary digital algorithms, and the fingerprint is then compared to the other fingerprints in our database.”<sup>9</sup> The students’ writing is personified as a potential offender, and access to turnitin technology by instructors promises to deliver results commensurate to those from an elite national crime lab.

These metaphors from other technologies of detection are important, I will argue, because the technological proficiency associated with academic dishonesty is increasingly becoming associated with analogous technologies. Even the Center for Academic Integrity, which takes the high ground of traditional rhetoric rather than electronic surveillance, persistently talks about the metaphor of the “radar screen.” For example, the CAI website presents “Resources for Getting Academic Integrity on the Radar Screen.”<sup>10</sup> In interviews with publications from three separate universities, the

center's executive director, Diane M. Waryold, asserts that academic integrity is "on the radar screen" of the center,<sup>11</sup> that good classrooms can get plagiarism "on the radar screen,"<sup>12</sup> and that faculty members are reporting more incidents because "it's on the radar screen."<sup>13</sup> To encourage schools to adopt academic integrity policies, "radar screen" even functions as the label for a developmental stage in their taxonomy of how institutions respond to academic dishonesty. The "radar screen" stage is located between a "primitive" stage one and a "mature" stage three.

**Stage two: "Radar screen"** This stage describes a school where cheating issues have risen to public debate because of the perceived weakness of academic integrity policies and fundamental concerns with the consistency and fairness of existing practices. Stage two is characterized by early efforts, usually led by administration, to put a policy and procedures into effect, often for fear of litigation.<sup>14</sup>

The radar metaphor, of course, is one of combat, specifically of air defense, in which the enemy must first be located in order to be neutralized. A "radar screen" level institution has become aware that it is under attack and is thus motivated to overcome its comparative vulnerability in the face of invasion.

All of these metaphors – metal detectors, tests of bodily fluids or tissues, computerized fingerprint matching, and radar screens – point to something other than the production and interpretation of texts in discourse communities. Although they each characterize privacy and individual property differently, I would argue that all these analogies assume an objectified view of communication as product. Either writing is properly a primitive tool to be evaluated by more sophisticated tools, or matter that can

be authenticated as acceptable because it is organic and not man-made. For both metal detectors and drug tests, the aim is to screen out heterogeneous, impure content, which is detected because the presence of a metallic or mechanically complicated component or a contaminated fluid or tissue has been indicated.

Because policing academic dishonesty in cyberspace subverts the collaborative orientation of participants in an idealized classroom, alarmists stage a series of dystopian scenes in which victims and perpetrators are assigned moral positions. In other words, once students and instructors become opponents in a “battle against plagiarism,”<sup>15</sup> most composition narratives take sides. From the position of advocacy for students, we read from Rebecca Moore Howard that fledgling authors have become prisoners who face an “academic death penalty” if they naively commit plagiarism. Moore’s language implies that those who are already disadvantaged by class or ethnicity are subject to arbitrary and disproportionate punishment for the combinatory practices of most writers.<sup>16</sup> In a recent article about plagiarism-detection software, James Purdy similarly argues that we should be “calling off the hounds,” since even anti-prosecutorial rhetoric from plagiarism detection software implicitly encourages the hunt for plagiarizers to become bloodsport:

The word choice here conjures images of the classic fox hunt—mobs of hunters on horseback galloping after dogs hot on the trail of their next kill. The use of plagiarism detection software, in other words, becomes a hunt for prey. This phrasing also positions the student as a wily and cunning trickster (the mythological image of the fox) and the instructor as a hunter out for the kill. While the former sadly may be true, we hope the latter

never is. Moreover, this word choice also suggests an elite class chasing after lower creatures for sport.<sup>17</sup>

Although more benevolently described as a “cat and mouse game” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*,<sup>18</sup> metaphors of the hunt for plagiarizers are not limited to animal prey. For example, one site about appropriate citation practices that advises students in the U.K., where the use of Turnitin.com plagiarism-detection software has become near universal, compares the nation’s centralized academic honesty bureaucracy to a “witch hunt.”<sup>19</sup>

If a crime has actually been committed, rather than an execution, we debate about whether plagiarism is accurately called “theft” or “fraud.”<sup>20</sup> If extremely literalistic views of intellectual property are accepted as the norm, faculty members complain of “highway robbery,”<sup>21</sup> and students refuse to engage in peer review practices that might risk having their classmates “steal” their work.<sup>22</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word’s etymology via Martial includes a prehistory of crimes against persons that include “kidnapping” and “seducing,” but by the time we reach the *Webster’s Third International Dictionary* the word has become limited to the commission of “literary theft.”

Yet even technocratic metaphors, such as those used about turnitin.com, which are not situated within the frame of violence or crime, have ideological implications, and not just because discourses of morality inevitably return from the repressed. The American Library Association has characterized this general instrumentalism about new technology as “tool literacy.”<sup>23</sup> Unlike higher-order forms of information literacy that are aimed at critical thinking about professional or disciplinary conventions or

membership in interpretive communities more generally, tool literacy emphasizes competence in the most rudimentary skills of physically manipulating text (whether it appears in traditional print or as electronic characters and images) often via particular software applications. Students plagiarize, the logic goes, because new software applications make it possible to manipulate pieces of text in new ways, and these pieces of text are no longer difficult to assemble together, because they are no longer confined to the physical archives of elite research libraries or the prohibitively expensive for-profit “research services” of the pre-Internet era.<sup>24</sup> As it has with pornography, the Internet has vastly improved access to previously rare and expensive texts that would have been formerly difficult to acquire without risk of public exposure.

The correlation between cut-and-paste replication of materials from the Internet and intellectual dishonesty seems to be remarkably strong. A 2003 study of how Auburn professors defined plagiarism, which indicated little interdepartmental consensus otherwise, showed that the most frequent faculty definition of plagiarism, shared by over 75% of the respondents, was “submitting a paper that has been cut and pasted in part or all from a website or papermill.”<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in Kelly Ritter’s study that formed the basis of her work on the economics of authorship and the rhetoric of paper mills, she discovered that 71% of students considered “Taking source material from the Internet and using it as my own in a paper or take-home exam” to be “cheating,” and only 6% thought an “author” could be a person who engaged in “Gathering different sources and pasting them together as a collection of writing, then putting your name on that collection.”<sup>26</sup> James Purdy has asserted that because technology and writing have become so tightly

enmeshed, the technological character of written discourse is in danger of becoming invisible.<sup>27</sup>

However, any convergence of common perceptions shared by faculty and students should be read critically. In another 2005 report from the Center for Academic Integrity, it seems that students and instructors have reached a very different conclusion about the relationship between technological manipulation of texts and academic dishonesty. The Center finds that “most students have concluded that 'cut & paste' plagiarism - using a sentence or two (or more) from different sources on the Internet and weaving this information together into a paper without appropriate citation - is not a serious issue.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Ritter’s study indicated that only 39% of students thought that “Writing material for the Internet (either a personal or business Web site)” merited being considered “an author.”<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, in Sara Rimer’s damning piece in the *New York Times*, she cited research that 38% of the undergraduate students surveyed said that they had engaged in one or more instances of “‘cut-and-paste’ plagiarism involving the Internet, paraphrasing or copying anywhere from a few sentences to a full paragraph from the Web”<sup>30</sup> By virtue of the ease of access, Rimer asserts this conduct was often judged to be “trivial.”

Within the community of composition instructors, there has been a contentious debate about the authoritarian potential of policing the border between acceptable and unacceptable text practices when “patchwriting” discourses are submitted for academic credit by students who are already culturally disenfranchised, such as those depicted in Mike Rose and Glynda Hull’s work on “Rethinking Remediation.”<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, particularly when collective and collaborative authorship is so important in the academy

and valued in the professional world, as Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede point out, to adjudicate student's cases on the basis of selective and arbitrary rules seems manifestly unjust.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, as Lunsford points out in a collaborative hypertext, ownership has been destabilized by the acceptance of postmodern theory in the academy and the advent of new technologies in the larger society.<sup>33</sup>

Currently, the largest and most significant body of published work in composition theory and research emphasizes the risks of excessive legalism. Some, like Rebecca Moore Howard, have situated themselves in opposition to stringent administrative regulations about academic honesty and emphasize the importance of patchwriting strategies across different rhetorical conventions and historical periods: classical and medieval mimesis, works in twentieth century modernism, postmodern anti-authorial texts, the products of Internet collaborative discourse communities, and – her ostensible subject – patchwork compositions by unsophisticated student writers who are intimidated by the demands of institutions of higher education. Unfortunately, the question of whether student writers patchwrite because they are competent writers or because they are incompetent ones is given two somewhat contradictory answers by Howard. To paraphrase, nontraditional writers are underappreciated in the academy, but they are nevertheless self-conscious about authorship and so patchwrite, *and* they are made to feel inadequate when bullied by product-driven composition curricula and so patchwrite to fulfill arbitrary requirements.

In trade publishing and the mainstream media, a very different position is articulated. In contrast to those who are willing to subvert the authoritarian strictures of university regulations, honor code advocates argue that organizing a community of

students around administrative regulations will ultimately succeed in producing model students and model citizens. This advocacy position has mostly gained influence in the academy through the endowment of programs and centers. Having looked at the data, I am extremely skeptical of the empirical claims made by honor code advocates, particularly when so much anecdotal evidence, indicates that abstract adherence to honor codes has little effect on student behavior.<sup>34</sup> However, beyond this I have two objections to the honor code approach that are grounded in composition pedagogy: 1) instruction about how to participate in discourse communities is best offered in the context of social practices rather than social principles and 2) writing is a public act, and so having an honest dialogue with students about how texts circulate in the public sphere is more productive than idolizing the stoicism of an honor code dictated only by internalized norms. It is also disturbing that many of the discourses around “honor codes” involve reactionary and nostalgic rhetorical moves that often gesture toward the authority of traditional military institutions in a politically opportunistic way. Such constructs of “integrity” are implicitly at odds with “diversity” and occasionally explicitly in opposition to “political correctness.”<sup>35</sup>

A third ideological alternative characterizes the approach of compositionists who might consider themselves pragmatists and thus accept some surveillance of textual practices as a necessary evil. This group generally advocates greater use of and access to plagiarism-detection tools. In the experience of writing program administrators at my campus, such programs can be welcomed by students and instructors, based on surveys of both teachers and learners.<sup>36</sup> As someone who has had weeping students in her office who were actually betrayed by the plagiarizers who had won their trust, sometimes in

remarkably cruel ways, it is certainly difficult for me to see plagiarism as a victimless crime. This is particularly true in my own work environment, a public research university with competitive admissions, which maintains a meritocracy with a very limited number of spots and a large and diverse population of deserving potential freshmen. Yet some plagiarists have bragged of their exploits in online chat, confident that academic laborers aren't well paid enough to monitor them. Others have taken the work of their non-native speaking or working class peers, removed the minor inflections of language or class, and have received higher grades on these papers than the original authors.<sup>37</sup>

I believe that our own work at U.C. Irvine with Turnitin.com has actually facilitated campus dialogue about academic honesty, ever since we first used it with twenty sections in the 1998-1999 academic year.<sup>38</sup> Although individualized boutique assignments may seem most desirable for dissuading potential plagiarists,<sup>39</sup> there is also merit in having common writing tasks to foster intellectual community and to create a basis for empirical composition research. Because students must first read and sign a release, so they will be aware of their rights and responsibilities, and because they upload their own papers into the database themselves, student writers need to participate actively in the process. For campus authors, it emphasizes a valuable lesson: written work is always potentially public, and texts circulate.

As a collective ritual of initiation into a discourse community, turnitin.com is almost certainly inadequate, but using such software may perform other kinds of cultural work that Internet ethnographers and anthropologists have only just begun to study. Certainly as more secondary schools and graduate schools use plagiarism-detection

software, these discursive practices are not going away any time soon. For example, because Turnitin.com highlights intertexts, this system allows composition researchers to learn much about the patchwriting practices defended by Howard. And because two geographically separated students may also buy copies of the same paper from a proprietary paper mill that would otherwise be unavailable to a conventional search engine, Turnitin.com can also reveal covert textual practices by students who submit whole text papers from the paper mills, like those Ritter analyzes. Turnitin.com members with otherwise disconnected e-mail addresses become associated through their common texts and intertexts. From using Turnin.com, we have discovered that there are many cases where student work is actually taken from the desktops of roommates or romantic partners without their knowledge and consent, so that the ethnography of plagiarism does include some acts of actual electronic theft.

Unlike an honor code, the UC Irvine turnitin.com release addresses the student in the context of the experiences of other students. The text of the release reads as follows:

#### Academic Honesty Form for Students

Plagiarists fail the course and have their offense recorded in their School and in the School of Humanities. Violations of academic honesty can affect a student's graduation, financial aid, and eligibility for honors. The University deals with plagiarism cases every quarter, even though most people do not hear about them. No matter how pressured you feel, do not plagiarize; it is not worth it.

The University wants instructors to be perfectly clear about a couple of things. In particular, any paper may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents for a limited time in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Please read the following statement carefully and sign it:

"I understand that to protect the value of the independent work that I do in this course, the work of all students in the course may be compared for evidence of plagiarism to the work of other students, both in this course and in others, and to other sources on the Internet and elsewhere; this may involve the storage of students' work on computer systems outside of the university. I understand that my instructor will be the only person who can see my work so stored. I promise to follow all the university, departmental, and course policies about academic honesty."<sup>40</sup>

The consequences this document enumerates aren't part of an eternal, unchanging, traditional matrix of values. Rather this release represents the rules of a particular institution in a particular time from the perspective of particular disciplines. The emphasis is on external costs not internal morality: the sanctions affect financial aid, time to graduation, and quality of awarded degree. The release also doesn't hold students to the lofty goal of "originality"; instead it emphasizes the value of "independent work." It

emphasizes academic labor in a collective academic environment rather than inspiration of an isolated moral individual governed by the abstractions of higher law. It also puts part of the onus upon instructors who must communicate an institution's expectations clearly, signals empathy to students who are "pressured" by the conditions for undergraduate labor that Howard describes, and shares information by making public disciplinary sanctions that "most people" wouldn't otherwise know about.

Textual practices around academic honesty are also reinforced by other discursive activities. In collaboration with librarians, writing program administrators designed the first "Virtual Research" project during a time when Google was still in beta and a number of competing search engines – with limited efficacy as finding aids – were vying for attention from academic users.<sup>41</sup> Subsequently this collaboration produced "Discovery Tasks" to encourage students to use the library's portal to the California Digital Library and several "Materials Examination Exercises" designed to give students hands-on experiences with evaluating primary sources and scholarly materials in small groups. These collaborations around information literacy have created opportunities for grant-writing, conference presentations, and published work.<sup>42</sup>

This is not to say that there isn't hypocrisy in requiring Turnitin.com (or waxing nostalgic about the days before it was needed), given the university's other positions on issues of privacy and intellectual property. But I would argue that it is not the disconnect that is commonly imagined by those who have studied recent academic scandals in which professors get off much more easily than those who fill their lecture halls.<sup>43</sup> The issue is not the gap between *Lehrerfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*, but a more insidious and complex set of challenges to academic values. For example, in the 1999-2000 academic year, my

colleague Ellen Strenski and I, alerted our university that we were “concerned that that the Policy on Academic Honesty might need to be updated in light of changing technology.”<sup>44</sup> We wanted to include “electronic media” alongside “print,” and “images” alongside “texts” as important communicative forms in coursework. With a mixture of concern and surprise, we “noted that in the past year there have been several cases where students failed to properly cite resources found on the internet, and that these students did not seem to understand that some of the materials found on the internet were protected by trademark or copyright.”<sup>45</sup> There was also a more complicated point in this document: as our students were writing in an increasingly visual age, images had become central to the rhetorical presentation of their persuasive texts and thus could not simply be taken wholesale without citation of the original source.

Since amending this policy, I think my composition colleagues and I have begun to consider new allegiances, even though we continue to believe that the definition of academic honesty must acknowledge the impact of new technology. I think we can no longer comfortably take the side of corporate interests who have appropriated an unfair share of the creative commons since the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Too many destructive initiatives against scholarly pursuits have been undertaken in the name of “trademark and copyright” protections that I am no longer willing to defend. This means that we – as writing instructors and writing program administrators – have a moral obligation to occasionally side with librarians, rather than our traditional academic colleagues in research disciplines, particularly when library associations have taken such stronger stands on access to information than associations of research universities who ally themselves with the corporate model of patent and product acquisition. Perhaps

nothing dramatizes the troubling new alliances of the University of California with corporate interests than its widely publicized crackdown on file-sharing,<sup>46</sup> which poses a greater liability in terms of litigation despite its relatively trivial impact on intellectual work done by undergraduates toward a degree. Nothing in these widely disseminated documents on digital appropriation addresses the much more damaging practice of Internet plagiarism, which is relegated to a local problem and consigned to individual composition programs.

On this score, Turnitin.com also has both a troubling past and a troubling future. Although founder John Barrie claims that U.C. Berkeley had not purchased a campus license for the turnitin.com product because the university was embarrassed after he pointed out that “cheating was rampant” and thus “the university was dragged through the mud,”<sup>47</sup> the university itself has indicated reservations about the impact of the software on their students’ rights to privacy, ownership of intellectual property, and due process, which have been detailed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.<sup>48</sup> The Berkeley campus also had a legitimate gripe with Barrie because the software was developed by university personnel using university resources, and yet Barrie capitalized on an investment of public resources and attempted to sell his software back to his former employer. Particularly when open source and freeware alternatives could be developed (and are being developed at the University of California at Santa Barbara), the hegemony of Turnitin.com is disappointing. The latest news from Turnitin.com about a collaborative project with LexisNexis to “protect intellectual property” with a product “designed to benefit the media and business community” does not give one much confidence in the lip service Turnitin.com pays to academic ideals when the ethical

obligations of a research university are to provide services for the public good.<sup>49</sup>

Although far from “total information awareness,” the potential for surveillance by copyright holders risks the dissemination of information within and between academic communities.

As faculty members and students participate in discourses around a particular form of plagiarism-detection software competing positions of pragmatism and skepticism can appear disconnected from the larger campus dialogue about privacy, intellectual property, and academic honesty while also promulgating local practices in particular courses that bring these issues to the forefront. More work, such as that of Kelly Ritter, needs to be done on the current rhetorics of plagiarism, and the education of students about appropriate practices should emphasize a holistic approach to information literacy that goes beyond training in the use of particular tools.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles Bazerman, “Paying the Rent: Linguaging Particularity and Novelty,” Originality, Imitation & Plagiarism Conference, University of Michigan, August 25, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> David Kay, August 6, 2002 E-mail

<sup>3</sup> Sharon Block, quoted in Paula Murphy, “New Technology Update: Electronic Plagiarism Detection,” *TLtC News*, UC Center for Teaching and Learning with technology (May/June 2004) <<http://www.uctltc.org/news/2004/05/plagiarism.php>>, accessed September 3, 2005. The metaphor of “false positives” from Turnitin.com also appears in Adam L. Penenberg, “Me Against My Students: How I use the Internet to combat plagiarists, fabulists, and cheaters,” in *Slate* (October 3, 2005) at <<http://www.slate.com/id/2127365/?nav=tap3>>, accessed October 3, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> *Nickel and Dimed On (Not) Getting by in America*, Barbara Ehrenreich (New York: Henry Holt, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> In a post-September 11 society in which the color coding by the Office of Homeland Security uses a similar index, it is hard to see this system as politically neutral even though the index predates the terrorist threat level system.

<sup>6</sup> Susan Hertzog, “Turnitin.com Pros and Cons: Guilty in Whose Eyes?,” presentation of April 29, 2005 <<http://www.easternct.edu/smithlibrary/library1/plagiarism/herzog.html>>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Although, considering that Turnitin.com began as a peer review program, it is questionable to see these activities as new.

<sup>8</sup> Turnitin.com, “Legal Document” <[http://www.turnitin.com/static/legal/legal\\_document.html](http://www.turnitin.com/static/legal/legal_document.html)>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Turnitin.com, “Technology FAQ” <[https://www.turnitin.com/static/faqs/technology\\_faq.html](https://www.turnitin.com/static/faqs/technology_faq.html)>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> The Center for Academic Integrity, “How to Get Started” <[http://www.academicintegrity.org/resources\\_inst.asp](http://www.academicintegrity.org/resources_inst.asp)>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in “A Focus on Academic Integrity: Code found not to be a part of campus culture,” *Duke News and Communications*, Friday, March 9, 2001 <<http://www.dukenews.duke.edu/2001/03/integrity309.html>>, accessed September 23, 2005.

- 
- <sup>12</sup> Quoted in Mary Clarke-Pearson, "Download. Steal. Copy. Cheating at the University," *The Daily Pennsylvanian* November 27, 2001  
<[http://www.dailypennsylvanian.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2001/11/27/3c03502bad345?in\\_archive=1](http://www.dailypennsylvanian.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2001/11/27/3c03502bad345?in_archive=1)>, accessed September 23, 2005.
- <sup>13</sup> Quoted in Grace Lee, "Plagiarism 101" *Read Me: New Media. Net Culture. Now*  
<<http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/ReadMe/article.php?id=441>>, accessed September 23, 2005.
- <sup>14</sup> The Center for Academic Integrity, "How to Get Started"  
<[http://www.academicintegrity.org/resources\\_inst.asp](http://www.academicintegrity.org/resources_inst.asp)>, accessed September 23, 2005.
- <sup>15</sup> Kelly Ritter, "The Economics of Authorship: Online Paper Mills, Student Writers, and First-Year Composition," *CCC* 56.4 (June 2005), 625.
- <sup>16</sup> Rebecca Moore Howard, "Plagiarisms, Authorships, and the Academic Death Penalty," *College English* 57.7 (November 1995) 788-806.
- <sup>17</sup> James R. Purdy, "Calling off the Hounds: Technology and the Visibility of Plagiarism," *Pedagogy* 5.2 (2005) 277.
- <sup>18</sup> "The Cat and Mouse Game of Plagiarism Detection," Jeffrey R. Young, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* <<http://chronicle.com/free/v47/i43/43a02601.htm>>, accessed October 4, 2005.
- <sup>19</sup> "Beat the Witch-hunt! Peter Levin's Guide to Avoiding and Rebutting Accusations of Plagiarism, for Conscientious Students" (2003) at <<http://www.study-skills.net/plagiarism.pdf>>, accessed October 4, 2005.
- <sup>20</sup> Advocates for calling plagiarism "fraud" rather than "theft" do not necessarily question the analogy of intellectual property to tangible goods, as I do in the subtext of this paper.
- <sup>21</sup> See "highway robbery" in two different contexts at <http://www.fno.org/may98/cov98may.html> and <http://www.camlang.com/sp005.htm>, accessed September 23, 2005.
- <sup>22</sup> Candace Spigelman, *Across Property Lines: Textual Ownership in Writing Groups*, Studies in Writing and Rhetoric (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2000), 23.
- <sup>23</sup> American Library Association, "Information Literacy for Faculty and Administrators"  
<<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitoverview/infolitforfac/infolitfaculty.htm>>, accessed September 23, 2005.
- <sup>24</sup> Abigail Witherspoon, "This Pen for Hire: On Grinding Out Papers for College Students." *Harper's* June 1995: 49-57.
- <sup>25</sup> "Faculty Perceptions of Plagiarism," *Journal of College and Character* 2 (2005)  
<<http://www.collegevalues.org/articles.cfm?a=1&id=1417>>, accessed September 23, 2005.
- <sup>26</sup> Kelly Ritter, "The Economics of Authorship: Online Paper Mills, Student Writers, and First-Year Composition," *CCC* 56.4 (June 2005), 626-627.
- <sup>27</sup> James R. Purdy, "Calling Off the Hounds: Technology and the Visibility of Plagiarism," *Pedagogy* 5.2 (2005) 275-296.
- <sup>28</sup> The Center for Academic Integrity, "How to Get Started"  
<[http://www.academicintegrity.org/resources\\_inst.asp](http://www.academicintegrity.org/resources_inst.asp)>, accessed September 23, 2005.
- <sup>29</sup> Kelly Ritter, "The Economics of Authorship: Online Paper Mills, Student Writers, and First-Year Composition," *CCC* 56.4 (June 2005), 627.
- <sup>30</sup> Rimer, Sara (2003). A Campus Fad That's Being Copied: Internet Plagiarism. *The New York Times*: nytimes.com. September 23, 2003. Retrieved 09/03/2003 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/03/education/03CHEA.html>
- <sup>31</sup> Glynda Hull and Mike Rose, "Rethinking Remediation: Toward a Social-Cognitive of Problematic Reading and Writing," *Written Communication* 6.2 (1989): 139-154.
- <sup>32</sup> Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford. 1990. *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- <sup>33</sup> Andrea Lunsford, Rebecca Rickly, Michael J. Salvo, and Susan West. 1996. "What Matters Who Writes? What Matters Who Responds? Issues of Ownership in the Writing Classroom." *Kairos: A Journal for Teachers of Writing in Webbed Environments* 1.1.  
<<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/1.1/features/lunsford/title.html>>, accessed October 5, 2005.
- <sup>34</sup> Bear Braumoeller and Brian Gaines. 2001. "Actions Do Speak Louder than Words: Deterring Plagiarism with the Use of Plagiarism-Detection Software." *Political Science Online*, APSANet, (December)  
<[www.apsanet.org/PS/dec01/braumoeller.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/PS/dec01/braumoeller.cfm)>, accessed via Google cache on October 4, 2005.

---

<sup>35</sup> See the quotations listed on the Center for Academic Integrity website, which include an admonition to “transcend political correctness” < <http://www.academicintegrity.org/quotes.asp>>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>36</sup> See Ellen Strenski and Elizabeth Losh, “Initial Report on Plagiarism.org,” internal document, U.C. Irvine, 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Those placed at a disadvantage by this practice have included my own basic writers in both the 2002 and 2003 Winter quarters.

<sup>38</sup> In our initial experience using Turnitin.com, we discovered no plagiarizers and announced in our report that we believed it served a “deterrent” function. Subsequently, we have found many cases of plagiarism with Turnitin.com and are persuaded that the early results may have been a fluke from the limited sample that would generate fewer matches.

<sup>39</sup> See “Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: the WPA Statement on Best Practices,” Council of Writing Program Administrators < <http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9>>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>40</sup> David Kay of the School of the School of Information and Computer Science at U.C. Irvine wrote the initial version of this document for his own upper division technical communication class.

<sup>41</sup> See the exercise on <http://e3.uci.edu/faculty/losh/research/paraphrase.html> for a sample.

<sup>42</sup> “Virtualpolitik: Obstacles to Collaboration in the Digital University,” Research and Occasional Papers Series, Center for Studies in Higher Education (June 1, 2005). Center for Studies in Higher Education. Paper CSHE-9-05. <<http://repositories.cdlib.org/cshe/CSHE-9-05>>

<sup>43</sup> Jon Wiener in *Historians in Trouble: Plagiarism, Fraud, and Politics in the Ivory Tower* (New York: New Press, 2005) argues that historians from the left have faced more public shame and stiffer academic penalties than those who represent conservative interests.

<sup>44</sup> Committee on Student Affairs Annual Report 1999-2000 <[http://www.senate.uci.edu/8\\_Reps&Pubs/AnnualRep99\\_0/StudentAff99\\_0.html](http://www.senate.uci.edu/8_Reps&Pubs/AnnualRep99_0/StudentAff99_0.html)>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Committee on Student Affairs Annual Report 1999-2000 <[http://www.senate.uci.edu/8\\_Reps&Pubs/AnnualRep99\\_0/StudentAff99\\_0.html](http://www.senate.uci.edu/8_Reps&Pubs/AnnualRep99_0/StudentAff99_0.html)>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> See websites such as “SHARE RIGHT: Resources about filesharing,” <<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/shareright/>>, accessed January 14, 2005 for digital ephemera related to the U.C. system’s carefully orchestrated public relations campaign.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Grace Lee, “Plagiarism 101” *Read Me: New Media. Net Culture. Now* <<http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/ReadMe/article.php?id=441>>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>48</sup> Andrea L. Foster, “Plagiarism Detection Tool Creates Legal Quandary,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* May 17, 2002 < <http://chronicle.com/free/v48/i36/36a03701.htm>>, accessed September 23, 2005.

<sup>49</sup> “New Lexis-Nexis Copyguard Combats Growing Problem of Unauthorized Use of Copyrighted Material,” Lexis-Nexis Media Relations, August 22, 2005 News Release <<http://www.lexisnexis.com/about/releases/0820.asp>>, accessed September 23, 2005.