Abstract: - Both traditional and virtual environments face the plague of plagiarism and are confronted with decreasing attention to perfecting original research and study skills. Among all, e-sources seem most exposed and tempting for the ones who seek an easy way out by means of cheating. This danger is especially present at students’ level, but not exclusively, as such people choose not to make the effort of constructing their own views, but rather import others’ approaches and language. However, this is only a mask to wear briefly, leaving the person behind it empty-handed/empty-headed for a long interval of time. E-resources are readily available, thus speeding up knowledge and progress. It is the academic environment that should put this heritage to good use, facilitating networking and originality, and educating learners and researchers towards contributing to it, not stealing from it. Inasmuch as the reviewing of manuscripts is an essential step in the publication process, all scientists have an obligation to do a fair share of reviewing, as publication policies together with the screening procedures play a key role in combating intellectual theft and promoting real values.

Key-Words: - plagiarism, citation, editing and reviewing for virtual environments, copyright laws

1 Introduction

Plagiarism is a serious offence, despite the fact that many people think of it as just copying another's work, or merely borrowing someone else's original ideas. In fact, plagiarism is an act of fraud, which involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterwards. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to plagiarize means:

- to use a production without crediting the source
- to commit intellectual theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

Original ideas are considered intellectual property, and are protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in a certain way (such as a book or a computer file).

2 Problem Formulation

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been taken, and providing the audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

2.1 Plagiarism

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of the new work, whether credit is given or not.

Changing the words of an original source is not sufficient to prevent plagiarism. If the essential idea of an original source has been retained, but not cited, then it still is plagiarism, however drastically its context or presentation may have been altered.

2.2 Citation

Citation is the way of informing the readers that certain material in came from another source. It also gives readers the information necessary to find that source again, including:

1. information about the author
2. the title of the work
3. name and location of the company that published the copy of the source
4. the date the copy was published
5. page numbers of the borrowed material
2.3 Advantages of citing sources

Giving credit to the original author by citing sources is the only way to use other people's work without plagiarizing. But there are a number of other reasons to cite sources:
1. citations are extremely helpful to anyone who wants to find out more about those ideas and where they came from.
2. not all sources are good or right, and proper citation separates such ideas from the author’s. The writer may probably have more accurate or interesting ideas than those in the sources.
3. citing sources shows the amount of research that has been done.
4. it gives solid background to the work, by lending outside support to its ideas.
5. indicating sources helps the reader distinguish author’s ideas from those of the sources. This will actually emphasize the originality of the given work.

When borrowing words and ideas, it is necessary to acknowledge their source. The following situations almost always require citation:
1. using quotes
2. paraphrasing
3. using an idea already expressed by someone else
4. making specific reference to the work of another
5. mentioning someone else's work that has been critical in developing the author’s own ideas.

3 Problem Solution

In general, Editors and Reviewers are appointed by publication committees on basis of merits and competition, to perform specific but convergent tasks in promoting progress and original approaches, and discouraging mediocre or imported ideas. For reasons of effectiveness and continuity, they usually serve a three-year term. The members are selected according to the publication’s need for representation in a particular subject area, and are an example of individual commitment to maintaining high standards, in objective and prompt reviews.

3.1 The review process

Each manuscript should be reviewed by individuals who are highly competent and recognized in the particular field of the submitted manuscript.

The editorial office contacts those reviewers that have been identified as qualified and/or recommended by the authors.

Authors are also encouraged to submit in their cover letters names of individuals whom they feel are appropriate and qualified to review their manuscript.

Once potential reviewers agree to read a manuscript they are given a clear time-frame to complete the review. When the reviews are completed, a decision is made to either accept the paper or give the authors the opportunity to revise according to reviewers’ suggestions or to reject the paper based on the reviewers’ criticisms and the editors’ opinion of the paper. In some instances it is necessary to seek the opinion of other reviewers if further comment is necessary to make a final decision.

When an editor has completed his decision on a manuscript, the decision letter and reviewers’ comments are sent to the author. Any questions or concerns regarding the editorial decision on any manuscript must be made directly to the publication editorial office. Revised manuscripts are evaluated to determine if the author(s) have adequately addressed and answered the critiques of the reviewers and editors.

Depending upon this evaluation, manuscripts may be accepted, returned for further revision, or rejected. If a paper is accepted, it is immediately sent to the publication office and slated for the next available issue.

3.2 Grounds for declining a manuscript

Manuscripts that do not meet the standards are returned to authors with substantial comments describing the basis for the decision. Manuscripts may be rejected if it is felt that the findings are not sufficiently novel, do not provide sufficient new insights, do not contain enough new information, or are too preliminary to warrant publication.

3.3 Obligations of editors

- To give unbiased consideration to all manuscripts offered for publication, judging each on its merits without regard to authors’ race, gender, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political views.
- To process manuscripts promptly.
- To accept a submitted paper for publication or to reject it with complete responsibility and authority.
- To confer with reviewers for an evaluation to use in making the decision, if necessary.
- Not to disclose information about a manuscript under consideration to anyone other than reviewers.
- To respect authors’ intellectual independence.
- To avoid situations of real or perceived conflicts of interest. Such conflicts include, but are not limited to, handling papers from present and former students, from colleagues with whom the editor has (recently) collaborated, and from those in the same institution. In case of a manuscript authored by the
editor and submitted for publication, certain other qualified editors and reviewers should be delegated to assess it. If the editor is involved in an ongoing scientific debate, he should arrange for another qualified person to take on editorial responsibility temporarily.

- Not to use unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations read in a submitted manuscript in the absence of the authors’ consent.
- To support publication of an appropriate article pointing out an error and correcting it, if possible, in the case the editor were presented with convincing evidence that the main substance or conclusions of a previously published article had been erroneous.

3.4 Obligations of reviewers

- To promptly return to the editor the manuscript for which the reviewer feels inadequately qualified or lacks the time to judge the reported research.
- To objectively judge the quality of the manuscript and respect the intellectual independence of the authors. Personal criticism is totally inappropriate.
- To be sensitive to conflicts of interest when the manuscript under review is closely related to the reviewer's work in progress or published. If in doubt, the reviewer should return the manuscript promptly without review, informing the editor on the conflict of interest or bias.
- Not to evaluate a manuscript authored or co-authored by a person with whom the reviewer has a personal or professional connection if the relationship would bias judgment of the manuscript.
- To treat a manuscript sent for review as a confidential document. It should neither be shown to nor discussed with others except, in special cases, to persons from whom specific advice may be sought; in that event, the identities of those consulted should be disclosed to the editor.
- To explain and support judgments adequately so that editors and authors may understand the basis of all comments. Any statements on previously reported observations, derivations, or arguments should be accompanied by the relevant citation.
- To be alert to authors' potential failure to cite relevant work by other scientists. A reviewer should call the editor's attention to any substantial similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any published paper or any manuscript concurrently submitted to another journal.
- Not to use or disclose unpublished information/arguments/interpretations contained in a manuscript under consideration, without the authors’ consent.
- To promptly respond after manuscript receipt. If reviewers need more time, they contact the editor so that authors can be kept informed and, if necessary, assign alternate reviewers.

3.5 Fair use laws

The United States government has established rough guidelines for determining the nature and amount of work that may be borrowed without explicit written consent.

These are called fair use laws, because they establish whether a certain use of original material is reasonable; below they are condensed into rubrics to be applied for determining fairness in any usage.

- Modalities of use: mere copying is unfair, but if the material has been transformed in an original way through interpretation and analysis it becomes fair.
- Quantity: a small amount can be considered fair. The less the better.
- Impact on the original: if the new product competes with the original on its own market, and harms it economically, it is unfair use. The more the content of the new work or its target audience differs from that of the original, the better.

3.6 The public domain

Works that are no longer protected by copyright, or never have been, are considered public domain. This means that one may freely borrow material from these works without fear of plagiarism, provided that one makes the proper attributions.

The terms and conditions under which works enter the public domain are interesting. In general, anything published more than 75 years ago is now in the public domain. Works published after 1978 are protected for the lifetime of the author plus 70 years. The laws governing works published fewer than 75 years ago but before 1978 are more complicated, although generally copyright protection extended 28 years after publication plus 47 more years if the copyright was renewed, totaling 75 years from the publication date. When uncertain about whether or not a work is in the public domain, it is probably best to contact a lawyer or act under the assumption that it is still protected by copyright laws.

3.7 Copyright laws

Copyright laws exist to protect intellectual property and they make it illegal to reproduce someone else’s expression of ideas or information without permission. This can include music, images, written words, video, and a variety of other media.

A work was only protected by copyright if it included a copyright trademark (the © symbol), but, according to laws established in 1989, works are now protected with/without the mention of this symbol.
Anyone who reproduces copyrighted material improperly can be prosecuted in a court of law. It does not matter if the form or content of the original has been altered – as long as any material can be shown to be substantially similar to the original, it may be considered a violation of the Copyright Act.

The Copyright Act only protects works that express original ideas or information. For example, one could borrow freely from the following, without fear of plagiarism:

- Compilations of readily available information
- Works published by the U.S. government
- Facts that are not the result of original research
- Works in the public domain (cited properly)

4 Conclusion

Facts that have been published as the result of individual research are considered the intellectual property of the author. Facts that are not the result of unique individual research need not be cited. Facts that are readily available from numerous sources and generally known to the public are considered common knowledge, and are not protected by copyright laws. Such data can be used freely in papers without citing the authors. When in doubt, the source should be cited, just to be safe.

In determining whether or not plagiarism is a crime, quantity is not relevant. Even if a small part of a work is found to have been plagiarized, it is still considered a copyright violation, and its producer can be brought to trial. However, the amount that was copied probably will have impact on the severity of the sentence.

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