

Academic Integrity and Intellectual Property

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Copyright and Intellectual Property Office

This article highlights an issue in which the Ball State Community should be aware.

Academic Integrity and Intellectual Property

It is a fact that academic freedom is a fundamental right. But within that right is the ethical issue of academic integrity. Academic integrity requires that any and all new academic intellectual property be totally identified as the creation of a given faculty member, a student or a group of individuals, i.e., joint authorship.

In the classroom, faculty members should always promote academic integrity with their students. Academic integrity can be addressed in the course syllabus where it can be made clear that academic assignments including exams, any and all papers, homework, quizzes, team efforts, etc., will require academic integrity. In other words, cheating, fabrication and plagiarism will not be tolerated in any academic assignment.

Plagiarism is one the most abused types of academic integrity. Some steps can be taken to assist in alleviating the problem of plagiarism. For example, the syllabus can stress the importance of citing sources. Additionally, references to plagiarism in the news can be made known along with the consequences that plagiarism can bring. For example, the recent case [May 2003] of Jayson Blair of the New York Times having to resign from the Times because of alleged plagiarism is illustrative of the problem of not citing sources is one of many examples that have occurred the past few years.

Plagiarism has been defined as taking the written intellectual property [IP] content from another and offering it as your own intellectual property. Plagiarism has always been considered inappropriate at the very least and at the very most, illegal and punishable by the law. And in the case of Mr. Blair, the loss of a prominent reporter position was due to the allegation of plagiarism.

The Internet makes intellectual property material in a variety of forms available 24/7 and along with that availability comes the ever-present enticement of using that ubiquitous intellectual property. The Internet makes it extremely easy to misappropriate another's IP by simply cutting and pasting the IP content of another person's document. Now there is absolutely nothing wrong with borrowing intellectual property from others. Searching for and then obtaining relevant information to be incorporated into a research paper [for example] is an appropriate part of the academic experience and an appropriate research activity. Further, this method is how society has built upon previous works to create new and expanded intellectual property.

The problem occurs when IP that is incorporated into a paper, thesis, dissertation, etc., is not given proper attribution through a citation. It is extremely important that students and faculty realize proper attribution of sources is an integral part of academic integrity.

To avoid plagiarism, the course syllabus should specify that every direct quotation taken from a print or electronic source must be identified by quotation marks or indentation and must be properly cited either in the text, in a footnote or endnote.

Citation Assistance Sources

There are a number of Internet sources that can be used to assist students in creating proper citations for their use of intellectual property owned by others.

[EasyBib.com](#):

EasyBib is free. You can print, email or copy the citations you create at EasyBib. Some of the e-sources that have citing assistance include: email, online databases and web sites. Some of the print source citing formats include: books, dissertations, encyclopedias, magazine articles, government publications and scholarly journals. [click on the thumbnail for screenshot of their page]

[OW \[Online Writing Lab\] at Purdue University](#):

OWL's Research and Documenting Sources page is another free source and offers assistance in using the American Psychological Association [APA] Format and in using the Modern Language Association [MLA] citation format. [click on the thumbnail for screenshot of their page]

Some sources that offer suggestions and might assist in determining whether or not a submission involves plagiarism include the two following sources.

Cheating 101: Detecting Plagiarized Papers Plagiarism and the Web

Services are now available that allow a student paper to be submitted to a web site to determine whether or not there may be plagiarism present. **It should be noted that doing this without the permission of the student is a violation of the student's privacy rights.** One final note. Within the concept of intellectual property is the Copyright Law. The Copyright Law guarantees certain exclusive rights to the owners of intellectual property. These rights are guaranteed by law and include the rights of making copies, distribution, and the making of derivative works. Academic integrity might very well be compromised further by copyright infringement of another's intellectual property.

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