Plagiarism in Face of Turnitin Service: the Kenyatta University Experience

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Presented at the
Outline

• Introduction to plagiarism.
• Overview to Turnitin software.
• Interpreting originality reports from Turnitin.
• Strategy for Turnitin service implementation at Kenyatta University.
• Students experiences / feedback
• Challenges
• Suggestions
• Demonstration on Turnitin services.
Plagiarism

- Plagiarism, in an academic perspective, is defined as an *act of presenting other people’s ideas, statements or works as their own.*
  - It happens among: *students, researchers and other scholars*
  - When they *present research reports, papers, assignments as their own when it's not the case.*
Temptations to Plagiarism

- There is great temptation to copy and paste other people’s works, due to
  - Improved technology (Scanners, copiers, digital cameras, etc)
  - Availability of easy-to-use word processing software e.g. Microsoft Word.
  - Access to internet and
  - Availability to electronic information – ejournals, ebooks, google resources.
  - Access to professional / commercial research service bureaus and assistants.
  - Lack of time to do enough research.
- Failure to acknowledge sources of information appropriately often leads to plagiarism.
Turnitin

- It is *online* service for educational institutions used to determine the *originality* of a written *report*.

- Turnitin *compares submitted papers* to its extensive *online database* of public Web content and to *previous submissions*.
  - Searches for *text* taken from these sources.
  - Provides a *report of sources* of text found and *percentage index* indicator.
Turnitin ... contd

Turnitin operates in a three hierarchical order for users

- Administrator
- Instructor
- Student

- Each level has specific roles and responsibilities.
- Users must login using unique credentials.
Administrator

- Roles of Administrator
  - Setup the system/service
  - Customize the system
  - Introduce the Instructors
  - Responsible for the service and liaise with the providers.
- At Kenyatta University, it is the Chief University Librarian who undertakes the role of administrator.
- All the lecturers and librarians are introduced as instructors
Instructor

- Defines the class.
- Introduces all the students
  - Using email, first name and surname.
- Accesses to documents submitted to a class and their respective originality reports.
- Can make comments/discuss with the student.
- Makes the interpretation / judgment.
Student

• Logins in to the system and enters a class (Previous set by the instructor)

• Submits a paper
  • Browse the paper (file), upload, confirm then submit.
  • Confirmation for successful submission is given.

• View /Study originality report
  • Report generation may take a few minutes or a day, depending with the size of document.

• Resubmission is possible.
  • To replaces earlier submissions will depend on setting by the instructor. Feedback often given after 24 hours.
Turnitin allows a variety of file formats, mainly common word processors, these include:

- Microsoft Word™ (doc, docx)
- Corel WordPerfect® (wp, wpd, wri, doc)
- HTML (htm, html)
- Adobe PostScript®
- Text file (txt)
- Rich Text Format (rtf)
- Portable Document Format (pdf)

Maximum size allowed for submission is 20MB.
Originality Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Color Code</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td></td>
<td>0% - no matching text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-24% of matching text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td></td>
<td>25-49% of matching text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td></td>
<td>50-74% of matching text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td></td>
<td>75-100% of matching text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- These percentages show the similarity of text and \textbf{NOT} a measure to plagiarism
List of Submitted Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Similarity</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>File</th>
<th>Paper ID</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Kimani</td>
<td>ICT Fundamentals</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>321664241</td>
<td>17-Apr-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Thuku</td>
<td>Towards National Database</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>321667371</td>
<td>17-Apr-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuku John</td>
<td>Final Teacher</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>321969259</td>
<td>23-Apr-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maina Mwangi</td>
<td>Road safety</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>323553960</td>
<td>23-Apr-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Kimani</td>
<td>PERI Databases 2012</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>321663723</td>
<td>17-Apr-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onyango James</td>
<td>Test Title</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>323554727</td>
<td>23-Apr-2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Inbox for: Title of assignment / research project
- Columns: author, title, similarity report (% & color code), file name, date submitted
Sample report

Turnitin numbers and colour codes matches between submitted work and similar sources. (Above left panel) paragraph 1 in red text originates from the website listed as number one in red. You can click on the link to take you to the original source (or double check through pasting text into Google).

Source: Rolfe, Vivien. Understanding Turnitin originality reports, 2008
Interpreting Originality Reports

- The report is displayed in two main sections
  - Left panel shows submitted work
  - Right panel shows matches found from other sources.
- There is extended use of color codes to indicate common sources.
- Matches from websites and Turnitin resources give the hyperlinks.
- Matches from books and journals, will show those sources.
Interpreting Originality Reports... contd.

- Clicking the numbers on the right side of the report takes you to students report.
- Clicking on the coloured text on the right links you to the external source.
- Judgment whether plagiarism exists or does not exist must be done carefully.
- 0% does not indicate there is no plagiarism.
- Higher % may not necessary mean there is plagiarism. Thus quotations must be acknowledged, bibliographies may be similar, etc.
Strategy to Implement Turnitin

- Needed to ensure that documents in the institution repository had been check against obvious plagiarism.
- Lobbied for Turnitin service to be adopted for use in checking against similarity of text.
- Licenses were bought.
- Training to staff
  - Librarians
  - Teaching staff (Deans and heads of departments)
  - Students – Continuous through user instruction.
Student
• Submits the research report
• Subjects it to similarity check

Supervisor
• Studies/discuss originality
• Makes judgment

Deans
• Schools
• Graduate Schools

University Librarian
• Catalogues/Classify
• Report added in the Institution Repository (IR)
Role of the Library

- Manage the Institutional Repository.
- Catalogue and classify theses and dissertations forward.
- Liaise with other libraries: locally, regionally and internationally.
- Ensure/Confirm that documents on the (IR) have passed the originality checks.
- Conduct training on use of Turnitin service
Feedback from Users

- Help in user identify areas that need citation
- Avoid over-reliance on a single document
- Appropriate paraphrasing
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Lecturer – Student engagement
Challenges

• Research publications from most universities not available online, therefore the comparison is not comprehensive.
  • There have been cases of plagiarism that are identified by the teaching staff through their exposure to the field.
• Some students fear that the system may indicate they have plagiarized yet it is not so. This affects its adoption.
• Many users are always anxious to know the safe similarity % index. It is usually not possible to give a definite answer.
• Some documents may not be available for comparison, a request should be made to the hosting institution.
Suggestions / Recommendations

- Universities and research institutions should establish their institutional repositories to help in comparison of documents.
- Librarian should ensure that research documents are comprehensively indexed.
- Turnitin is not a replacement to other methods used to identify plagiarism.
- Turnitin is helpful in creating awareness to plagiarism leads.
References

Thank you