How Over 800,000 Educators are Reducing Serious Incidents of Unoriginal Content and Improving Student Writing
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1.0 Summary

Educators today battle a pervasive culture of copying and cheating—a culture driven by unprecedented competition and the ability for students to easily and instantly access billions of source documents over the Web. Promoting academic integrity in this environment isn’t easy, but one tool is proving to be effective in helping institutions produce better, more original writers and researchers—and in achieving long term, lasting improvements.

Turnitin, a service of iParadigms LLC, is used by over 800,000 educators worldwide to check student papers and essays against a rapidly expanding database of Internet content and subscription-based publications, as well as over 135 million student papers that have been submitted to Turnitin over the past decade. Using easy-to-read, color-coded Originality Reports, Turnitin supplies educators with information they can use to assess student works quickly for possible plagiarism or other misuses of information. More importantly, Turnitin is a proven instructional support tool, offering instructors a platform for communicating the importance of proper paraphrasing and citation, original writing, and independent thought.

A growing body of research—including data analysis, surveys and independent studies conducted by institutions around the world—provides evidence of Turnitin’s efficacy in helping educators reduce serious incidents of unoriginal content in student work and to produce better writers across the entire curriculum.

As outlined in this paper, these research results reveal that the following results are achieved when secondary schools and institutions of higher education use Turnitin consistently and over a period of years:

• Students become better writers and researchers. They create work with more original content and learn appropriate ways to use and cite source material.
• With easy-to-read Originality Reports, hours teachers once spent searching for evidence of suspected plagiarism can be spent producing better writers who make more appropriate use of outside source materials.
• Institutions improve their levels of learning. With continued use of Turnitin, educators can reinforce appropriate ways to use information year after year — across all disciplines.
2.0 Introduction

2.1 PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE WRITING IN A CUT-AND-PASTE CULTURE

From elementary schools to postgraduate programs, today’s educators are struggling to promote academic integrity as they develop tomorrow’s writers and researchers. Studies conducted by Donald McCabe and the Institute for Academic Integrity reveal that cheating, fueled by heated competition among students, is pervasive. Nearly four in five college students admit to cheating at least once. [1] Another study reveals that the social stigmas of cheating—the kind of deterrent teachers once relied on to help manage the problem in classrooms—has all but evaporated among students. In 1960, 58.3% of high school students admitted to allowing another student to copy their work. By 1989, that number had soared to 97.5%.[2]

The growing popularity of test-score accountability, particularly in the United States, has not reversed this trend. With school funding and teacher salaries tied to examination results, learning too often takes a back seat to performance on tests.

For educators striving to stem the rising tide of plagiarism, yet another challenge looms. Students at all levels have access to billions of source documents via the Web, making it easy for young writers to create work that includes cut-and-pasted content. Or for about $8 to $10 a page, they can even download previously authored essays and reports from online paper mills and submit them as their own work.

FIGURE 1 | Each Turnitin search produces an easy-to-read Originality Report. The color-coded reports feature side-by-side comparisons that educators can use to assess unoriginal content and teach students about proper citation. Using Turnitin helps educators teach students to think for themselves—even when working with outside sources.

To Speak or Sign

The Parental Pressure to Choose between Cochlear Implants, Sign Language, or Both

On the Use

Sign language is a beautifully expressive, visual language using hand, body and facial expressions to convey words and meanings, however, as more and more parents are learning even as early as birth that their child may be deaf, more children are getting cochlear implants than ever before and there is fear that fewer and fewer children will learn to sign. In fact, as of May 2002, 69 percent of babies born in the United States had been screened for hearing loss as part of universal newborn hearing screening programs. Such early identification of infant hearing loss represents a dramatic change from the situation that existed only six with hearing loss were not identified until they were 2 1/2 years of age (Sorlin 2003). It is likely that the implementation of these early screenings have led to the growth of cochlear implants within the United States to 20 percent or more per year (Sorlin 2003). Many parents view deafness as a disability that with cochlear implants can be cured. They desire that their child learn language and function “normally” in society.

Cluster View

- cochlerear.com
  - Lincoln Land Community College
    - Student paper (from 2001)
  - 36%
- norwich.edu
  - Student paper (from 2006)
  - 22%
- jama.com
  - 18%
- about.com
  - 13%
- medical-examiner.com
  - 10%
- rathd海湾学院
  - 8%
2.2 LESS COPYING AND MORE LEARNING

At institutions throughout the world, efforts are under way to promote a culture of learning, rather than of copying. For more than 800,000 educators in nearly 9,500 high schools and colleges in 126 countries, one tool has proven essential in the effort to reduce plagiarism and inappropriate use of information.

Turnitin, the world’s leading originality checking service from iParadigms LLC, helps to promote academic integrity at a time when too many students erroneously believe information to be “free.” Every day, Turnitin checks more than 200,000 papers for text matches against more than 135 million student papers, billions of pages of Web content, thousands of books including classic works of literature, and more than 80,000 newspapers, magazines and scholarly journals.
3.0 Real-World Results

3.1 REALIZING REAL-WORLD RESULTS WITH TURNITIN

Educators around the world have come to rely on Turnitin to ensure originality and to help students learn better by writing better. Recent statistical studies conducted on tens of millions of student papers submitted to Turnitin by secondary and higher education institutions over the past seven years illustrate how regular use of Turnitin helps reduce incidents of unoriginal content.

3.2 REDUCING UNORIGINAL CONTENT

Summarizing results from both secondary and higher education institutions, a distinct improvement trend emerges:

- After two years of regular Turnitin use, institutions often show improvements of 20% or more in the incidence of unoriginal content. When compared to their first full academic year of use, that’s a corresponding 20% reduction in unoriginal content. At individual institutions with widespread implementations of Turnitin, improvements of 30 to 35% are not uncommon.
- After four years, institutions show improvements of more than 30% in incidences of unoriginal content. Many institutions observed improvements of up to 70%.
- After six years, institutions see more than 40-45% improvement, on average, in incidences of unoriginal content when compared to the first year of use.

Results like these aren’t limited to secondary schools and four year colleges and universities. Two-year colleges and for-profit institutions see similar improvements.

![Graphs showing improvement trends](FIGURE 2)
3.3 THE HALO EFFECT: INCREASED USE BRINGS STEADY IMPROVEMENTS

Our analysis of millions of papers submitted over the seven-year period highlights another important factor contributing to Turnitin’s effectiveness. Institutions not only used Turnitin from year to year, they increased their use of the service from one year to the next, submitting progressively greater volumes of work every year.

Data culled from the analysis of both secondary and higher education papers shows that, typically, first-year usage increases by at least 35%, second-year usage by at least 50%, and third-year usage by 75%. By the fourth year and beyond, participation increases at least 150% over the first year.

That steady increase in participation attests to Turnitin’s “halo effect:” as educators continue to use the service, levels of originality improve even in new students’ writing.
4.0 Effectiveness

4.1 FIVE TIMES MORE EFFECTIVE THAN MANUAL DETECTION
Independently conducted studies reveal that the Turnitin service is significantly more effective than manual plagiarism detection methods. In a 2006 Pennsylvania State University case study, researchers reviewed 429 assignments from students enrolled in five sections of Geography 482 (Understanding Geographic Data), an offering of Penn State World Campus, the university’s distance-learning program. The assignments were submitted by part-time students who worked full-time, and whose median age was 41.

The study searched for evidence of “copy-and-paste plagiarism” by manually comparing papers with possible source works and then by comparing the results returned by Turnitin. Manual methods of detection, which identified 2.8% of the papers as containing plagiarism, missed nearly four out of five instances of unoriginal content, while Turnitin identified plagiarism in 12.8% of the papers.[3]

4.2 A CONSENSUS AMONG EDUCATORS
The Penn State study reflects a consensus among Turnitin users: the service works. In an April 2010 survey of thousands of educators, nine out of 10 (92%) reported that Turnitin helps prevent plagiarism. The survey, conducted by iParadigms, also found that 92% of educators were satisfied with the service.[4]

In a separate, independent evaluation of 11 online plagiarism-detection services, Turnitin scored the highest against an evaluation matrix established under the guidance of a six-member academic panel.[5]

4.3 TEACHING WITH TURNITIN
For educators aiming to maximize results from Turnitin, it helps to understand what the tool is – and what it isn’t. Educators should view Turnitin originality checking as “a tool to assist in the detection of plagiarism,” argue Wright, Owens and Nigel in a paper presented at the 3rd International Plagiarism Conference in 2008. The authors say Turnitin should not be construed as a substitute for personal instruction. Rather, the authors say, Turnitin is “designed to be used in tandem (rather than replace) traditional methods for assessing academic integrity (such as identifying abrupt changes in written structure and style).”[6]

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Three Steps to Achieving Long-Term Results from Turnitin

Research results confirm that institutions can steadily improve the amount of original writing and proper use of information in student works by following three key best practices.

1. Use the Turnitin service consistently, submitting papers on a regular basis.
2. Continue using Turnitin from year to year and progressively increase participation as much as possible.
3. Support the efforts of faculty across all disciplines—with training and professional development—to use Turnitin and services as instructional support tools for formative assessment, rather than just for “plagiarism deterrence and policing.”
K.O. Jones, presenting at the 2008 International Conference on Computer Systems and Technology, concurs, stating that Turnitin, while a useful text-matching system, isn’t designed to replace instructors whose expertise is required to determine if flagged content has been used inappropriately.[7]

4.4 HELPING CREATE BETTER WRITERS AND RESEARCHERS

At every level from middle school through higher education, and in every discipline, instructors who use Turnitin as a teaching tool say the service is helping them to get the results they want.

An April 2010 iParadigms survey of educators found that Turnitin helps them do more than battle a pervasive cut-and-paste culture. Survey results show that Turnitin helps instructors achieve progress in several vital areas of writing and research education. Respondents say Turnitin helps them do the following:

• Discuss academic integrity with students: 89% of respondents
• Teach techniques for paraphrasing, summarizing and quoting: 89%
• Teach students to cite sources properly: 79%
• Build better writing skills in students: 75%.

4.5 GIVING EDUCATORS MORE TIME TO TEACH

Instructors also report that Turnitin saves them valuable time by sparing them hours they otherwise would spend checking student works manually. In iParadigms’ April 2010 survey, for instance, more than four out of five respondents, or 81%, reported that Turnitin saves them time. Similar findings are reported in other independent studies. A 2007 test of Turnitin at Curtin University of Technology shows nearly half of participating instructors say the time they spent searching to confirm incidents of plagiarism decreased as a result of using Turnitin. At Curtin, the service proved so useful that 80% of instructors who used Turnitin for one year said they wanted to use it again the following year.[8]

4.6 FOR STUDENTS, A WELCOME LEARNING AID… AND A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Students recognize the benefits of using Turnitin. Malaysian instructors who used Turnitin as a teaching tool conducted their own student survey in 2008. Based on 112 responses, the instructors found that nearly three out of four students (74.2%) said Turnitin enabled them to identify where they needed to edit their work to avoid plagiarism. And almost just as many (70.5%) said that, after using Turnitin, they were “more aware of academic integrity and the importance of academic conventions.”[9]

Even more positive was the reaction among upper-level pharmacy students at the University of Auckland. Nearly nine of ten respondents (87%) agreed that using Turnitin with their assignments was a good idea. And 66% of those said their experience with Turnitin will prompt them to be more diligent in correctly citing sources.[10]

Some students are so convinced of Turnitin’s value that they would like for everyone to use it. A business school in London surveyed graduate students in its marketing and communications program. Overall, students found the service convenient and easy to use. They even said that Turnitin was their preferred method of turning in weekly assignments and written work. Nearly four of five (78%) preferred to receive feedback on written assignments from Turnitin. Even more (87.5%) thought Turnitin should be adopted in other academic programs.[11]
5.1 GET THE FULL SOLUTION ADVANTAGE

OriginalityCheck™ plagiarism prevention is an essential part of Turnitin, the only complete web-based solution for managing writing assignments through multiple phases of feedback and revisions. In addition to OriginalityCheck, Turnitin includes two other services:

- GradeMark®, an innovative paperless grading tool that allows instructors to abandon the days of red ink and stacks of papers. GradeMark is a time-saving alternative to traditional pen-and-paper grading, making it easy for instructors to give students the rich, time-sensitive feedback essential for building quality writing skills and for helping students to master course content.
- PeerMark®, a patented system that gives instructors the ability to create peer review assignments that students use to evaluate and learn from one another’s work. These assignments provide a unique and valuable framework for students to develop critical thinking and writing skills.

With Turnitin, institutions can:
- Accelerate the learning process
- Involve students more in their own development
- Free instructors from the burden of tracking papers
- Promote critical thinking
- Maintain academic integrity

5.2 TURNITIN IMPROVES BOTH TEACHING AND LEARNING BEYOND JUST PLAGIARISM PREVENTION

The April 2010 iParadigms survey results show that all of the tools in Turnitin—OriginalityCheck, PeerMark and GradeMark—help instructors in all disciplines (not just those in language arts) to accomplish the following:

- Help students build better writing skills: 75% of respondents
- Become better instructors: 72%
- Save time compared to conventional methods: 81%
- Conserve printer paper and ink: 71%

5.3 MAKING TURNITIN A PART OF YOUR CULTURE

To learn how you can use Turnitin to build better writers and communicators, visit www.turnitin.com or contact us.

- Secondary Education (510) 764-7600 x239
- Higher Education (510) 764-7600 x240
- sales@turnitin.com

Request a complete literature review of independent studies on Turnitin’s efficacy and impact on teaching, learning and academic integrity at: www.turnitin.com.
6.0 References


About Turnitin and iParadigms, LLC

iParadigms, LLC is the world’s leading provider of web-based solutions for plagiarism prevention. The company’s products include Turnitin, used by educators worldwide to check students’ papers for originality, to enable web-based peer review and for digital grading of student work. The company’s solutions check millions of documents each month and are used in over 125 countries. iParadigms is headquartered in Oakland, CA and is backed by Warburg Pincus.

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