

Text Matching Service Pilot Project

*Report to Faculty Assembly - Call for Faculty Volunteers
November 10, 2008*

The Committee on Intellectual Integrity (CII) will launch a pilot project during the Spring 2009 semester to investigate the effectiveness of the availability of a Text Matching Service such as Turnitin. The committee has investigated the issues surrounding the use of such services and, though we continue to consider a range of arguments against them, we also believe that these services may have the potential to be effective educational tools.

We are now asking for faculty volunteers to test this service. Our call for volunteers extends through December 2, 2008. This material will be distributed to you electronically, as well as to department chairs. Please forward it to faculty – full-time and part-time – that you represent.

Background

These text matching services are often referred to as “Plagiarism Detection Services,” but it is important to recognize that in actuality they do not detect plagiarism. They merely find matches to strings of words across the Internet, within various electronic scholarly publications and in some cases within databases of previously submitted papers. Part of the rationale for recommending a pilot test of a TMS is that the publicity of these services, most pointedly Turnitin’s advertising, presents a picture of a tool that quickly and simply finds plagiarism within submitted papers. The truth is that an “originality report” from one of these services presents a great deal of information which must be examined by an instructor to determine what, if any, of the “matched” text constitutes possible plagiarism.

Conditions of Use

Faculty who wish to use Turnitin during the Spring semester will be expected:

- To attend training on the use of the service. Training will be available during Winter Break Out and again before classes begin.
- To include a statement in their syllabus regarding how the TMS will be used during the course. CII will provide boilerplate language.
- To instruct their students on how to use the service and to be the primary contact for their students in the use of the service.
- To encourage students to use the service on all drafts of papers prior to submission of the final assignment.
- To participate in assessment activities during the semester.

For a variety of reasons, this project is limited to use in undergraduate courses.

How to Volunteer

Please have faculty interested in participating in this project contact Dr. David Bozak, dab@oswego.edu.

For More Information

Please go to the CII website, <http://www.oswego.edu/provost/integrity/>, for more information on this pilot project.