

Redefining Plagiarism

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Plagiarism Definition

“When somebody presents the work of others
(data, words, or theories)
as if they were his/her own
and without proper acknowledgement.”

<https://publicationethics.org/category/keywords/plagiarism>

When and where do our definitions of plagiarism come from?

- Western, Eurocentric historical and etymological roots: Latin root – “To kidnap, to steal”
- Major technologies that shifted how plagiarism happens:
 - The printing press (~1450);
 - The Internet (~1990s);
 - GenAI/Large Language Models (~2020s).
- Plagiarism and copyright are entangled in commercial publishing

Challenges Brought on from GenAI

- We do not necessarily know what data sets were used to train Large Language Models (e.g., ChatGPT).
- We can no longer have confidence that writing (as both a process or a product) is an entirely human endeavour.
- It is reasonable to assume that GenAI is being used in many forms of writing. It can be difficult to know if GenAI is being used as a supplement to or substitute for human effort (i.e., analyzing, thinking, creating).

GenAI Text Detections Tools

- Are controversial
- Can produce false negatives and false positives
- Have variations in efficacy, sensitivity, and specificity
- Can be “tricked” by the use of machine translation tools, human editing, use of ‘humanizing apps’
- Cannot reliably be used to identify possible plagiarism

Elkhatat et al. (2023); Foltýnek et al. (2023); Gegg-Harrison & Quarterman (2024); Sadasivan et al. (2023); Weber-Wulff et al. (2023).

Are we moving towards a Postplagiarism era?

Postplagiarism refers to an era in human society in which advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence are a normal part of life, including how we teach, learn, and interact daily.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the International Journal for Educational Integrity, a publication of BMC, part of Springer Nature. The header includes a search bar and navigation links for Home, About, Articles, Submission Guidelines, and a prominent 'Submit manuscript' button. The main content features an editorial by Sarah Elaine Eaton, published on 12 October 2023, with the title 'Postplagiarism: transdisciplinary ethics and integrity in the age of artificial intelligence and neurotechnology'. Below the article, it states 10k Accesses, 16 Citations, 40 Altmetric, and a Metrics link. The footer of the page includes a purple bar with the journal's name and a link to BMC.

Eaton, 2023

Towards A Revised Definition of Plagiarism

- Human-AI hybrid writing may soon become the norm
- Move over spell check, GenAI is here (e.g., Microsoft CoPilot)
- *Technology may evolve, but responsibility remains a constant (at least for now) – As humans we can outsource some or all of our writing to an AI app. What we do not outsource is our responsibility for outputs that have our name attached to them.*

Towards A Revised Definition of Plagiarism

- *Our understandings of plagiarism – and originality – are shifting, but as yet there is neither clarity nor consensus about what a new definition of plagiarism could be.*
- *Shifting our focus to what counts as quality may ultimately be more productive than trying to detect plagiarism as it is currently defined.*

References

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THANK YOU

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