


Plagiarism
Beating the Cheats

John Royce
Robert College of Istanbul

2001: An Odyssey in Time and Space

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Mmmmm.....

I am very impressed by *Encarta*.
My son uses it to do his homework, and he can answer all the questions without having to learn anything.

Verbatim quote, parent to David Johnson, formerly Librarian, Sevenoaks School, 1993.

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What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words or ideas without due attribution or acknowledgement, an attempt to pass off those words or ideas as one's own.


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WHY cite?

- Give credit where it's due
- Provide evidence of research
- Strengthen your arguments
- Build on what is known
- In turn, the writer will want, expect, & deserve recognition


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Why is plagiarism wrong?

- It is cheating, it is theft, it is fraud.
- “You didn’t learn the material. Your writing skills didn’t improve. Your grade is based on deception.” (Edlund)
- “Cheating takes away from everyone’s achievement. If you are working hard and doing your best, it’s not fair when somebody cheats” (Hess, quoted by Chidley, 1997).

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Why they cheat

- Ignorance
- Need to pass, need to achieve
- Laziness, bad time management
- Everyone else does it (and seems to get away with it)
- The teacher won’t know
- The teacher does not care
- Culture
- Lack of understanding, lack of interest

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Carlson's Conundrum

- Kids copy when they don't understand. (McGregor: "Do scribes learn? Copying and Information Use." SLMR, 2001.)
- We learn best when we engage with the material. (Fitzgerald; McGregor; McKenzie; etc.)
- Most Internet documents are written for an adult audience.

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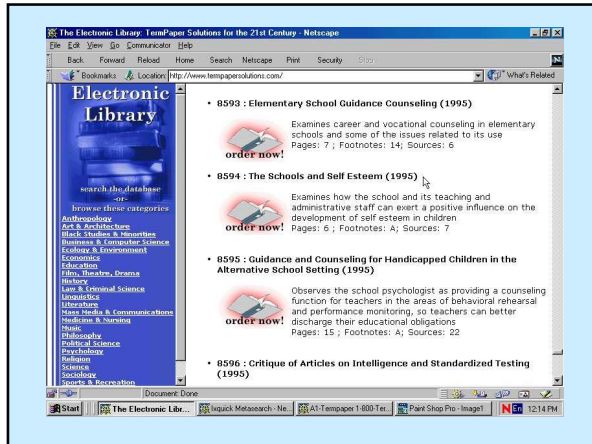
The screenshot shows a Netscape browser window displaying the 'AltaVista Advanced Search Cheat Sheet'. The page title is 'ADVANCED SEARCH CHEAT SHEET' and it includes a link to 'Print out this page as an easy reference guide for Advanced Search.' Below the title is a table with search operators and their functions:

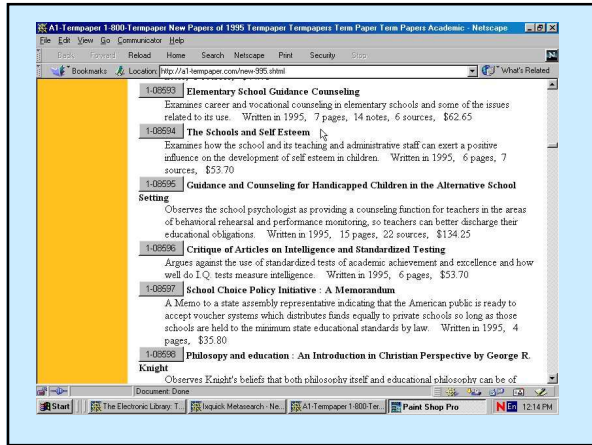
AND	Finds documents containing all of the specified words or phrases. Peanut AND butter finds documents with both the word peanut and the word butter.
OR	Finds documents containing at least one of the specified words or phrases. Peanut OR butter finds documents containing either peanut or butter. The found documents could contain both items, but not necessarily.
AND NOT	Excludes documents containing the specified word or phrase. Peanut AND NOT butter finds documents with peanut but not containing butter. NOT must be used with another operator, like AND. AltaVista does not accept 'peanut NOT butter', instead, specify peanut AND NOT butter.
NEAR	Finds documents containing both specified words or phrases within 10 words of each other. Peanut NEAR butter would find documents with peanut butter, but probably not any other kind of butter.
()	Use parentheses to group complex Boolean phrases. For example, (peanut AND butter) AND (jelly OR jam) finds documents with the words peanut butter and jelly or peanut butter and jam or both.
anchor:link	Finds pages that contain the specified word or phrase in the text of a hyperlink. anchor:"Click here to visit garden.com" would find pages with "Click here to visit garden.com" as a link.
applet:class	Finds pages that contain a specified Java applet. Use applet:morph to find pages using applets called morph.
	Finds pages within the specified domain. Use domain:uk to find pages from the United Kingdom, or use

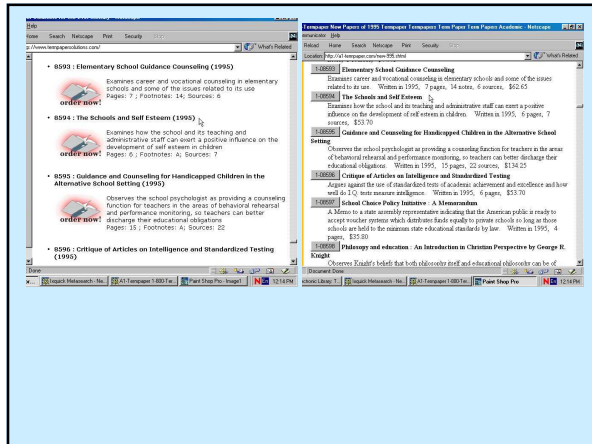
The cheat sites and the paper mills

- Some are free and some for fee
- Many condemn plagiarism (?), many condone it
- Some display their essays, some fax or email
- Many link to other sites
- Some custom write essays
- Cost is no guarantee of quality

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Figuratively speaking (1)

- 1996: 28 pay-for sites on the internet (Hickman)
- 1998: 38 free essay sites / 72 pay-for sites (Hickman)
- 2000: 11000 sites (Sacchet)
- 2000: 400 *quality* sites (Senechal)

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Figuratively speaking (2)

- 1997: Schoolsucks.com claimed between 5000 and 6000 visits per day
- 1999: High Performance Papers : peak term-paper due time: 800 requests for custom written papers – 800 requests a day
- 80% to 87% U.S. students admit to cheating at least once (Kleiner & Lord; McCabe; *Who's Who Among American Students, 1998*)
- 26% admit to plagiarising at least once (McCabe)

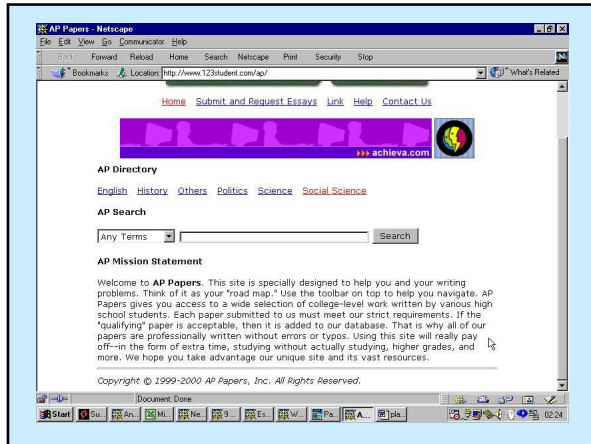
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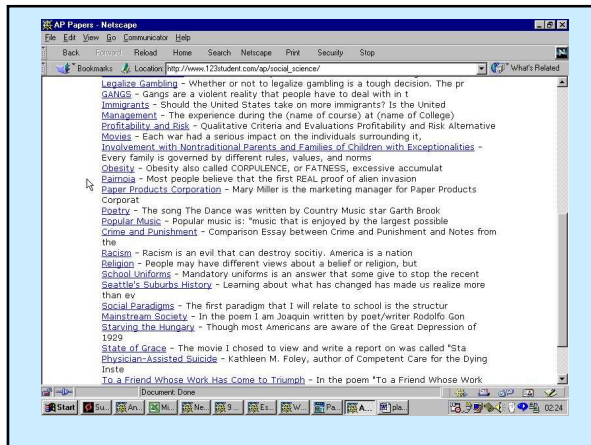



Stone Soup



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Good news, bad news

- The good news : most of the essays on the free essay sites are mediocre.
- The bad news : teachers may not realise that mediocre students are plagiarizing mediocre essays.
- The worst of it : second language students may not recognize poor language, poor composition.

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Fortunately...

Students who cheat
tend to think that their teachers
are extremely stupid.

Black (1999)


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The tricks they get up to

- Copy a large section but reference/ quote just a small portion
- Build a pastiche from several sources
- Make up false citations/ references
 - Use an author available in the library
 - Invent an author/ source
 - Use a real web site
 - Reference a web site but not the web page
- Make up quotations/ misquote

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Some (more) of the giveaways

- Lack of citations; mix of references
- Lack of bibliography
- 'Interesting' references to page numbers
- Level of works cited
- Reference to items not included
- Failure to cite good evidence!
- Spelling (US/ UK etc)
- Non-sequiturs


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Research
is **not** about finding out.

Research
is about **finding evidence!**


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Finding evidence...

- Bibliography = witnesses!
- References = evidence!
- Check the evidence, check what the witnesses have to say!
 - Check what has been cited.
 - Check what has not been cited.
 - Check what should have been cited.


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The detective work

- Ask to see books, printouts, p/copies etc
- Check the sources cited
 - Check what has been used and how
 - Check for false citations
- Internet search for essay title, quotations, unique words, random keywords, phrases
- Check resources available to students – online and offline
- Check the cheat sites
- Use a search site/ use a search service


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The nitty-gritty

- Go where the kids go: library / -ies
- Cd-roms & online databases
- Yahoo!
- Use a variety of search & meta search engines
- Use a variety of search strategies
- Use plagiarism search services


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Eureka!

It need not all be lifted
– it's enough that some
(a significant proportion?)
is discovered to be stolen property...

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The tip of the iceberg

- The searchable web
- The rest of the web (the invisible web)
- The rest of the internet
- *All other sources of information*
- If it's not there, even the most powerful search engine won't find it...


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You won't catch them all

- The invisible web
- The invisible network
- Translations
- Obscure publications
- Unpublished materials
- The thrill of the chase


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When all is revealed!

- Give (the ignorant) a chance to make amends (?)
 - Better still, catch them before it's too late
- Be SURE of your facts.
- Follow policy.


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Deterrent measures

- **SHOW YOU ARE SERIOUS!**
- School ethos, policy
- Explanation & instruction
- Habit – citation from the start
- Restrict sources / demand hard-copies
- Systematic, random checks
- Make work interesting, make work personal, use Essential Questions
- Make work fresh, don't rehash
- Live feedback/ the process skills


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The librarian's role

- Sound the alarm!
- Guide & trainer.
- Detective / information specialist.
- Partner & collaborater.
- Advisor.
- Exemplar.

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The research evidence

It works!

- Pursuing an active anti-plagiarism policy reduces plagiarism.
- Use of cheat-resistant assignments and alternative assessment reduces plagiarism.

Gajadhar, McGregor, et al.


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Plagiarism Beating the Cheats

- Evidence
- Citations
- Bibliography
- **Follow them up!**

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email: jroyce@robcoll.k12.tr
website: <http://vm.robcoll.k12.tr/~jroyce/workshops.htm>

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