SOFTWARE

MORE ON PLAGIARISM

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When getting important documents for review I usually check them for plagiarism. One of the best address seems docoloc – try it out, they have free demo accounts.
The Washington Post last week has some interesting comments – "Cut-and-Paste Is a Skill, Too"

The proliferation of [educational] sites like these leaves teachers with an even more vexing problem: how to test what students really know. The time-honored paper now teaches students a very different skill set, one that appears to be unintentional and largely unrecognized — but one that's much closer to what I do at work these days. One university professor, writing anonymously on his "concernedprofessor" blog, notes that students today create "hyper-plagiarism which becomes harder and harder to catch. While these chimera-esque papers can, most of the time, be easily spotted through the mixing of language styles, clever students can pass these off throughout their academic careers with little worry."

The concerned professor argued basically

As institutions, we've always dealt with a fair share of "academic dishonesty" – outright plagiarism, "group work" taken to extremes, falsification of data and everything in between. All professors know the stories (perhaps having experienced them personally) of students buying papers outright from upperclassmen. None of this is new to academic life and, of course, the internet merely increases the frequency of this sort of behavior. None of this would be worth writing about were it not for the fact that last year, about half of our graduating class was implicated or caught in some variety of cheating.

My ivory tower seems to crash when reading this. Viewing the problem, however from the other side – coping with the enormous amount of literature out there, synthesizing from

sources of variable credibility, putting structure around and editing it into a coherent document is definitely a new competency (Gogol for the last sentence – you will not find it – it is rephrased from the article above).

As the commentary at Slashdot says:

But truly distinguishing plagiarism is a matter of intent. Did I mean to copy, was it accidental (a trick of memory), was it polygenesis[?] … Young people today are simply too far ahead of anything schools might do to curb their recycling efforts.

BTW *plagiarius* means *kidnapping*.