

Plagiarism

What is it? – put simply it is the presentation of another's words, work or conclusions as your own.

How can we detect it? – one of the easiest ways to detect plagiarism in written works is to be familiar with the sources, triggering a “this looks familiar” moment. However, with the proliferation of websites, online libraries, books and resources that the internet has brought this becomes increasingly difficult. Most educational systems use plagiarism checkers such as Turnitin which are available by subscription. Fortunately there are a number of free plagiarism checkers online and they are described here:

<https://elearningindustry.com/top-10-free-plagiarism-detection-tools-for-teachers>

Unfortunately we can only use such tools for the submitted papers and not for the individuals who are writing their docs. As such changes in language are often a key that something is copied directly. I.e. if the writing is a fairly low grade level and there are two or more really well written, erudite sentences with many multisyllabic words there is a good chance that the sentences were copied.

What education can we give to entrants? – I would strongly recommend that we educate entrants on appropriate use of source material and appropriate citations and end notes. This is a good website to read to understand what is plagiarism and how to avoid it in research papers. Plus articles about how to cite appropriately, lots of good information here.

<http://en.writecheck.com/plagiarism-guide>

One thing that helps avoid inadvertent plagiarism is removing the writing one step from the source material. Read the source, take notes, write your paper from your notes not from the source material. This allows you to reformulate topics in your own words.

Recommend that entrants run their documentation through a free online plagiarism checker.

What education can we give to judges? – can plagiarism be proven without direct comparison of sources? No. The same website should be recommended to judges to educate themselves about plagiarism. If plagiarism is suspected then it should be brought to the attention of the tallyroom staff ONLY. Accusations should not be made to the entrant.