Chapter 16
Plagiarism

ABSTRACT

Plagiarism is easily differentiated from piracy. Piracy is the sale of qualified but unauthorized copies of a work, an action grudging the author of profit but not credit. Depriving authors of profit that is rightfully theirs is theft, but plagiarism focuses on ownership credit rather than profit. The main worries for plagiarism are its influence on creativity, motivation, and ability to think in alternative ways. These qualities of personality may be negatively impacted by habitual plagiarism. Moreover, the various impacts of plagiarism are lack of information authenticity, fake credit, personality faults, spoiling of professional reputation, and destroying the creative ability of creative professionals. This chapter explores plagiarism.

INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism is proposition that people generally value the esteem of others, particularly their peers. In order to earn the esteem of our peers, we look for the recognition of our originality, creativity, insight, knowledge, and technical skills. Some plagiarism is unintentional due to a psychological condition called "cryptomnesia," nonetheless there is certainly a considerable amount of plagiarism that is conscious and purposeful, the result of rational, cost-benefit calculation. Both are common due to the availability of easily accessible electronic resources, such as Internet, as a result of which it has become so much easier for people to 'cut and paste' chunks of unedited text

BACKGROUND

The word 'plagiarism' originates from the Latin words 'plagiarius', an abductor, and 'plagiare', to steal. Generally, plagiarism is the use of another person's products of mind without acknowledging that they belong to someone else. There are different types of plagiarism with different legal and social aspects. Some ways of plagiarizing include copying and pasting text without proper way of citation, missing citation by using text from a source without citing it, fabricating data by manipulating someone's research data or findings to hide plagiarism, idea theft which occurs frequently in advertising and design, by presenting someone else's idea as your own, and copyright

infringement which is reproducing, distributing, or displaying a work without the permission of the copyright owner. In the age of internet and technology, access to information has become very easy, people can find thousands of articles and related publications by simply 'googling' their topics, and the sources are difficult to be identified.

Plagiarism affects human creativity and knowledge, by making them think less and learn fewer, since no effort is needed to write texts, create concepts and original ideas. Another drawback of plagiarism is that it offends the literary rights of the original author and the property rights of the copyright owner. It is obvious that plagiarism is an ethical issue, which is treated by different methods, such as spreading awareness on individual and organizational levels, and creating codes and regulations to punish and penalize those who get caught in the act of plagiarism.

There are numerous writings and opinions concerning the issues of plagiarism, by many experts. Stuart P. Green (2002), Professor of Law at Rutgers Law School-Newark, in his article 'Plagiarism, Norms, and the Limits of Theft Law: Some Observations on the Use of Criminal Sanctions in Enforcing Intellectual Property Rights' (2002) explores the concept of plagiarism as a proposition that people generally value the esteem of others, particularly their peers. In order to earn the esteem of our peers, we look for the recognition of our originality, creativity, insight, knowledge, and technical skills. This is very common among writers, artists, and intellectuals, who not only enjoy the creative act itself, but also wish to see those acts recognized by others. This desire for esteem produces a norm that Stuart P. Green refers to as the "norm of attribution." Rendering to this norm, words and ideas may be copied if and only if the copier attributes them to their inventor. Without this recognition there would be fewer inducements to produce new work.

People who value the norm of attribution would regard credit earned for someone else's work as illegitimate. Undeniably, such people can attain gratification only if they know that the work they are being known for is in fact their own. However, for many people, the attribution norm becomes a moral obligation, rather than a willful desire to show respect and appreciation to the work of others.

Edward Wasserman, professor of Journalism Ethics at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va., describes media and journalistic plagiarism in his article 'Plagiarism and Precedence' (2006). He states that journalistic plagiarism "forbids un-credited reuse of what intellectual property law would describe as unique expression". Many times, looking to describe a reality, journalists come up with characterizations that are indeed original. This deserves credit, however even this principle is not easily applicable. Innovative expression slips into the depths of the Internet, and suffers the risk of non-stop borrowing and lending. The first reporter who described some minor incident as "a wake-up call," may have imagined he or she had come up with an astonishing new idea; but soon enough, the same idea would be found through Google search in dozens of other web sources. Therefore, the moment of invention is lost, and the whole attempt becomes useless.

Lawrence Lessig (2004), is an American academic best known as a supporter of reduced legal restrictions on copyright, trademark, and radio frequency spectrum, particularly in technology applications. In his book 'Free Culture' (2004), he claims that even though creative work has value; the taking of something of value from somebody without approval is wrong, and is a form of piracy. However, the current debate in the US has this turned around. He gives an example of a composers' rights organization, ASCAP, which sued the Girl Scouts for not paying for the songs which girls sang around Girl Scout campfires. There was "value" (the songs) so there must have been a "right"—even against the Girl Scouts.

Before the Internet, this conflation didn't matter all that much.

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