

Abstract: Plagiarism in the sense of “theft of intellectual property” has been around for as long as humans have produced work of art and research. However, easy access to the Web, large databases, and telecommunication in general, has turned plagiarism into a serious problem for publishers, researchers and educational institutions. In this paper, we concentrate on textual plagiarism (as opposed to plagiarism in music, paintings, pictures, maps, technical drawings, etc.). We first discuss the complex general setting, then report on some results of plagiarism detection software and finally draw attention to the fact that any serious investigation in plagiarism turns up rather unexpected side-effects. We believe that this paper is of value to all researchers, educators and students and should be considered as seminal work that hopefully will encourage many still deeper investigations.