

Request for Re-submittal of Project Report

The University of Texas defines plagiarism as “using someone else’s work in your own academic work without giving proper credit” ^[1]. This is a valid policy - when using someone else’s work, it is important to give credit to the original author who has worked hard previously, to not only create, but also share their work. Among other instances, the documentation goes on to state that “borrowing images and other media without documentation of the original source” is considered an intentional form of plagiarism and a violation of the university’s policies. The guidelines for ramification if one is found to be plagiarizing are quite serious and therefore we are grateful to get an opportunity to explain what happened. In this report, we outline where and why our original project report did not abide by the university’s policy about plagiarism and request consideration for a resubmittal of the project report.

As part of the course, Introduction to Machine Learning with Dr. Gurari, our team developed a neural network to perform a time-series analysis of financial data. To more effectively communicate our system, we decided to include an image of a sample architecture that depicts the deep learning model. The image was selected from an article on Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) models - which was discovered through a search engine during our research ^[2]. Although we remembered to add the citation for this article on the final project presentation, we did not include the reference in our project report. Both of us realize our error and accept that we should have given appropriate credit to the original author, Mr. Christopher Olah, in the report as well. Perhaps, the late addition of the picture in our submission made us forget to go back and update the works cited in our paper. In hindsight, it is clear that we needed to be more attentive when initially drafting the final report paper of our project and double-checked all borrowed work - including images. We did not mean to take credit for someone else’s work but, without referencing the image from the article, our paper fails to acknowledge someone else’s contribution in explaining our system. We simply

wanted to be able to visually communicate our machine learning model to non-experts, but as stated previously, we should have been more vigilant regarding plagiarism practices. Even though it was acceptable for us to use the image in our report, we should have clearly mentioned the source of the information.

Both members of team are in agreement that we were wrong to not cite the image in our project report submission. We understand our error, accept the accusation, and apologize for not fully abiding by the university's policies around academic honesty. In the future, we promise to learn from this experience and make sure that all borrowed work, especially images, are cited correctly and that we give credit when it is due. We would like to also thank Dr. Gurari for her response to the situation and providing a safe environment to us for learning such an important lesson. We realize the penalties of such a violation can be quite severe in other circumstances and therefore her handling of the case enabled us to grow without severe consequences. We have updated our project report with the citation of the image, and we request that our paper be considered for a resubmittal. Given this violation, we believe that we should be docked points for a clear error in judgement. Because our intention was not to pass off somebody else's work as our own, we think a penalty of 15-20% of the grade for revised paper would be a fair outcome.

References

[1] Material regarding University of Texas's Plagiarism Policy:

<https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/avoidplagiarism.html>

<http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/>

[2] Article containing used image:

<http://colah.github.io/posts/2015-08-Understanding-LSTMs/>