TURNITIN

WHY USE TURNITIN?

Turnitin can be described as:

“…an electronic text matching system that compares text in a student assignment against a database of sources …and provides an originality report in which ‘matched’ text is underlined, colour coded and linked to either the original source or a similar document on its database…also offers an indication of the proportion of the submitted work that matches other sources” (Curtin 2014).

The University of Wollongong provides access to the Turnitin Assignment tool as a Moodle activity. While Turnitin can be used as a punitive measure to catch students who are copying the work of others without acknowledgement, it is also valuable as a feedback mechanism to help students learn what constitutes plagiarism and to help them to develop their academic writing skills.

Turnitin is one aspect in the adoption of a holistic approach to academic integrity that can be used to teach students what constitutes plagiarism as well as how to cite sources and reference correctly. Turnitin can also provide indicators for staff on where students may need help with improving their writing skills. Turnitin should be used in conjunction with other educative strategies to help address issues in academic writing with students.

Diagram 1 illustrates the possible benefits of using Turnitin:

Diagram 1 (Source: Rogerson, 2014)

Diagram 2 illustrates how a Turnitin originality report can be used for continuous improvement cycle in student writing

Diagram 2 (Source: Rogerson, 2014)

Turnitin matches text submitted by a student to a number of sources, including the internet, works already published, databases and assignments that have previously been lodged by students.
Diagram 3 illustrates the sources that are used to match students’ work:

- **Internet**: the publicly accessible Internet, including Wikipedia and sites selling assignments
- **Published Works**: including ABI/Inform, Periodical Abstracts, Business dateline, and electronic books
- **Databases**: the ProQuest and Gale commercial databases
- **Lodged Assignments**: every assignment previously submitted to Turnitin from UoW and all other institutions

Diagram 3 (Source: Rogerson, 2014)

The following YouTube video, created by University of Western Sydney demonstrates how students can view and interpret the Turnitin Originality Report: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsJQc48th4Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsJQc48th4Y)

References:


McCarthy, G and Rogerson, A 2009, 'Links are not enough: using originality reports to improve academic standards, compliance and learning outcomes among postgraduate students'. Available at: [http://works.bepress.com/arogerson/3](http://works.bepress.com/arogerson/3)
