

Computer Science Project

2006-2007 Session

Plagiarism and How to Avoid it

Definitions

- Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work as your own
- Collusion is working with someone else when you are meant to be working independently

Good practice

- Refer to other peoples' work
- Quote other people
- Reuse other peoples' code

BUT BE SURE

TO REFERENCE THIS PROPERLY

Bad practice

- Cheating: pretending someone else's work is your own
- Copying work without saying you have done this
- Using code written by someone else without saying what you have done.

Citing other peoples' work is valuable (1)

- Show the context in which your project is being done
- Demonstrate that you have researched the background
- Use ideas from others to develop your project
- You get credit for a good bibliography

Citing other peoples' work is valuable (2)

- Back up your ideas by citing reliable published work

BUT ALWAYS GIVE REFERENCES

Failure to cite references indicates :

- Ignorance
- Attempt to deceive

Avoiding plagiarism

Always cite source of

- direct quotations
- paraphrases
- borrowed ideas & opinions
- borrowed diagrams and figures
- reused code

A common pitfall: errors in note taking

Distinguish between *paraphrases* and *direct quotations*.

- Paraphrasing is putting the authors' ideas in your own words. You must still cite the reference.
- Direct quotations go within quotation marks.
- Copy quotations exactly.

Example 1a (no plagiarism)

Direct quotation (reference correctly cited)

“ The great efficiency breakthroughs in software are to be found in the fundamental architecture of the system, not in the surface design of the interface”
(Tognazzini, 2003)

Example 1b (no plagiarism)

Paraphrased text, no direct quotation
(reference correctly cited):

The fundamental architecture of a software system has a much greater influence on its efficiency than the surface design of the interface. (Tognazzini, 2003)

Example 1c

Bibliography entry for examples 1a and 1b

Bruce Tognazzini, 2003, *First Principles of Interaction Design*,
www.asktog.com/basics/firstPrinciples.html,
Nielsen Norman Group, downloaded 16 Nov 2006

Example 2a (bad practice)

Direct quotation (no citation):

“ The true measure of any compression scheme is the triple test of how well it compresses typical inputs, how quickly compression and decompression are achieved, and how much memory space is required for the method to operate.”

Some might say this is plagiarism, since the source is not identified

Example 2b (plagiarism)

Direct quotation (no quotation marks, no citation):

The true measure of any compression scheme is the triple test of how well it compresses typical inputs, how quickly compression and decompression are achieved, and how much memory space is required for the method to operate.

Example 2c (bad practice)

Mis-quoted text (reference correctly cited)

“ The real *measure of any compression scheme is the triple test of how well it compresses input data, how quickly compression is achieved, and how much memory* is needed for the operation.”

(Witten, Moffat and Bell, 1999, page 406)

I have put the parts that are *actually* quoted in italics to show that only part of the quotation is accurate.

Example 2d (bad practice)

Attempt at a paraphrase that is actually mostly a quotation (reference correctly cited)

The real measure of any compression scheme is the triple test of how well it compresses input data, how quickly compression is achieved, and how much memory is needed for the operation. (Witten, Moffat and Bell, 1999, page 406)

(This is the same text as on the previous slide.)

Lesson: EITHER QUOTE ACCURATELY OR PARAPHRASE PROPERLY

Example 2e (plagiarism)

Same text as for 2c and 2d, but no citation

The real measure of any compression scheme is the triple test of how well it compresses input data, how quickly compression is achieved, and how much memory is needed for the operation.

Lesson: ALWAYS CITE YOUR SOURCES

Example 2f (no plagiarism)

Paraphrase (reference correctly cited):

To evaluate a compression scheme we need to know how well it compresses typical inputs, the speed at which it works, and the amount of memory space needed for the method to operate. (Witten, Moffat and Bell, 1999, page 406)

Note: by re-writing the text in your own words (paraphrasing) you demonstrate that you *understand what it means*. You get credit for this.

Reusing code (1)

- **Plagiarism of designs and program code is taken even more seriously, because this material is supposed to come from you.**

But

- Code re-use is often a sensible approach.
Remember: it is one of the reasons for using Object Oriented methods!
- Don't re-invent the wheel: if a suitable program has been written, use it

BUT ALWAYS CITE YOUR SOURCE

Reusing code (2)

- Some development environments (e.g. Delphi or Visual C++) produce a lot of automatically generated code.
- Whatever the origins of the code you use, make sure you adopt a system for distinguishing that which is copied or machine generated from that which you have written yourself.
- For example, you might put a comment at the start and end of each generated/copied passage.

Risks of plagiarising

The year before last 8 students on this module were found guilty of plagiarism.

- Four had zero marks for the interim report.
If you use material from a project suggestion, or other source, be sure to cite it.
- Another four failed the module, and in some cases failed their degree.

Advice on using others' work

- Always cite correctly.
- Never pretend someone else's work is your own.
- Record all citation information, and construct your bibliography, as you go along.
(This will save you a lot of time, too)