



Turning it in: Experiences, Challenges and Recommendations for the Appropriate Use of Plagiarism Detection Software

Luis F. Razon^{1*}, Raymond R. Tan¹, Michael Angelo B. Promentilla¹,
Kathleen B. Aviso¹ and Krista Danielle S. Yu²

¹ Chemical Engineering Department, De La Salle University

² Economics Department, De La Salle University

*Corresponding Author: luis.razon@dlsu.edu.ph

Abstract: The global availability of vast amounts of information via the World Wide Web has led to significant progress in academic research. However, the copying of original material is now much easier and the tracking of the original source material of plagiarized submissions is more difficult. Many prominent personalities have been involved in sensational cases of plagiarism as either perpetrators or unwitting victims. The challenge of detecting plagiarism in academic work has led to the development of plagiarism detection software, one of which is Turnitin.com. Services like Turnitin automatically detect word clusters in a submitted document that are identical to material in its repositories or on the Web. Turnitin provides a “similarity report”, which consists of a document with portions of the submitted text highlighted to indicate identical matches with documents in its repositories and a “similarity score” -- the percentage of the submitted document that matches other documents. The availability and ease-of-use of plagiarism detection software has made it very popular in academic institutions. Similar software is used by major academic journals as well. There are inappropriate uses of these tools, however, such as setting a hard numerical target for the similarity score and assuming that a paper with a low similarity score is not plagiarized. In this paper, we share our experiences with the use of plagiarism detection software and make recommendations for its appropriate use.