

Implementing Turnitin/Originality Verification software at RMIT University in the context of Academic Integrity

Judy Frazer, Turnitin Project Manager

RMIT teaching & learning

Search for

Home / Our Organisation / Teaching and Learning / Links / Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity @ RMIT

Information for students

- Resources to assist students
- How to avoid plagiarism

Resources for staff


- Staff resources on Academic Integrity
- Getting started with Turnitin

Turnitin originality verification project

- [Joining the Turnitin Pilot Project](#)
- [Turnitin Application Form](#) (staff log-in required)
- [EVALUATION FORM NOW AVAILABLE](#) (staff log-in required)
- [Calendar of Events](#)

What is Academic Integrity?

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship through respecting the work of others whilst having the freedom to build new insights, new knowledge and ideas.



RMIT University upholds the values of academic integrity as fundamental to the scholarship undertaken by all members of its community.

This website provides a central resource to support RMIT students and staff in maintaining integrity in all aspects of their academic work.

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Background.....	3
Turnitin software.....	3
The Project Pilot.....	4
Evaluation.....	6
Comments from the Project Team.....	7
Recommendations.....	8
Appendix A – Comparative presentation of Turnitin Evaluation Data.....	9
Appendix B – Evaluation.....	11
Appendix C – Student Response: a small sample set.....	24
Appendix D – Turnitin management.....	25
Appendix E – Strategy for the implementation of Turnitin at RMIT: June Review.....	26

Implementing Turnitin/Originality Verification software at RMIT University in the context of Academic Integrity

Introduction

This report outlines the implementation of Turnitin in the context of developing Academic Integrity at RMIT University during 2004. It outlines the project process, presents evaluation of the Project and offers recommendations for 2005 and beyond. Relevant documentation is provided in Appendices.

Background

Concern about student plagiarism in Universities has led to a range of approaches in recent years. Some approaches have directly concentrated on simple policing, and others, on educative support to develop a strong culture of Academic Integrity in order to minimize plagiarism. It is this shared understanding between staff and students of what constitutes scholarship and originality that the Project Team at RMIT took as its first principle.

RMIT University had already developed its Policy and Procedures on Plagiarism before this project began. The Policy does not yet refer to the use of software such as Turnitin. Adapting the Policy, Procedures and Guidelines to make reference to software of this kind is now underway. The Policy is due for review in January 2008. It is appropriate that a similar approach be taken to the RMIT Policy on Assessment, to ensure a seamless Teaching and Learning University position and to support Academic Integrity as one of the University's values.

Turnitin Software

This software matches text from a submitted assignment. It identifies matching text from Internet sites, an increasing number of electronic journals and books, past assignments and a range of documents held in its database. It is the most widely used commercial software of its type and is used internationally as well in more than thirty Australian and New Zealand Universities.

When an assignment is submitted, the software reports on its findings, but without a 'conscience'. It shows where text may have been copied, but it is the lecturer/teacher whose judgement on the student's work is essential to determine whether referencing is present, faulty, or ignored. There is considerable potential provided in the application of the software to provide opportunity for the teacher/lecturer to consolidate or indeed commence sound student practice in citing/referencing/writing with integrity while reviewing a report with a student.

There is also considerable potential for the use of the software to be a deterrent to bad practice and plagiarism when used appropriately and consistently.

The Project Pilot

The Project was informed by the RMIT Assessment Working Party (2003) and was endorsed in February 2004 by the Teaching and Learning Strategy Committee on submission of a Project Brief, "Implementation of Originality Verification Software at RMIT (2004)" as a twelve-month Project.

- A Project team was formed, comprising John Kenny as Leader, with Garry Allan as Academic Adviser and Rachel Roberts as Administrator. When John Kenny left RMIT, Judy Frazer stepped into his role.
- The team developed a strategy for implementation (refer Appendix E) and moved into designing and developing the Academic Integrity website with the assistance of a broad consultative group which included representatives from the University Library, the Curriculum Innovation and Development unit, the Learning Skills Unit, the Academic Registrar and academic advisories in both TAFE and HE sectors. The website is now a single source for the variety of resources for both staff and students available within the University to support their practice and an educative approach to Academic Integrity including downloadable Learning Objects for staff.
See: <http://www.rmit.edu.au/teachingandlearning/links/academicintegrity>

It is also the key operational device supporting the implementation of the software use by staff. It provides online access to participation in the project and ongoing administrative support by Rachel Roberts, via being required to sign on to the Guidelines and governance framework, in order to become a licensed user of Turnitin. This framework centralizes Turnitin management, enabling accurate monitoring of staff use and text matching statistics. It also results in efficient monitoring of technical issues and effectiveness of communication with staff.

- Consultation was conducted with stakeholders, including representatives from the Student Union, the Student Leadership Program, RAIS, NTEU representatives, CID staff, the International Office, Research and Innovation staff and numerous academic groups.
As in other Universities, the Student Union representatives initially expressed some concerns. These have been addressed in general, but it appears that there is still concern from this quarter around some staff approaches, which are less educative. Another concern for students is the profit-making of a commercial company from their intellectual property, submitted in assignments and added to the Turnitin database. However, students remain interested in the direction of the Turnitin project and appreciate its educative purpose.

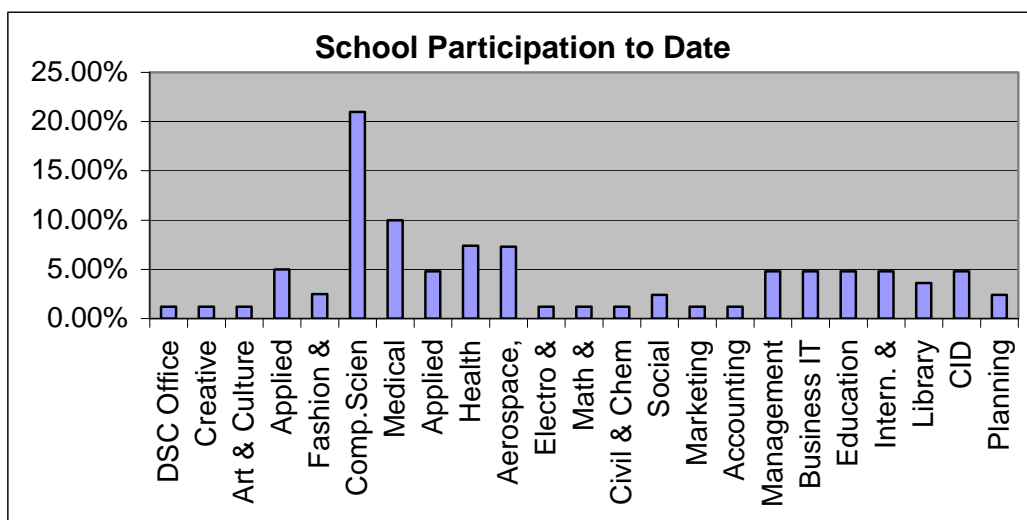
- The team commenced introductory sessions for interested staff and management, simultaneously recording and presenting these to the University community on the Website as a 'Calendar of Events'. These sessions introduced the software, demonstrating the process and presentation of reports generated using work submitted from the audience when possible. Question and answer sessions followed each demonstration, often indicating shift from hesitancy or prejudice to a new awareness of the practical purpose and potential of the software, (as well as its limitations) on the part of staff participants.

Session demonstrators 'signed up' or referred participants to the Website to 'sign up' to use the software within clear guidelines, which include levels of approval beyond the teacher/lecturer.

Introductory sessions continue and the evaluation results will indicate their usefulness.

To date there have been 16 information sessions for academics across the university from the Chinese Medicine, Nursing, International and Community Studies, School of Maths and Geospatial Science, School of Computer Science and IT Plagiarism Committee, Social Science & Planning, Aerospace, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, Business Management, Criminal Justice Administration, Justice and Security (TAFE), Advertising and the School of Applied Communications.
- To date, there are 84 Turnitin RMIT staff accounts created since July 2004. Within 5 months, 50% of these accounts became active, i.e., used in the assessment process. This number will no doubt increase over time with successive assessment submission periods, and with an increase in popularity of the software. There were a total of 1800 submissions to Turnitin in the first semester.

Some correction of process was made, in the case of a failure to work within the RMIT Turnitin Guidelines and in relation to a perception of a conflict between those Guidelines and the existing RMIT Policy on Plagiarism.



Evaluation

Turnitin evaluation is set up to run with continuously active QA feedback operative off the supporting website. It may be viewed at (staff login required):

<http://www.rmit.edu.au/teachingandlearning/links/academicintegrity/turnitinevaluation>

The Turnitin implementation is the only whole-of-organisation RMIT software with continuously accumulative QA and is aligned to program quality assurance requirements by supporting staff in the recording of their actions with Turnitin in their own course logs. The system has been structured to provide the University with a capacity for centralised management of its QA of Academic Integrity and Turnitin initiatives.

In November 2004, at the conclusion of the first semester of use of Turnitin, an evaluation of Turnitin was conducted by addressing the two groups (i) Staff who had actively used Turnitin and (ii) Staff who were yet to activate their account. A summary of this evaluation is below and details on staff responses are provided in Appendices A and B.

Users:

- While numbers are comparatively small, there is a consistent appreciation of the software by those who used it as indicated in the wish to continue doing so in 2005 and beyond.
- Most report a positive effect on their students work quality and the reports generated by Turnitin to be useful to them in assessment.
- Only one staff member reported *not* discussing the use of Turnitin with students. It is this discussion with students that is conducive to deterring both deliberate and careless lapses in the practice of Academic Integrity in submitting work, and is the essentially part of the educative approach.
- Staff comments demonstrated understanding of an educative approach.

Non Activated licensed staff:

Staff who had applied for Turnitin accounts but not activated them, in general

- Declared lack of time to be the reason
- Were comfortable with the Guidelines for use and
- Intend to use Turnitin next year.

Student Responses:

Some responses were sought and recorded in a student group where Turnitin was used within the Guidelines.

In general students did not feel strongly about the use of the software, but were genuine in believing that they could inadvertently copy non-attributed text from the web. There was also some concern expressed in the case of a dishonest student copying from discarded drafts of other students, thereby leaving the student creator of the draft liable to a charge of plagiarism. (Refer Appendix C)

Comments from the Project Team

The Project Team worked with other University groups on the Turnitin implementation, and was invited to contribute to a summary paper on Academic Integrity at the Educause 2005 conference with other Universities from Australasia. On the basis experience gained from inter-University collaboration, the following judgements were made on the RMIT implementation of the Turnitin service.

Strengths

- Positioning Turnitin within the framework of Academic Integrity for both staff and students
- Software deployed systematically, with staff use of Turnitin being predicated on alignment to University guidelines that ensure that student and University interests are protected in the use of the software.
- Turnitin being implemented with a supporting information management system that tracks and logs its use within the University (Detail is shown in Appendix D)
 - We note good promotion through RMIT newsletters, conferences and bulletins was effective.
 - Face to face demonstrations with staff groups were efficient and enjoyed a high success rate measured by staff present on the day joining the project.
 - Staff response is positive to the implementation of Turnitin in the context of Academic Integrity.

Risks

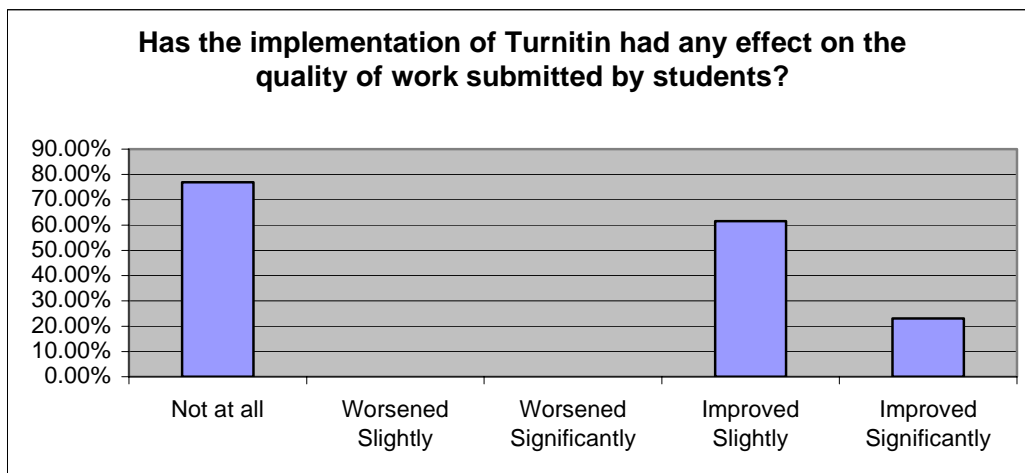
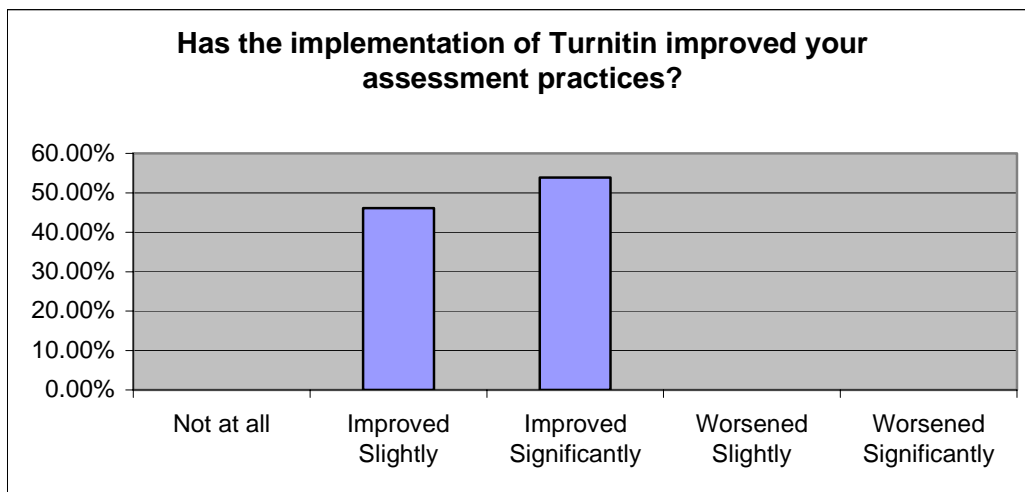
- The perception of conflict between RMIT Plagiarism Policy and the Turnitin Guidelines needs to be dispelled. Adding references to the software in the Policy, its Procedures and Guidelines will assist, but we believe Review of this Policy and the Assessment Policy should be brought forward.
- Staff failing to adhere to the guidelines and departing from an educative approach could introduce a culture of conflict and generate complaints
- Students are not required at enrolment to agree to electronic checking of their work, allowing dissent which could sabotage the growth in use of the software.
- Costs of maintaining the RMIT Licensing and provision of staff supports are essential.

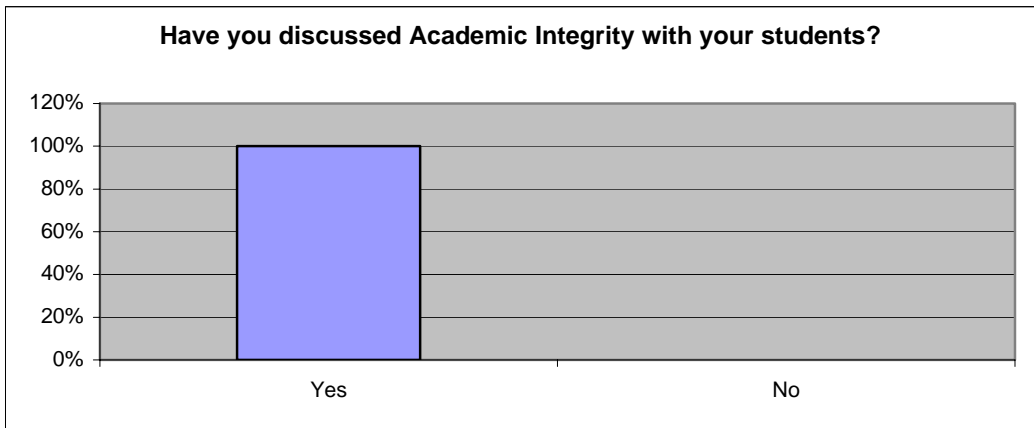
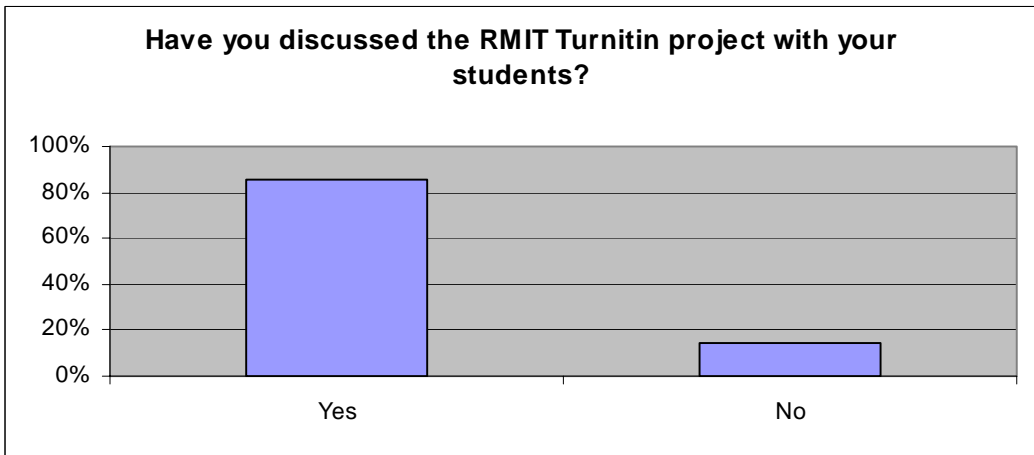
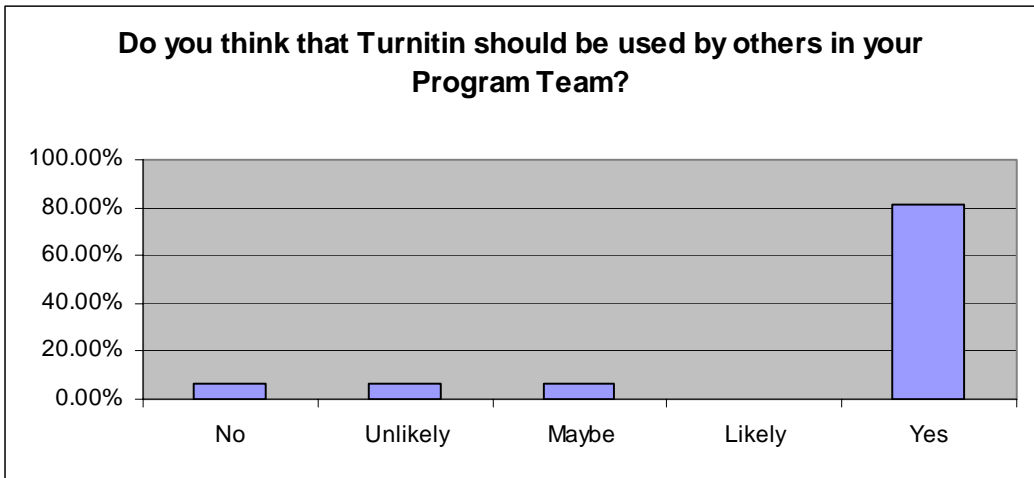
Recommendations

- Academic Integrity be incorporated as one of the University's values
- Enrolling students to endorse use of software specifically. (Raised with the Academic Registrar's Group in preliminary discussion)
- By consensus of Senior management, the Turnitin Service be successfully aligned within T&L and as a service located within the DLS as the product is now incorporated into the Blackboard suite
- The promotion of Academic Integrity via the use of Turnitin be included in Academic Portfolio Teaching and Learning Workplans
- Academic Integrity be promoted appropriately with International Students with provision of pack or leaflet available at Orientation, in a variety of languages
- Consideration should be given to the use of Turnitin offshore (This option is available to the University within its Turnitin licence but requires informed management of offshore deployment)
- Ongoing evaluation and feedback from academic and service groups be maintained to ensure relevance to all stakeholders
- FAQ be established for staff and students
- For the benefit of students, the relationship with the Library and Learning Skills Unit and Academic Integrity be maintained by periodic briefings
- Student upload and use of Turnitin be piloted in 2005 in programs where it does not impact of equity of assessment, and there is expertise and a history of good-practice with Turnitin by the program team
- Consideration be given to making Turnitin available to research students to assist in the checking of their work output
- Originality verification software is in its infancy, and will evolve rapidly. A watching-brief on the development of this technology is recommended.

Appendix A - Comparative presentation of Turnitin Evaluation Data

Shown below are graphical representations of the feedback collected in the Turnitin evaluation survey. Staff from 23 different workgroups within the University participated, with 37 running active accounts and submitting 1800 student assignments to Turnitin in Semester 2, 2004.





Online Questionnaire to Users of Turnitin Program

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In November 2004, at the conclusion of the first semester of operation of Turnitin at RMIT, the QA questionnaire was activated on the website and feedback was sought from the 37 staff who had active Turnitin accounts. We received 15 responses to the questionnaire, with summary remarks below:

Use of Turnitin has improved assessment practices in general. It has mostly improved efficiency in marking assignments – staff admit they spend more time marking assignments, but spend less time looking for copied material and spending energy about being concerned about plagiarism.

All staff have discussed Turnitin and Academic Integrity with their students before submitting their papers into the software.

Changes in the quality of work submitted by students has somewhat improved as a result of them knowing about Turnitin.

Staff are divided about whether or not students should have access to self-checking in Turnitin. Yet, most staff see the benefits of self-checking theses.

All staff had a sound understanding of the Turnitin guidelines at RMIT, and most staff felt quite comfortable adhering to them. Two staff have not discussed the guidelines with their manager, which could be a problem.

Most staff wish to continue using Turnitin in 2005. Even though many do not find the text matching reports completely useful, they still think that using the software is good practice and is a step in the right direction for upholding academic integrity within our university.

Staff express a common need for more staff across the university to use Turnitin. Only then will it be truly effective in revealing copied work across programs, and from past students.

Why did you apply for a Turnitin account?

- 1 - Need assistance with assessment practices
- 9 - Specific assignments needed checking for text matching
- 4 - Ability to check own papers
- 9 - To help foster Academic Integrity at RMIT
- 2 - Just curious
- 3 - Instructed by manager / supervisor / co-ordinator

Further Comments

- I wanted to have a go after the demonstration
- Ease of 'copy-and-paste' with the WEB makes this type of checking necessary with assignment work.
- Fully online courses have quite a bit of written work all electronically submitted. Plagiarism has been detected in the past but it is time consuming to check suspected work by internet searches.
- Having been interested in and involved in raising the issues of plagiarism and how we might combat it it was fait accompli that I should be personally involved.
- And having Judy come over and show the system to us
- Check thesis submissions
- I was checking a document to go on an RMIT website
- Found that many students were cutting & pasting often without citation. In addition many had not developed their work beyond the "reportage" stage - not much analysis synthesis or recommendation. I wanted a system to help me to train students in the correct citation practice and I wanted to combine that with training in improving the quality of their work in the afore-mentioned areas.

Has the implementation of Turnitin improved your assessment practices?

- 0 - Not at all
- 6 - Improved slightly
- 7 - Improved significantly
- 0 - Worsened slightly
- 0 - Worsened significantly

Further Comments

- It is an affirmation that what we've been teaching in regard to academic integrity is working. While it's still early days and I have a lot more papers to check everyone who's used other people's intellectual property has properly acknowledged it
- This process is much easier than checking references one-by-one or even using a Google search
- Silly items in Lickert scale. I have found Turnitin so difficult to use as it is premised on practices which are not appropriate for teaching here that I have only used it once or twice. Like all other 'teaching' type software it tries to drag you into using it to submit essays and to communicate with students exclusively. If we were to use all the software which tried to do this students and staff would be confused and inundated with technological rule setting. The STS tries to be central like this as well as most of the stuff on the DLS

- Allowed me to screen student papers for potential plagiarism but unfortunately I found that Turnitin does not include several full-text databases which my students typically use for their work so I am still required to use other methods for ensuring they are not plagiarising.
- Turnitin has led to quick detection of plagiarism including small-scale instances through to more serious instances.
- Still early days yet but there are indications of how we can improve assessment practice.
- Picked up coping between students and significant cut & paste from the Internet without due reference. Also able to see at a glance where and how students use material from the Internet and selected resources.
- You would hope plagiarism would be picked up by the supervisor this is an extra check
- Students now trained in citation and their work has moved from "reportage" stage.

Have you discussed the RMIT Turnitin project with your students?

13 - Yes

1 - No

Further Comments

- Yes and they knew that their final hard copy assignments had to be accompanied by a virus-free disc to use for this purpose
- Not what I wanted it for. I use Google with essays without explicitly discussing this and they know I will check for plagiarism without me telling them how and indeed I would like to keep the method a bit mysterious as this is more effective in preventing plagiarism than having them see a particular piece of software or anti plagiarism practice as a challenge.
- Discussed in terms of informing them of the pilot project and what this meant in terms of submission and grading of assignments.
- Fully online students have been advised that their work would be submitted to Turnitin and provided with the Turnitin web site address.
- All classes involved were advised both verbally in class and in writing.
- Yes before they submit
- I work with staff not students
- They were fully briefed in the procedure we established and in citation and in analysis synthesis reflection methods.

Have you discussed the concept of Academic Integrity with your students?

14 - Yes

0 - No

Further Comments

- Yes during O-week in the first three weeks of classes during the semester as well as providing them with a session from the LSU and a student manual on essay and research preparation
- Of course
- Only in general terms. I still find I need to explain what constitutes academic integrity in some detail (i.e. this is why you have violated principles of academic

- integrity)...they still need LOTS of training in this. This needs to take place earlier in our program as I see the students in their last 2 years. It really needs to begin from Day 1.
- Fully online students were advised to look at the university academic integrity website.
 - All my students get a serious briefing on the meaning of academic integrity in its broadest meaning at the very beginning of their program. I run detailed orientation briefings on all aspects of the program including our expectations of performance our interpretation of assessments and the activities and practices we use.
 - ad nauseum
 - I have mentioned in some forums with staff

Has the implementation of Turnitin had any effect on the quality of work submitted by students?

2 - Not at all

8 - Improved slightly

3 - Improved significantly

0 - Worsened slightly

0 - Worsened significantly

Further Comments

- I thought they were doing well but this confirms that they're taking this seriously
- This was the first time I tried it with this group of students but they were informed that the program would be used so there was no evidence of plagiarism with the submitted assignments
- Maybe in that they are aware I am checking for plagiarism they are a bit more careful than in previous years.
- It is hard to assess this. More plagiarism has been detected but I think levels are little changed.
- Again very early days as yet. Some improvement in referencing in some classes but only marginal.
- I thought they'd have the idea-this just confirms it
- Compared to previous years it is clear students are having to do much more in their "own" words.

Has the implementation of Turnitin improved your efficiency when marking student assignments?

4 - Not at all

2 - improved slightly

6 - Improved significantly

2 - Worsened slightly

0 - Worsened significantly

Further Comments

- While it is more time consuming it is giving me the edge in ensuring that academic "theft" is under control considering that I teach in the Criminal Justice Program it does make more than common sense. It is ethical as well as moral sense

- I still need to read in detail and comment extensively as well as check references that are not available for checking on Turnitin.
- Although not 100% accurate Turnitin provides in many cases a very rapid assessment of the copying of other texts throughout an assignment.
- Overall it has had a negative effect on overall efficiency meaning that it has taken significant amounts of time to use the rather cumbersome interface that Turnitin provides when loading up 50-60 large files.
- I don't have that nagging feeling of "where did I read this before"
- In terms of efficiency - where I suspected there was a low level of academic integrity Turnitin has saved time local the sources (evidence) to substantiate my feelings.
- All work is submitted in both electronic and hard copy. If the electronic copy passes the matching test then I mark the hard copy without the need to look for citation errors (or absences). If the electronic copy fails the matching test then both copies are returned to the student with feedback so they can correct the work and re-submit it.

Have your students shown interest in using Turnitin for self-checking?

7 - Not at all

2 - Less than 5 students

1 - More than 5 students

Further Comments

- But this may be more due to the pressures of the end of the year. Certainly if it were advertised I think they would be interested
- Did not discuss this possibility with them
- Then again I did not inform them of this option.
- I have not offered this.
- This has not been discussed at this stage with students.
- Not at this stage-but next year I can see them wanting to know
- I haven't asked that question.
- I don't give it to them
- Not that I know of but if we offered them the use of Turnitin as a self-checking and self-educating tool I think they would like to use it.

Do you think students should have access to self-checking in Turnitin?

9 - Yes

5 - No

Further Comments

- If we're about facilitating a maturation process academically it seems sensible to consider the ethical and moral side of the students as well
- Pointless it would only frighten students who had made legitimate mistakes and not prevent the ones who want to get away with it. It may lull the teacher into a false sense of security.
- I do not think this should be offered to undergraduate students as it may encourage students to learn what material is not included on the Turnitin database. I think there is significant advantage in students not knowing this.
- Potentially very useful particularly for those doing research and project work.
- Yes they can self-check their theses

- Yes on the basis of my own checking experience. Gave me confidence in the material I prepared but of course it does not ensure I cite materials fully or accurately. This is the danger with students - ie they check that they wont get caught only and thereafter do not worry about citing fully.
- As above. But I do not want them submitting my work for checking - i.e. I need to update my citations in some areas.

Do you consider that there is an expanded role for Turnitin at RMIT, i.e. in the assessment of research theses?

11 - Yes

3 - No

Further Comments

- Would be useful for honours theses but would need the documents as one file and this could be a very large upload
- Its too narrow in its definition of how it should be used and it picks up less plagiarism than I can on my own. I checked an essay I had already picked up plagiarism on and it returned substantially less plus it highlighted legitimately referenced material.
- I believe that research thesis are guided very much by the academic supervising the thesis - enforcing Turnitin would only serve to increase the perception that RMIT does not trust its staff members - very few staff members would risk their own careers by not ensuring that their students' work is original.
- Although most supervisors would be aware if any of their students work is plagiarised access to Turnitin would be instructive for postgraduate students and supervisors and assessors.
- This is a very important area of potential growth and development. However the system will need to be more flexible and efficient in handling large files. This is an area in particular where there is potential benefit for students to have access to self-checking on the system.
- RMIT needs to be able to demonstrate academic integrity if we wish to stand up in the global market as a serious university.
- Well I am doing it!
- Yes as noted above
- I prefer that students check their work themselves before they submit it for marking.

Did you understand the guidelines to the RMIT Turnitin project?

0 - No understanding

4 - Some understanding

11 - Good understanding

Did you discuss the RMIT Turnitin guidelines with your supervisor / manager / director?

11 - Yes

3 - No

Does the request to adhere to the RMIT Turnitin Guidelines make you feel:

- 2 - Dubious about the project
- 0 - Uncomfortable in applying for a Turnitin account
- 0 - Unconfident in using the Turnitin software
- 5 - Positive about the project
- 3 - Comfortable in applying for a Turnitin account
- 7 - Confident in using the Turnitin software

After uploading papers into your account, do you find the text-matching reports:

- 1 - Not useful
- 2 - Somewhat useful
- 3 - Useful
- 3 - Very useful
- 7 - Extremely useful

What advice would you give to your colleagues to assist them in getting the most out of the Academic Integrity and Turnitin initiative?

- Use it!
- Have a go- persevere
- Would certainly recommend it to them
- Don't use it unless you are prepared to do battle with a long series of inapplicable steps and a framework, which is inappropriate. It makes some very dominating and silly assumptions and makes you work in a rigid framework.
- Train the students from Day 1.
- Turnitin will be most effective when all assignments in a program or similar programs and courses are systematically using it. Recycling own and others work between similar courses is not detected unless this is the case.
- Very worthwhile to try out such systems provides further insight into how students are using study notes, the web and textbook material. Understanding such patterns or behaviour and practice can help to improve our assessment practices and performance.
- Get hooked on to the software
- Because the sequence of processing determines the score for the paper you need to realise that it provides a distorted level of academic integrity when looking at the whole class (e.g. a student will score 40% and if it is against an earlier paper that paper might on score 10%.
- Go ahead and trial the service as a self checking mechanism first but remember that it does not address all issues of academic integrity or plagiarism.
- MUST train students in academic integrity citation and in the synthesis analysis reflection etc process and in the cultural expectations of academic work in Australia. Turnitin is a teaching tool not a "plagiarism policing" tool.

Have you utilised resources from the Academic Integrity website to communicate with your students about Turnitin?

7 - Yes

8 - No

Have you directed your students to the Academic Integrity website?

10 - Yes

5 - No

Do you think you will continue to use Turnitin in 2005?

0 - Definitely not

1 - Unlikely

0 - Maybe

2 - Likely

12 - Yes

Do you think that Turnitin should be used by others in your Program Team?

1 - Definitely not

1 - Unlikely

1 - Maybe

0 - Likely

13 - Yes

Having used Turnitin, do you require more training to improve your time efficiency with this product?

5 - Yes

10 - No

What other comments would you like to make about the Academic Integrity and Turnitin Initiative?

Good stuff! Possibly take it to Chancellery to consider offering this as a PD component for all areas of the University.

As above it simply makes the wrong usage assumptions and tries to force specific processes, which are inflexible. You have to 'second guess' it to use it and you have to "fudge" a lot of its processes in order to submit a single essay. It's trying too hard to be the central software for student submissions. In addition it requires whole essays in electronic format, which this school is simply not set up to cope with. It does not work at

all well with pieces of text typed in. It does not solve the problem of students buying essays from websites set up to sell them which I had hoped it would as I do not want to pay to check student material and it seems to consult a very narrow range of sites - less than I would.

Definitely a useful tool - helps to confirm one's own perception about a student's work - whether positive or negative - is also a useful tool in providing feedback to students for example prising them that most submitted work was original.

See if Turnitin can apply for access to other full text databases and journals since its use can be limited in a specialty subject without access to those resources.

1. It needs to be recognised that fully online courses are offered to students over all campuses and classes may contain students working from other countries and interstate and assignments are submitted electronically. Current guidelines are quite impracticable for these courses. 2. The uploading of student work into Turnitin classes is quite time consuming. A group of 30 assignments takes about 1 hour to upload individually and it is not clear that much time would be saved by bulk loading as the assignments need to be collected together and this is time consuming. Integration of Turnitin with Blackboard is very urgently required to facilitate the transfer of student work. 3. Turnitin will be most effective when all assignments in a program or similar programs and courses are systematically using it. Recycling own and others work between similar courses is not detected unless this is the case. 4. It needs to be recognised that much text that is electronically accessible to students is not included in the Turnitin database.

It is critical that we continue to address how to improve our standing in relation to academic integrity. Regardless of how cumbersome the current system interface may be we need to develop both skills and insights into how to use such systems to best effect. For example the current activity has highlighted the extent to which students are able to use existing material very successfully with appropriate referencing in place (Turnitin does not know the difference between referenced and unreferenced material indeed Turnitin actually gives increased text-matching when referencing is included because of the references themselves.)

The more members of RMIT teaching staff using Turnitin the better. I am very concerned about the use of material from other RMIT sources e.g. work on assessments from other classes/subjects/courses and from previous years work (e.g. from friends who did the subject last year or the year before).

Turnitin Questionnaire to Non-Users

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The QA questionnaire was emailed to 39 staff who applied for Turnitin accounts but did not activate them, with the aim of identifying why their accounts remained dormant. We received 12 responses to the questionnaire.

In summary, the results show that staff wish to foster academic integrity at RMIT and are curious as to how Turnitin can be of assistance. Staff are positive about the implementation of Turnitin and support its use at RMIT.

Generally, staff have discussed Academic Integrity with their students, but not the Turnitin project.

However, staff do not have the time to learn how to use Turnitin, and discuss the program with their staff and their students. They hope they can do this in 2005.

Even though staff wish to take on the program in 2005, they are yet to understand the guidelines surrounding the use of Turnitin at RMIT and *further training is essential in guidelines and technicalities*.

The further comments at the end of this section provides direct statements from non-using staff.

1. Why did you apply for a Turnitin account?

- 0 - Need assistance with assessment practices
- 2 - Specific assignments needed checking for text matching
- 3 - Ability to check own papers
- 5 - To help foster Academic Integrity at RMIT
- 4 - Just curious
- 0 - Instructed by manager / supervisor / coordinator
 - o Was going to try and understand how it might apply to research theses.
 - o Concerned by level of plagiarism in assignments
 - o It was entirely my own decision – and I actually sought it out. I felt – still feel – it is essential at the level I am currently teaching.
 - o To investigate relevance to library staff in teaching of info literacy etc
 - o Plagiarism is not uncommon and the process for determining that a work is plagiarised needs appropriate software. I normally use Google - with some positive results.

2. Our records show that you have not utilized your Turnitin account. Is this due to:

- 7 - Lack of time = 7
- 0 - Lack of confidence in the program
- 0 - Objection from students
- 0 - Objection from manager / supervisor / coordinator
- 0 - No need for text matching in the program
- 0 - No need for assistance in assessment practices
- 6 - intend to use Turnitin in 2005 = 6
 - o I think we have proposals that might mean that theses will not require checking with Turnitin.
 - o I have now utilized it – lack of time prevented this until now.
 - o I have been pre-occupied with preparing papers for conferences: I fully intend to use it next year – and may begin this year.
 - o I would need to know how to use the program, as it is not on my computer as far as I know. Attempts to login in to the site earlier failed.

3. Did you understand the guidelines to the RMIT Turnitin project?

- 2 - No understanding
- 4 - Some understanding
- 3 - Good understanding
 - o But I feel I needed to use it straightaway – there was an (inevitable) time lapse, and I feel less familiar with it now.

4. Did you discuss the RMIT Turnitin guidelines with your supervisor / manager / director?

- 4 - Yes
- 5 - No

5. Does the request to adhere to the RMIT Turnitin Guidelines make you feel:

- 0 - Dubious about the project
- 0 - Uncomfortable in applying for a Turnitin account
- 0 - Unconfident in using the Turnitin software
- 2 - Positive about the project
- 6 - Comfortable in applying for a Turnitin account
- 4 - Confident in using the Turnitin software

6. Have you discussed the RMIT Turnitin project with your students?

- 2 - Yes
- 5 - No
 - o No Time
 - o My job as an academic skills adviser means I don't have regular students. However, I have discussed this with many lecturers who come to us for assistance with student plagiarism.
 - o Somewhat surprised that they were completely comfortable with it
 - o But only in general terms, as I have not implemented it.

7. Have you discussed Academic Integrity with your students?

5 - Yes

1 - No

- Sort of
- My job includes assisting students with referencing and how to avoid plagiarism.
- I teach English for Academic Purposes to overseas-qualified students. There is a very real need for them to understand the – quite-different – referencing methods, which we use. I actually wonder whether having a separate presentation for students would be a good idea? Has anyone else put this forward?

8. Do you require more training or assistance to encourage your use with Turnitin?

5 - Yes

4 - No

- Perhaps
- Probably
- I think the instructions are very clear and, as with most software programs, once you've grasped the important points, to become really familiar with it you need to play with it.
- Because I haven't used it immediately, I feel I need a refresher course in all honesty.
- Just need to try it out first

9. What other comments would you like to make about the Academic Integrity and Turnitin Initiative?

The issue arose when it was considered whether research theses should be submitted for turnitin analysis and the problems that would arise with intellectual property and confidentiality - particularly where the contents of these theses might be subject to agreements with outside parties. I understand solutions have been found by which there is no need to submit thesis to turnitin assessment.

I support it

I think it's important that this is available for students to be able to put their papers through before they hand them in (not sure if this facility is available yet – I think there was talk of allowing this). This is one way to ensure a learning outcome for the student. I'm concerned that some lecturers I've talked to wanted to use it as a punitive measure, despite our willingness to work with them to ensure that students learn from it.

I was unable to commence evaluating the Turnitin program because the Program Team felt that it should be discussed at more length at program team meetings due to the potential implications for the Division. In other words, they wanted a consensus/planned approach rather than one individual going solo. Apologies therefore that I have been unable to provide you with any useful information so far but my enthusiasm is still strong for testing this.

The questionnaire is based on ill-grounded assumptions. So I am writing briefly. We do NOT individually use it... We are not using it - yet - for all subjects. We are using it for first semester subjects, but not for later - yet! It is so work-intensive without student upload, that we have no time/energy to run everything through. It is a brilliant system, which will, then, allow us to educate students more completely than at present; but the current rules - without student upload - do not let that education take place. Students are all aware that their work can be Tii-ed.

I think the comment I made above about presenting to students would be an excellent addition. (And I think this could apply to all students with an overseas educational background – in particular countries such as China. The educational culture is so different there)

I didn't use Turnitin - I tried but somehow got lost as I was doing it! Perhaps I didn't understand the process well enough, and then time and other things overtook me and I didn't get back to it.

Appendix C - Student Response: small sample set

Student Group: Software Engineering, School of Computer Science and IT

- Turnitin demonstrated to the group both in lecture and tutorial
- Student submissions were run through Turnitin and University Guidelines followed
- In general they were apathetic about the use of the software, but were genuine in believing that they could inadvertently copy non-attributed text from the web.
- Only four students were interviewed for these responses.

Question:

As a student do you have any general impressions on Turnitin and its use on your assignments?

Responses:

'Not really, software seems ok'

'A draft submission would be useful if you genuinely forgot to reference, so that it would not be treated as plagiarism'

'Students seem to cheat less in higher years, it may not be as relevant in higher years'

Question:

Do you have any issues with the storage of your IP by Turnitin?

Responses:

'No'

Question:

Do you have any concerns regarding the use of Turnitin software on your assessment?

Responses:

Some students copy assignments from discarded paper printouts.. I am concerned about an innocent student being charged with plagiarism if their work was copied'

Appendix D – Turnitin management

A screenshot depicting the whole-of-University management structure for Turnitin. With the software being deployed in alignment to the School-based structure of the University. Statistics and logged activity is available to central University management via the Administration Turnitin account.

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology								renew account
account ID	account name	status	instructors	new account	stats	update	del	
--	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	active	--	--	--	--	--	
38562	Academic Development Group	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
37334	Accounting and Law	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
32215	Aerospace, Mechanical and Manufacturing ...	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36097	Applied Communication	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36557	Applied Sciences	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36754	Art and Culture	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
37011	Business Information Technology	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36555	Business Portfolio Office	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
37131	Chancellery	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
37008	Civil and Chemical Engineering	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
32214	Computer Science and Information Technol...	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36591	Creative Media	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36553	DSC Portfolio Office	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36753	Education	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
37010	Fashion and Textiles	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36584	Health Sciences	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
37215	Infrastr Electro & Build Serv	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
37078	International and Community Studies	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36561	Management	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36923	Marketing	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36879	Mathematical and Geospatial Science	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
32403	Medical Science	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
37159	R&I Portfolio Office	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36556	SET Portfolio Office	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
37009	Social Science and Planning	active	▶	--	?	+	×	
36554	T&L Portfolio Office	active	▶	--	?	+	×	

Implementation of Verification Software at RMIT (2004) June Review.

Background:

This is a twelve-month project-based implementation of the verification software (Turnitin) at RMIT. The project brief was endorsed in February 2004 by the T&L Strategy committee and it began shortly afterwards, led by John Kenny as Project Manager. Since John has now left RMIT, Judy Frazer has stepped into the role.

The aim of the project is to introduce the Turnitin plagiarism detection software to RMIT via a controlled pilot over a 12-month timeframe in 2004 across nominated programs at RMIT.

Key Outcomes

1. Establishment and coordination of a project team, which will guide and inform the implementation of Turnitin at RMIT.
2. Development of a strategy for the wider implementation of Turnitin at RMIT.
3. An interim evaluation report (June 2004) and a full report in December 2004.
4. Development of workable administrative processes and support materials for the wider implementation of Turnitin in 2005.

Progress to date

All four key outcomes have been and are being addressed. The project has undertaken the following tasks as essential to successful implementation of the software. It should be remembered that the context is educative, and that use of the software is one component of educating students in academic integrity to ensure sound practice at RMIT.

- o Planning Group/Project team established. Representatives from the Learning Skills Unit, Portfolio (Engineering), Library, Curriculum Innovation and Development, Academic Projects (Office of the Academic Registrar) and a Student Representative are active contributing members.
- o Administrative processes are under continuing development with a framework ready to support 'early adopters' to access and utilise the software.
- o Academic Integrity Website has been designed and is under development. Use is made of existing material where possible, and the Website design will provide practical support for both staff and students, becoming a single source for the variety of resources available to staff and students within the University on issues pertaining to Academic Integrity.
The interim URL of this website is:
www.rmit.edu.au/teachingandlearning/links/academicintegrity and it can be found by searching for "Academic Integrity" from the RMIT homepage.

- Policy and Guidelines for use of the software have been developed to ensure both understanding and compliance by staff
- Professional Development session for teaching staff has been designed and invitations have been extended to staff through the Deans. RSVPs received will influence the future of this aspect of the project.
- Consultation with key Portfolio representatives is being undertaken to inform the Project team as to appropriate means of maximising staff involvement in the project. Current advice has lead to a Portfolio offering of an introduction to the software for interested staff in Design and Social Context.
- Ongoing negotiation with Turnitin, to ensure that the software activation can occur in a manner that meets the needs of the University.
- Development of support material for staff on Academic Integrity, including PowerPoint Learning objects suitable for inclusion in RMIT courseware.
- An introductory session has been held with DSC staff, which was positively received and was the subject of sound questioning from participants. It was clear that the session cleared away some doubts and demonstrated to the satisfaction of staff on the day, that Turnitin is a useful tool to be employed by the academic or teaching staff member.

Actions to be taken

The implementation plan aims to introduce staff to the application of the software and the guidelines for its use in order to secure staff understanding of the educative and management context and consequently a holistic educational and organisational outcome. In order to engage staff appropriately it seems likely that consulting portfolios for advice as was done with the DSC, on the most appropriate means of reaching staff may well be more rewarding than relying solely on a 'training day offer' approach. Given that the project is a first of its kind, and its importance to RMIT, and given that licensing the software is costly, it is imperative that we seek to maximise staff participation in the trial.

The team is currently developing other approaches for interested staff to 'sign up' throughout second semester, (Online, by telephone) so that there is not a single means of accessing the software (via a training day, for example) but still ensuring that the two key elements of the plan are met. These are:

1. The software will be used to provide feedback to students to correct non-originality in their submitted work and educate the students on the requirement of full and correct attribution at all times
2. All student work submitted to Turnitin must be accompanied by signed student approval, from the current University assessment coversheet.

Responsibility for program application of the software and the number of resubmissions acceptable within it, are at the discretion of the Head of School, in conjunction with relevant course and program coordinators.

The Project team now moves to enabling program staff to commence as users of Turnitin in semester two, licensing users and seeking evaluative comments from them. Given that new ways of working can be slow to be taken up by staff and taking the step to 'buy in' can be delayed, or postponed indefinitely, the project team has devised a more proactive approach to having staff 'sign up'. As mentioned, reaching portfolio staff teams is now a priority. Where such teams show interest, and when one of the means of introduction can be completed, staff will be directly invited to sign up on the day a session is attended or in a direct email offer of an account.

The implementation plan will continue to be reviewed on the basis of the level of identified interest from staff in working with the product.

Decisions And Risks

1. The decision needs now to be taken whether to commit RMIT to annual expenditure of \$20,000 by 'turning on' the Software by 1st August in order for it to be used by staff in 2nd Semester, 2004.
2. It is crucial that once begun, the use of Turnitin be seen in RMIT to be appropriate and successful. This implies ongoing sustainability of the project. Team members do not see it as complete in 2004. Surety of funding for the Software and ongoing support of project staff are seen to be key components of it success.
3. There may also be some risk around support for user-beginners' questions in addition to the general information and support the team has set up online. At this point support can be provided by the Admin and Principal Academic Adviser roles with minimal support from the Project leader. This may be insufficient if numbers of staff taking up the offer increase significantly. (All three staff involved 'donate' their time over an above their full-time work.)
Again, the plan will continue to be reviewed.

Evaluation of the project will seek comments from all involved, the team, Program coordinators/leaders and Heads of School as well as the Project Team.

A full report on the progress, if not completion of the project will be available in December.

Judy Frazer
Project Leader, with Garry Allan and Rachel Roberts