

From the Editor

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During the IEEE Panel of Editors meeting held in Los Angeles on April 4-5 this year, the sensitive topic of plagiarism was brought up for a long discussion, drawing our attention once again to the serious issues of intellectual property aggressions, copyright violations, and academic dishonesty.

Generally speaking, plagiarism is easy to do but usually, though not always, also easy to catch. With intention, the sentence “This article solves an open problem” could be insensibly modified to be “An open problem is solved in this article”, leaving no sign of direct copying in a manipulated writing like this. Whether a particular statement or paragraph is considered indirect copying or not is often unclear, hence debatable, while technological content is much more prominent and easily identifiable, especially by the original author or inventor.

Subject matters are often being searched for on the web by researchers and students today. By typing in a keyword to Google Search, for example, one typically finds a long list of related articles, seminar abstracts, and even PowerPoint slides for free viewing and downloading. On one hand, this can facilitate a plagiary to dig out one small reference from among literally thousands or even tens of thousands of items in the list to forge a contribution. In a sense, such a fraudulent act is difficult to identify. Yet, on the other hand, typing just a few keywords taken from a suspicious manuscript into Google Search may also easily discover some very closely related references for comparison. This is simply because, for technological contents, such keywords and phrases are unavoidable and unchangeable. Many forgeries were caught this way.

Google Search, as well as other web-search media, is a powerful free tool to recommend. Editors and reviewers can use them to help themselves in keeping plagiarized articles from being accepted or published. Meanwhile, authors can also use them to avoid unintentional plagiarism and self-plagiarism — a very unfortu-

nate instance that can happen to anyone. It is not uncommon that an academic supervisor overlooks a manipulated work presented to him or her by a supervisee, thereby forced to painfully and unwillingly admit the fault together with the plagiary after the case is revealed. Perhaps a web search beforehand could effectively help prevent this from happening.

Of course, it has been widely experienced that practicing plagiarism prevention is a challenge, but nevertheless we have to try. Notably, the IEEE has an articulate mission against plagiarisms. In fact, the IEEE has taken steps to prevent and penalize various kinds of plagiarisms. For example, the IEEE has a plan to implement some manuscript-scanning software aiming to help filter submissions to the IEEE Transactions, Journals, Magazines as well as Conferences and Workshops up front. Thanks to the advanced computer software and web-search technologies available today, a large portion of possibly copied or manipulated contents of a manuscript can be detected via text-comparison and word-counting fairly accurately, and then followed-up with by an inspector’s intelligence-based judgment and ultimate decision.

Moreover, the IEEE has a web site on “IEEE Intellectual Property Rights” for every member’s benefit and convenience, where guidelines and procedures are clearly described:

<http://www.ieee.org/web/publications/rights/index.html>

Our editors, reviewers, authors, and publishers should take advantage of utilizing this web site for their editorial and scholarly works (more details are given in the Appendix on page 89).

Together with joint efforts, we can effectively repress plagiarisms.

(continued on page 89)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G Ron Chen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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APPENDIX

The IEEE Publication Services and Products Board (PSPB) published an Operations Manual on 15 February 2002, which was amended on 15 February 2008. This PSPB Operations Manual can be downloaded from the up-right corner of the following webpage:

<http://www.ieee.org/web/publications/PSPB/index.html>

In Section "8.2 Publication Guidelines" of this Manual, there is a major section entitled "Guidelines for Adjudicating Different Levels of Plagiarism" in which it addresses the following issues:

1. Plagiarism
2. Five levels or degrees of plagiarism
3. Appropriate corrective actions that correspond to each level of misconduct

Readers may also consult with the following webpage:

http://www.ieee.org/web/publications/rights/Plagiarism_Guidelines_Intro.html

In particular, there is a clear statement on this webpage about the definition and seriousness of plagiarism, which deserves everyone's attention:

"IEEE defines plagiarism as the reuse of someone else's prior ideas, processes, results, or words without explicitly acknowledging the original author and source. It is important for all IEEE authors to recognize that plagiarism in any form, at any level, is unacceptable and is considered a serious breach of professional conduct, with potentially severe ethical and legal consequences."

Moreover, the following webpage should be very useful for one to understand some common issues related to plagiarism:

http://www.ieee.org/web/publications/rights/plagiarism_FAQ.html

For example, if one concerns with differentiating the levels of misconduct, some precise guidelines can be found on this webpage:

1. Level One pertains to the uncredited verbatim copying of a full paper, or the verbatim copying of a major portion (> 50%), or verbatim copying within more than one paper by the same author(s).
2. Level Two pertains to the uncredited verbatim copying of large portion (between 20 and 50%) or verbatim copying within more than one paper by the same author(s).

3. Level Three pertains to the uncredited verbatim copying of individual elements (Paragraph(s), Sentence(s), Illustration(s), etc.) resulting in a significant portion (up to 20%) within a paper.

4. Level Four pertains to uncredited improper paraphrasing of pages or paragraphs.

5. Level Five pertains to the credited verbatim copying of a major portion of a paper without clear delineation (e.g., quotes or indents).

In addition, the above website also contains the following useful web-links:

[Guidelines for Handling Plagiarism Complaints](#)

[Identifying Plagiarism](#)

[Investigating Possible Misconduct](#)

[IEEE Intellectual Property Rights \(Policies and Guidelines\)](#)

Moreover, our Circuits and Systems Society (CASS) has more specific guidelines given in section 6.2 in the following webpage:

<http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/icss/policiesprocedures.php#9>

And our CASS will adopt the DUDE (DUPLICATE text DETECTION) System, developed by ACM SIGDA and IEEE CEDA volunteers, for TCAD, TCAS-I and TCAS-II to pre-scan all submissions for detecting possible plagiarisms, which will be in place soon.

Our editors, reviewers, authors and readers are invited to join forces to deal with plagiarisms. In case contact information for the sponsoring Editor(s) or Vice President for Publications of our IEEE Circuits and Systems Society is not readily available, for example during the periods of committees reorganization, one may directly send inquiries to:

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