



# Workshop:

## Preventing plagiarism – What can librarians do?

**Dr. Oliver Trevisiol & Ansgar Schäfer, KIM, University of Konstanz**

13 September 2017, 1st Joint Staff Training Event, Maribor, Slovenia



**University of Konstanz**

# Introduction

- Subject specialist for history and education
- Communication, Information, Media Centre – University of Konstanz, Germany
- Plagiarism Prevention Project "Refairence"

# Agenda

## Objectives: (1) Reflection & discussion, (2) presentation of ideas, proposals, and examples

- Activity: Why may/should libraries busy themselves with plagiarism prevention?
- Introduction: Special aspects and principles of plagiarism prevention
- Examples for support from the library
- Activity: Your individual action plan
- Summary

## **Activity: Why may/should libraries busy themselves with plagiarism prevention?**

Think for yourself about possible arguments / reasons.

Write each of your reasons on a card.

Discuss your reasons in small groups.

Pin your cards on the board.

## definition

To use contents which are the work of others in a piece of work without citing the exact source.

To do so would create the misleading impression that it is my own original work.

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## The issue of plagiarism has particularities to consider.

- **Relevance**: The core function of universities is affected: our professional standards and thus directly the quality of learning, teaching, research, and the reliability and validity of results and assessment.
- **Complexity**: There is not the one solution – dealing with complex cases and grey areas requires sophisticated competencies and expertise.
- **Understanding**: Misunderstandings are likely, if the context and background knowledge is not explicated: with what prerequisites, prior knowledge, every-day practices are, for example, students and lecturers coming to the university? Knowledge, experience and understanding of each person as well as subject conditions may differ.
- **Affection**: Personal work and a person's own writing are touched: sensitivity and appreciation, appropriateness and honesty of (didactic) action are necessary.
- **Emotionality**: The discussion of the topic plagiarism is (often) emotionally charged.

# **Principles of successful prevention of plagiarism**

- Prevention first! When plagiarism is detected, it's too late.
- It is not only about text copies, but about the traceable use of any content from other sources, including data, images, programme code, concepts, etc.
- Plagiarism is associated with the topics of scientific working and writing.
- It is therefore about working methods in a professional context and thus also a didactic task.
- It is not about simple technical questions of (citation) rule application, but about demanding working methods, skills and competencies. The citation style is secondary - it is about the traceability and interlinking of content.
- A positive and constructive feedback and a supporting learning culture are necessary (for students AND instructors AND scientists).



# **Principles of successful prevention of plagiarism**

- "Good Practice" in teaching (task formulation, transparency of educational objective and assessment, practice, support, feedback, etc.) has already a strong preventive effect.
- Work on questions of integrity again and again in didactically meaningful situations.
- All fields of action are relevant; all stakeholders at the university are affected and must be involved.
- It is necessary to talk about plagiarism, to find a common language, and to agree on a common consistent approach.
- Create opportunities for open exchange on integrity issues – with all stakeholders: students, young academics, established scholars, management, science-supporting institutions (e. g. libraries), etc.

**What can librarians do?**

**Example: Some advice, how to give advice**

## What do I say, when I am asked?

- Reflect: Where can I help? Where not?
- Consider differences of subjects, regarding e. g.
  - direct / indirect quotations
  - which content needs a reference, which does not
  - the purpose, type, and context of the text
  - source usage and special formats
  - typical procedures and necessities of a subject
- Deconstructing rumours and myths (e. g. irritating "3 words rule" for direct quotations)
- Helpful positive question: "What do I have to cite?" instead of "What am I not allowed to do?"
- In case of doubt it is better to give more references than to little. Ask yourself: Can readers easily distinguish, where the content comes from and trace it back to its source?
- Depending on the question, refer to more specialized advice (e. g. writing centre, ...)

## **Refer to other services**

**Find out what is offered at your own university so that you can refer to it, when giving advice:**

- encourage to ask instructors and supervisors
- Student Advisory Services
- Writing Centre
- Centre for Key Skills
- International Office
- Library Services
- Learning Centre
- Counselling unit
- ...

**What can librarians do?**

**Example: Courses – "Information Literacy"**

## What can librarians do?

Example: Checklist – "Key questions to assess the intertextual quality (e. g. in case of suspicion of plagiarism)"

(english version available)

[https://www.plagiatspraevention.uni-konstanz.de/index.php?eID=tx\\_nawsecuredl&u=0&g=0&t=1505260256&hash=1b97aa162e80da1c3247cde91949c7479ea01939&file=fileadmin/zentral/universitaet/bibliothek/key\\_questions\\_intertextual\\_quality.pdf](https://www.plagiatspraevention.uni-konstanz.de/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&g=0&t=1505260256&hash=1b97aa162e80da1c3247cde91949c7479ea01939&file=fileadmin/zentral/universitaet/bibliothek/key_questions_intertextual_quality.pdf)

**What can librarians do?**

**Example: Worksheet – "Check your personal referencing style! What type of writer are you?"**

(english version available)

[https://www.plagiatspraevention.uni-konstanz.de/index.php?eID=tx\\_nawsecuredl&u=0&g=0&t=1505260256&hash=ace2e88282cd71a78cc473a98bb1f748b3961886&file=fileadmin/zentral/universitaet/bibliothek/Zitiertypencheck\\_English-Version\\_2016-10-26-1.pdf](https://www.plagiatspraevention.uni-konstanz.de/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&g=0&t=1505260256&hash=ace2e88282cd71a78cc473a98bb1f748b3961886&file=fileadmin/zentral/universitaet/bibliothek/Zitiertypencheck_English-Version_2016-10-26-1.pdf)

## What can librarians do?

### Example: Educational film – "Why do we cite?"

– [kim.uni.kn/film](http://kim.uni.kn/film)

(english version not yet available)

- How to avoid accidental plagiarism

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwOJvWhF\\_08](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwOJvWhF_08)



## **What can librarians do?**

### **Example: Information – "University web page about integrity"**

– [uni.kn/integritaet](https://uni.kn/integritaet)

(english version available)

<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/research/research-profile/academic-integrity-and-quality-assurance/>

## **Special questions and problems for librarians**

- How do we deal with plagiarism in our collection?
- How do we make e. g. theses available (electronically, open access) as the accessibility decreases the likelihood of plagiarism and increases their discovery.
- What is a reasonable offer (support, material,...) by a central service like a library at the university?
- Imbedding good practices and their training within the departments and in the regular curricula is important (e. g. integrating information literacy courses into study programmes as well as regular advice for instructors)
- ...

# **Activity: Your individual action plan**

## **Goal**

- Setting up a list of your activities concerning plagiarism prevention

## **Key questions**

- What am I doing well and do I want to keep it?
- What can I improve in my field of action, what do I want to do differently?
- What do I want my environment to do differently? Who should actually do what? What do I need as support?
- What will I change/improve from tomorrow?

**Write down your individual actions.**

**Discuss your ideas with each other.**

## **Take away messages – summary**

- Prevention first!
- Use a positive framing: The goal is that any content used is traceable back to its source. (Instead of: The goal is to avoid text copies.)
- Integrity issues must be anchored in everyday teaching and research and integrity must be lived in every day by all stakeholders.
- Libraries can support the stakeholders.
- More action instead of reaction.
- Begin to talk with colleagues; create and use opportunities for exchange among all stakeholders.

# Contact

[www.plagiatspraevention.de](http://www.plagiatspraevention.de) (german/english)

Dr. Oliver Trevisiol    Oliver.Trevisiol@uni.kn  
Ansgar Schäfer        Ansgar.Schaefer@uni.kn

