

EVALUATION REPORT

Turnitin Pilot Study

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Executive Summary

Turnitin is a software resource designed to help students avoid plagiarism and improper citation that was made available to UT Austin instructors during the spring 2006 semester in a pilot program administered by the Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment (DIIA). The tool was offered to instructors and students through the campus course management system, Blackboard. Interested instructors were asked to register for one of nine training classes although class attendance was not required for participation in the pilot. (See also p. 4)

The purpose of the Turnitin pilot study is to determine the ease of use of the Turnitin tool, how students and instructors use the tool, the effectiveness of DIIA training workshops and online resources, and student and instructor satisfaction with the tool. Formal evaluation activities included online faculty and student surveys to assess ease of use, document types of use, evaluate training and assess satisfaction with tool, training workshop exit evaluations, and observation of a DIIA Turnitin training workshop. (See also pp. 5-6)

The study yielded the following conclusions and recommendations

Key Conclusions (pp. 17-19)

- Generally, instructors who used Turnitin were satisfied with the tool and would use it again in the future.
- Most instructors and students found Turnitin easy to use.
- Most technical difficulties reported by instructors and students were minor.
- Most instructors and students felt Turnitin helped to reduce plagiarism in their class.
- Nearly all attendees were satisfied with DIIA Turnitin training and found it useful.
- Students do not understand how their instructors use Turnitin.
- Most students did not gain any instructional value from Turnitin.
- Students were uncertain about whether Turnitin should be used in the future.
- Small survey sample sizes mean study results should be interpreted with caution.

Key Recommendations (pp. 19-20)

- Continue to evaluate the viability of adopting Turnitin by determining the campus-wide interest level for using the tool among UT Austin instructors.
- If Turnitin is adopted**
- Provide student-centered, online information about Turnitin.
 - Create a centralized Web page for all UT Austin plagiarism resources including those related to Turnitin.
 - Create examples of how instructors can use Turnitin to improve student writing and ability to properly cite source material, include them in DIIA training workshops, and make them available online.
 - Offer longer training sessions prior to or at the beginning of each long semester but fewer total sessions.

Full Report

Background

Turnitin is a software resource designed to help students avoid plagiarism and improper citation. The software encourages original writing and proper documentation practices by cross-referencing submitted materials with an archived database of journals, essays, newspaper articles, books, and other published work. Each submitted paper is returned in an *Originality Report* that identifies which passages match those in a large database containing billions of pages from both current and archived instances of the internet, millions of student papers previously submitted to Turnitin, and commercial databases of journal articles and periodicals.

Turnitin was made available through an email invitation to all UT Austin instructors during the spring 2006 semester in a pilot program administered by the Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment (DIIA) and offered to instructors and students through the campus course management system, Blackboard. Interested instructors were asked to register for one of nine training classes although class attendance was not required for participation in the pilot. All training sessions were held in the DIIA multimedia lab. Instructors could also request a private consultation with DIIA staff.

DIIA created a Web page (<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/turnitin/index.php>) introducing the software resource and inviting instructor participation in the pilot. This page also provided links to the Turnitin Website (www.turnitin.com), the Blackboard tutorials for Turnitin (<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/blackboard/tutorials/turnitin.html>), and a page on *Recommended Use* (<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/turnitin/about.php>). DIIA guidelines for use include:

- Encouraging instructors to use all available plagiarism prevention resources at UT Austin including those available through the University Libraries, Undergraduate Writing Center, Student Judicial Services, and other University departments.
- Encouraging instructors to use Turnitin as a resource and not simply as a method for detecting similarities between submitted essays and those in the Turnitin database and exercising professional judgment when evaluating the originality of student work.
- Recommending that instructors notify students about the use of Turnitin in writing on the first day of class by including a statement in the syllabus. The following syllabus statement was suggested:

Students should be aware that all required writing assignments may be submitted through a software program called Turnitin. Turnitin is a software resource designed to help students avoid plagiarism and improper citation. The software encourages original writing and proper citation documentation practices by cross-referencing submitted materials with an archived database of journals, essays, newspaper articles, books, and other published work.

Study Description

Study Purpose

The purpose of the Turnitin pilot study is to determine the ease of use of the Turnitin tool, how students and instructors use the tool, the effectiveness of DIIA training workshops and online resources, and student and instructor satisfaction with the tool. Study results will be used to help inform the decision of whether UT Austin should continue to license the tool.

Study Plan

Planning for the Turnitin pilot study began in fall 2005 and included DIIA Teaching and Learning, Instructional Technology Integration and Development (ITID), and Instructional Evaluation and Assessment staff. The DIIA Turnitin planning team also collaborated with staff from the UT General Libraries, Writing Across the Curriculum program, and the Undergraduate Writing Center. Potential survey questions were reviewed by the DIIA planning team and a study plan and timeline was approved which included:

- An online instructor survey to assess ease of use, document types of use, evaluate training, and assess satisfaction with tool.
- An online student survey to assess ease of use, document types of use and satisfaction with tool.
- Training session exit evaluations.
- Observation of a DIIA Turnitin training workshop.
- Informal, written instructor feedback received by DIIA staff.

Data Collection Methods

Both the instructor and student surveys collected similar information from each user group about their use of Turnitin, technical difficulties, satisfaction with the tool, and feelings about future use. Instructors were also asked about tool-related online resources and training. Both surveys were administered online using SurveyMonkey.

All instructors who attended a DIIA Turnitin training workshop or who registered for a session but did not attend were sent email invitations to participate in the survey and a reminder. A total of 76 instructors were sent invitations to participate in the survey which was available to them April 10-17, 2006. Twenty-seven instructors responded (36%) with thirteen of these (48%) having used the tool by the survey date. Frequencies for each survey item were calculated and responses to open-ended questions were analyzed for common themes. Because of the small sample size, more complex statistical analysis was not possible and results should be used with caution. See Appendix A for a list of instructor survey items.

All students enrolled in the 17 courses using the Turnitin tool were sent email invitations to participate in the survey and a reminder. A total of 696 students were sent invitations to participate in the survey which was available to them April 11-19, 2006. One hundred forty-five students responded (21%) with seventy-six of these (52%) having used the tool by the survey date. Frequencies for each survey item were calculated and responses to open-ended questions were analyzed for common themes. Because of the small sample size, more complex statistical

analysis was not possible and results should be used with caution. See Appendix B for a list of student survey items.

DIIA Turnitin training workshops were evaluated in several ways. A short, five item evaluation form was given to all participants to complete immediately following the session. This instrument focused on workshop quality, attendee satisfaction with the workshop, and provided an opportunity for attendees to make suggestions for improvement. Twenty-four post-workshop responses were collected, aggregated, and analyzed after the final workshop. Frequencies were calculated for the three closed-ended questions and open-ended questions were analyzed for common themes. Because of the small sample size, more complex statistical analysis was not possible and results should be used with caution. See Appendix C for a copy of the post-workshop evaluation form.

Additionally, instructors who used Turnitin were asked about their use of online resources and their satisfaction with workshop training elements as part of the instructor survey. These questions were designed so instructors could retrospectively evaluate the training after they had the opportunity to use the tool on their own. Finally, the study evaluator attended one of the training workshops and collected training materials.

Other forms of informally gathered information were also considered. Informal feedback from course instructors was also collected by the evaluator including emails sent to workshop instructors about technical difficulties and emails sent to DIIA staff. The evaluator also attended planning team meetings and received feedback from team members regarding the content of the instructor and student surveys.

Findings and Conclusions

Turnitin Users

- ◆ **Thirteen UT Austin instructors used Turnitin in 17 courses during spring 2006**
 - Instructors from Liberal Arts and Engineering made up half of this group.
 - Most instructors who used the tool were Lecturers, Instructors or Assistant Instructors.
 - Two-thirds of instructors had ten or fewer years of university teaching experience.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of Turnitin Instructors – Spring 2006

Characteristic	Turnitin Instructor Users	
	Number	Percent
<i>College/School^a</i>		
Business	1	9%
Communication	1	9%
Engineering	3	27%
Liberal Arts	4	36%
Natural Sciences	2	18%
<i>Academic Rank</i>		
Assistant Instructor	3	25%
Instructor	0	0%
Lecturer	4	33%
Assistant Professor	2	17%
Associate Professor	1	8%
Professor	2	17%
<i>Years of University Teaching Experience</i>		
1-5	4	33%
6-10	4	33%
11-15	3	25%
16-20	0	0%
21-25	1	8%
26-30	0	0%
More than 30	0	0%

^a There were no instructor users in Architecture, Education, Fine Arts, Information, Geosciences, Law, Public Affairs, Nursing, Pharmacy or Social Work.

- ◆ **Some surveyed instructors¹ had not used the tool and cited a variety of reasons (Table 2).**
 - Eleven instructors accessed Turnitin but did not use it in a course.
 - A third of the reasons cited related to the perceived complexity of the tool or the perceived difficulty of using it.

¹ Respondents to this question include instructors who registered for DIIA Turnitin training but did not attend and instructors who attended training but did not use Turnitin in their courses.

Table 2 – What were your reasons for not using Turnitin? (Choose all that apply)

Reason	Number	Percent
Turnitin did not work for my particular assignments.	4	33%
Turnitin is too complicated to use.	2	17%
There were insurmountable technical difficulties	2	17%
Unable to attend training	2	17%
Will use it but have not done so yet.	2	17%
The effort required to use Turnitin was greater than the potential benefits.	2	17%
I use another form of plagiarism control.	2	17%
Plagiarism is not a problem in my courses.	1	8%
Other	1	8%

◆ **Seventy-six surveyed students used Turnitin during spring 2006**

- Students from Engineering and Liberal Arts made up nearly half of this group.
- Most student users (70%) were Juniors or Seniors.

Table 3 – Demographic characteristics of Turnitin student users – Spring 2006

Characteristic	Turnitin Student Users	
	Number	Percent
<i>College/School^a</i>		
Business	21	17%
Communication	18	14%
Education	6	5%
Engineering	35	28%
Fine Arts	1	1%
Liberal Arts	26	21%
Natural Sciences	17	14%
<i>Student Status</i>		
Freshman	7	5%
Sophomore	24	18%
Junior	50	37%
Senior	44	33%
Graduate student	10	7%

^a There were no student users in Architecture, Education, Fine Arts, Information, Geosciences, Law, Public Affairs, Nursing, Pharmacy or Social Work.

◆ **Nine hundred seventy (970) documents were submitted to Turnitin during the pilot period.**

- Nearly all submissions (95%) had a *similarity index* of less than a 25%².

² The *similarity index* is the percentage of the submitted paper that matches the Turnitin database. A similarity index of less than 25% is generally not a cause for concern as appropriately cited material and bibliographic entries can be part of the similarity index calculation.

Ease of Use

◆ **Most instructors and students found Turnitin easy to use.**

- Students appear to find Turnitin features somewhat easier to use than instructors.
- 54% of students found it *Somewhat* or *Very Easy* to retrieve papers from Turnitin.
- 58% of students found it *Somewhat* or *Very Easy* to retrieve Originality Reports.
- Overall, 84% of instructors and 90% of students found Turnitin *Somewhat* or *Very Easy* to use.

Table 4 – Instructor (I) and student (S) ratings of Turnitin’s ease of use.

How easy was it for you to:		Very Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Somewhat Easy	Very Easy	Did not use
locate Turnitin on the course Blackboard site?	I	0%	23%	62%	15%	0%
	S	0%	16%	35%	40%	0%
submit drafts/papers?	I	0%	23%	31%	31%	15%
	S	0%	5%	35%	60%	0%
understand the Originality Report (results)?	I	0%	8%	8%	85%	0%
	S	3%	9%	33%	28%	28%
use Turnitin overall?	I	0%	15%	69%	15%	0%
	S	0%	12%	34%	56%	1%

◆ **Instructors made a few suggestions for improving Turnitin’s ease of use including:**

- Simplifying the page for creating assignments.
- Making Turnitin easier to find within the Blackboard interface.
- Allowing instructors to see the student interface so they can better explain how to submit assignments.

◆ **The most frequent student suggestions for making Turnitin easier to use was to provide more detailed instructions and to improve the interface on Blackboard.**

Technical Difficulties

- ◆ **Six of 13 instructors (46%) reported having technical difficulties with Turnitin.**
 - Two instructors had difficulty with creating or deleting assignments. Other difficulties included problems with the roster synchronization, the revisions function, deleting submissions from the report summary, and difficulty using the Blackboard interface.
 - Instructors sought assistance from a variety of sources including³:
 - DIIA staff (3)
 - Blackboard support (3)
 - ITS support (2)
 - Turnitin technical support (1).
 - Some instructors used multiple support sources to address their technical difficulties.
 - Four of the six instructors (67%) who reported technical difficulties did not feel that the problems were solved to their satisfaction.
 - Two of these four instructors suggested improvements to Turnitin software.
 - One instructor desired additional training on assignment revisions.
 - One instructor desired greater support capabilities from the ITS help desk.

- ◆ **Eight of 76 students (10%) reported having technical difficulties with Turnitin.**
 - Three students reported having submission or resubmission problems, two complained of the system's slow speed, and one did not receive results.
 - Six sought assistance from their instructor and two did not seek any assistance
 - Five of the eight students reported getting their technical difficulties resolved to their satisfaction.

Instructional Usefulness

- ◆ **Most instructors (83%) used Turnitin for 1-4 assignments.**
 - Four instructors used Turnitin for only one assignment.
 - One instructor used Turnitin for 16 assignments and another used it for more than 20.

- ◆ **On average students reported using Turnitin for 3 assignments.**
 - 88% of students reported using Turnitin for 1-4 assignments.

- ◆ **Nearly all instructors (83%) reported using Turnitin for only one course.**
 - Instructors reported using Turnitin in 17 courses.

- ◆ **Most instructors report Turnitin saved them time.**
 - 67% of instructors felt that Turnitin helped them save time to a *Limited*, *Moderate*, *Considerable*, or *Very Great Extent*.
 - 25% of instructors reported Turnitin did not help them save time at all

³ Numbers in parenthesis indicate frequency of comment.

- ◆ **All students reported being informed that Turnitin was being used for their assignments although instructors did so in a variety of ways.**
 - 33% of students reported being informed verbally about Turnitin when an assignment was given.
 - 30% of students reported being informed verbally during the first week of class.
 - 38% of students reported being informed only verbally.
 - 23% of students reported being informed in writing in the course syllabus. This is the method of informing students recommended to instructors by DIIA.

Table 5 – How did your instructor inform you that Turnitin was being used in your courses? (Choose all that apply)

Method	Number	Percent
Verbally-first week of class	44	30%
Verbally-when assignment was given	48	33%
Verbally-after assignment was given	9	6%
Writing-in the syllabus	34	23%
Writing-on course Blackboard site	23	16%
Writing-in assignment instructions	21	15%
Writing-after assignment completed	2	1%
I was never informed	0	0%

- ◆ **Turnitin was not very helpful to instructors in grading student work.**
 - Half of instructors reported that Turnitin helped them grade student work *Not at All* or to only a *Limited Extent*.
 - 49% of students thought Turnitin helped their instructors to evaluate their work to a *Moderate, Considerable, or Very Great Extent*.
- ◆ **Turnitin did not help most student users to revise their papers or properly cite source material.**
 - Over half (52%) of surveyed students reported that Turnitin did not at all help them revise their papers. An additional 19% reported that this skill was *Not Applicable* to using Turnitin. (Table 6)
 - A third of instructors reported this skill as *Not Applicable* to using Turnitin.
 - While 33% of instructors thought Turnitin helped their student to revise papers to a *Considerable* or *Very Great Extent*, only 6% of students shared this viewpoint.
 - 45% of student respondents reported that Turnitin did not at all help them properly cite source material. An additional 26% reported that this skill was *Not Applicable* to using Turnitin. (Table 6)
 - A quarter of instructors reported this skill as *Not Applicable* to using Turnitin.
 - While 34% of instructors thought Turnitin helped their students to properly cite source material to a *Considerable* or *Very Great Extent*, only 11% of students shared this viewpoint.
 - 53% of students reported that Turnitin did not at all help them save time writing their papers.

Table 6 – Instructor (I) and student (S) ratings of the extent Turnitin was used to help students revise papers or cite source materials.

To what extent did Turnitin:		Not at all	Limited Extent	Moderate Extent	Consider-able Extent	Very Great Extent	NA ^a
help students/you revise papers?	I	8%	8%	17%	25%	8%	33%
	S	52%	19%	4%	4%	2%	19%
help students/you properly cite source materials?	I	17%	0%	25%	17%	17%	25%
	S	45%	12%	6%	10%	1%	26%

^a Not Applicable

- ◆ *Nearly all instructors found the Originality Reports (results) to be useful in assessing student work.*
 - Only one instructor thought that the Originality Reports were *Not at all useful*.
- ◆ *Both instructors and students were positive about Turnitin's ability to help students avoid plagiarism to at least a limited extent.*
 - 81% of instructors thought that Turnitin helped reduce plagiarism in their class to at least a *Limited Extent* compared to 71% of students. (Table 7)
 - Only 34% of students thought Turnitin helped *them* (as individuals) avoid plagiarizing to at least a *Limited Extent*. (Table 7)

Table 7 – Instructor (I) and student (S) ratings on the extent Turnitin helped students avoid plagiarism.

To what extent:		Not at all	Limited Extent	Moderate Extent	Consider-able Extent	Very Great Extent	NA ^a
do you think Turnitin helped your students/you to avoid plagiarism?	I	8%	8%	17%	33%	25%	8%
	S	41%	12%	7%	11%	4%	25%
did Turnitin help to reduce plagiarism in your class?	I	9%	36%	9%	9%	27%	9%
	S	19%	21%	13%	19%	18%	10%

^a Not Applicable

Training

Response to Training Before Use of Turnitin

A short, five item evaluation form (see Appendix C) was given to all training attendees to complete immediately following each Turnitin training session. These forms recorded attendee's immediate reaction to the training session. Of the 29 attendees, 24 (83%) completed evaluation forms providing the data reported below.

- ◆ ***Nine Turnitin training sessions were offered by DIIA during spring 2006***
 - The first workshop was offered on January 11; the final workshop was offered on April 19.
 - The average number of attendees per session was 3. Attendance ranged from 1 to 8 attendees.
 - Of the 29 attendees, 10 (34%) decided to use Turnitin during spring 2006.

- ◆ ***Nearly all (96%) attendees thought that the Turnitin training addressed their interests and needs.***
 - Attendees reported remaining unclear about the following:
 - How students submit reports
 - Zip file uploads
 - Blackboard interface
 - Date stamps on submitted papers
 - The routine process to follow

- ◆ ***Nearly all (96%) rated the instructor's presentations as very good or excellent.***
 - In particular, workshop attendees reported liking:
 - The instructor's skills (6)
 - Better understanding the tool (5)
 - Organization of the workshop (3)
 - Greater visibility/publicity for the tool (3)
 - Workshop resources (2)
 - The hands-on activity (2)
 - The small class size (1)
 - The workshop was practical (1)

- ◆ ***Most attendees (87%) rated the hands-on activity as very good or excellent.***
 - Suggestions for improvement included:
 - Providing a handout showing the difference between instructor and student screens.
 - More time to practice.
 - Most attendees had no suggestions for improving the hands-on activity

Response to Training After Use

Instructors who used Turnitin were again asked about their satisfaction with DIIA Turnitin training workshops as part of the instructor survey (see Appendix A). These questions were designed so instructors could retrospectively evaluate the training after they had the opportunity to use the tool on their own. Responses to these training-related survey questions are reported below.

- ◆ **All instructors who used Turnitin and attended DIIA Turnitin training found the workshop to be at least somewhat useful. (Table 8)**
 - Nearly all users who attended training found the explanation of Turnitin and the hands-on exercise to be *very useful*.
 - 56% of users found the training handouts to be *very useful*.
 - About half (55%) of users who attended training found the email updates at least somewhat useful

Table 8 – Instructors’ perceived usefulness of DIIA Turnitin training components after using the tool.

How useful were the following training components from the DIIA training session in helping you use Turnitin?	Not at all useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful
Explanation of Turnitin	0%	20%	80%
Hands-on exercise	0%	22%	78%
Handouts	11%	33%	56%
Email updates	44%	33%	22%

- ◆ **Turnitin users provided the following suggestions for improving training:**
 - “I took it before the semester; a follow-up during the semester would have been helpful”
 - “Let us be students to turn in assignments. Separately, let us be instructors and practice setting up several assignments.”
 - “I found the one hour course to be largely a waste of time, but really it is quite straight forward if one is at ease with Blackboard. However, I did pick up a few points that I needed. I do wish you would give separate, efficient courses for people who are comfortable with the basics. I find that the first 50 minutes of a one hour DIIA/ITS course are wasted time, but the last 10 are valuable. So I show up.”
 - “More follow up and airing of concerns in discussion board.”

Use of Other Training Resources

- ◆ *Most instructors who used Turnitin (58%) had never attended a workshop about preventing plagiarism.*
- ◆ *Most instructors who used Turnitin did not use online UT Austin resources related to Turnitin or plagiarism. (Table 9)*
 - The most frequently used online resource was the Turnitin/Blackboard tutorial.
 - All the instructors who did use an online resource found it at least *a little useful*.
 - UT Libraries' online plagiarism resources were not directly accessible from the DIIA Turnitin pages or the Blackboard tutorial pages.

Table 9 – Usefulness of UT Austin online resources related to Turnitin or plagiarism.

How useful were the following online resources:	Not at all useful	A little useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Did not use
DIIA recommended use guidelines for Turnitin Web page	0%	0%	33%	17%	50%
Using Blackboard and Turnitin – Turnitin/Blackboard tutorial	0%	17%	17%	33%	33%
Using Turnitin Originality Reports – Turnitin/Blackboard tutorial	0%	0%	33%	25%	42%
Preventing and Detecting Plagiarism Web Site (UT Libraries)	0%	0%	25%	8%	67%
Prevent and Detect Plagiarism Seminar handout (UT Libraries)	0%	0%	17%	8%	75%

Future Use

- ◆ ***A majority of instructors were satisfied with Turnitin overall.***
 - Seven instructors (58%) reported being *Somewhat* or *Very Satisfied* with Turnitin.
 - Five instructors (39%) reported being *Somewhat* or *Very Unsatisfied* with Turnitin.
- ◆ ***If available, most instructors (83%) would use Turnitin again in future semesters.***
 - The remaining instructors indicated they would *Maybe* use Turnitin again.
- ◆ ***Instructors identified a variety of benefits from using Turnitin including:***
 - It discouraged student plagiarism (3)
 - Being more willing to assign writing assignments (2)
 - Helping students improve their writing (2)
 - Having greater confidence or “peace of mind” about student papers being original (2)
 - Saving time (1)
- ◆ ***Instructors also identified a variety of dislikes about using Turnitin including:***
 - Technical problems (2)
 - The time it takes to submit and check student papers (2)
 - “Cumbersome” to learn (2)
 - More work for students to submit an electronic and a paper copy of work (1)
 - The difficulty of reading papers online (1)
- ◆ ***Students were uncertain about whether Turnitin should be used in the future.***
 - Half (51%) of student respondents indicated *Maybe* when asked if they would like to see Turnitin used in the future while 38% indicated *Yes*.
 - 52% of comments about future use were positive with most (27) focused on Turnitin’s ability to prevent or identify plagiarism.
 - Negative comments (35%) included:
 - Dislike of electronically submitting papers (8)
 - The extra effort required to use the tool (5)
 - The use of Turnitin might not be appropriate for all classes or assignments (3).
 - 12% of student comments about future use were neutral such as “don’t care,” “indifferent” or “don’t know” (10).
- ◆ ***Both instructors and students report knowledge of plagiarism on campus prior to spring 2006.***
 - 73% of instructors reported verifying at least one instance of plagiarism per year prior to using Turnitin.
 - 16% of student respondents reported knowing someone who had plagiarized in a UT Austin course either intentionally or unintentionally prior to the current semester (spring 2006).

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the study findings.

- 1. Overall, instructors who used Turnitin were satisfied with the tool and would use it again in the future.** Seven of the thirteen instructors (58%) who used Turnitin were *Somewhat* or *Very Satisfied* with the tool and all indicated they would definitely or *Maybe* use the tool again in the future. Additionally, instructors cited numerous benefits to using the tool including the discouragement of plagiarism and a greater willingness to assign writing assignments. Nearly all dislikes could be addressed with improved training or technical support. Turnitin's ease of use and ability to save instructor's time likely contributed to their satisfaction with the tool.
- 2. Most instructors and students found Turnitin easy to use.** Nearly all instructor and student users of Turnitin found it *Somewhat* or *Very Easy* to use overall with students finding it easier to use than instructors. About a quarter of instructors found locating Turnitin on their course Blackboard site and submitting drafts/papers to be *Somewhat Difficult*.
- 3. Most technical difficulties reported by instructors and students were minor.** The most commonly mentioned technical difficulty reported by instructors and students was related to draft/paper submission. Instructors also reported difficulty with the roster sync and using the Blackboard interface. None of these difficulties were reported frequently. While most instructors turned to DIIA staff or Blackboard technical support staff for assistance, most students sought assistance from their instructors making instructor training particularly critical.
- 4. Both instructors and students felt Turnitin helped to reduce plagiarism in their class.** Most instructors (81%) and students (71%) who used the tool felt it helped students avoid plagiarism in their class to at least a limited extent. However, only 34% of students thought Turnitin helped them, as individuals, avoid plagiarizing indicating that most individual students do not think they are the ones plagiarizing or improperly citing sources. For student respondents, preventing the plagiarism and cheating of other students was a primary benefit of the tool.
- 5. The perceived complexity of and effort required to use Turnitin is a barrier to adoption for some instructors.** A third of the reasons given by instructors who registered for or attended DIIA Turnitin training but did not use the tool related to the perceived complexity of the tool or the perceived difficulty of using it. Such perceptions could be a significant barrier to the widespread adoption of the tool on campus and need to be addressed early and directly by training staff, promotional materials, and online resources.
- 6. Students and instructors view the use of Turnitin differently.** Student and faculty perceptions of Turnitin and how it was being used differed in several ways. First, 49% of students thought their instructors used Turnitin to help them evaluate student work, but half of the instructors who used Turnitin reported that Turnitin helped them grade student work *Not at All* or to only a *Limited Extent*. While instructors may not be using Turnitin to help them assign a grade to a student assignment, they are using

it to evaluate the originality of the student's work. This is a distinction students may not have understood.

Second, 33% of instructors thought Turnitin helped students revise their papers to a *Considerable* or *Very Great Extent* while only 6% of students shared this viewpoint. Additionally, 32% of instructors thought Turnitin helped their students to properly cite source material to a *Considerable* or *Very Great extent* but only 11% of students felt the same way. These findings seem to indicate that students either do not understand how to use Turnitin to revise papers and improve citation practices, they are not being given the opportunity to do so, or they are choosing not to use the tool in these ways.

- 7. *Most students did not gain any instructional value from Turnitin.*** While Turnitin can be used by students to revise their papers and properly cite source material, survey responses indicate that students are not gaining these benefits from the use of Turnitin. Over half (52%) of students reported that Turnitin did not at all help them revise their papers with an additional 19% indicating this skill was *Not Applicable*. Similarly, 45% of surveyed students reported that Turnitin did not at all help them properly cite source material with an additional 26% reporting that this skill was *Not Applicable*. Thus, while instructors appear to gain value from using Turnitin as a plagiarism detection tool, the tool does not seem to have been used to instruct students on how to properly cite source material or help them improve their writing through revisions. Instructor training on this topic was limited.
- 8. *Students were uncertain about whether Turnitin should be used in the future.*** Slightly more than half of students (51%) indicated *Maybe* when asked if they would like to see Turnitin used in the future with 38% indicating *Yes* and 12% *No*. Although most (52%) written comments about future use were positive, they typically focused on Turnitin's ability to prevent or identify plagiarism. Student ambivalence is not surprising given that few of them received any instructional value from using the tool and they may not fully understand how their instructor used it to evaluate their work.
- 9. *Nearly all instructors were satisfied with DIIA Turnitin training and found it useful, but other training resources were not fully utilized and some topics were not addressed.*** DIIA Turnitin workshops were highly rated by attendees both before they used Turnitin and after. Unfortunately, session attendance was low averaging just 3 attendees per session. In addition, other Turnitin related resources available to instructors were not as widely used. For example, only a few instructors reported having taken a plagiarism prevention workshop or used an online plagiarism prevention handout. Similarly half of instructors who used Turnitin did not use the online recommended use guidelines for the tool. While it is unclear if instructors were aware of these resources, use of the guidelines and other resources might have improved how students experienced Turnitin and reduced instructor difficulties with the tool. Finally, very little workshop time was devoted to teaching instructors how to use Turnitin to improve student writing or to help students learn how to properly cite source materials and none of the workshop handouts addressed this topic.

10. While preliminary results are encouraging, the small number of instructors in the pilot study makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the viability of using the tool campus-wide. Only thirteen instructors piloted the tool. Survey results from this group must be interpreted with great caution since one or two responses could change results about satisfaction or future use from a majority satisfied/in favor to a majority unsatisfied/opposed. While the student sample is larger, it represents only 23% of all student users and only reflects the experiences of students in 17 courses limiting its usefulness. Furthermore, the responses of instructors who registered for or attended DIIA training but chose not to use the tool should also be considered.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the above conclusions, are interrelated and will be most useful if considered holistically. Recommendations 2-5 are relevant only if Turnitin is adopted. The bracketed numbers reference the above, numbered conclusions upon which each recommendation is based.

1. **Continue to evaluate the viability of adopting Turnitin by determining the campus-wide interest level for using the tool among UT Austin instructors.** While the current pilot study results are generally positive, they are limited in that the number of instructors who piloted the tool (13) was small making it difficult to determine the viability of permanently adopting Turnitin. It is likely that those instructors who piloted Turnitin during spring 2006 are not typical UT Austin instructors in that they were willing to adopt a new technological instructional tool in its piloting stage. The fact that only a third of instructors who took the time to attend DIIA Turnitin training decided to use the tool is also disconcerting and deserves further examination. In sum, further information on the interest level among UT Austin instructors in attending Turnitin training and using the tool is needed before any decision about adopting the tool is made. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10]
2. **Provide student-centered, online information about Turnitin.** Pilot study results indicate that students do not appear to understand how their instructors are using Turnitin and that they may not understand how they can use Turnitin to improve their writing and citation skills. Creating student-centered, online resources such as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and troubleshooting tips, which specifically address student concerns and highlight the ways students can benefit from using Turnitin, would assist students in realizing the potential instructional benefits of the tool and reduce technical difficulties. Such a resource should be accessible directly from the Turnitin Blackboard interface that students view and include links to other UT Austin plagiarism prevention resources [3, 4, 6, 7, 8]
3. **Create a centralized Web page for all UT Austin plagiarism resources including those related to Turnitin.** Currently, UT Austin resources related to plagiarism policies, definitions, and prevention are scattered among numerous departmental and organizational Web sites (UT Libraries, Dean of Students, Department of Rhetoric and Composition). If Turnitin is adopted, DIIA, in collaboration with other stakeholders, should create a UT Austin Web page that acts as a clearinghouse for campus plagiarism resources including those directly related to Turnitin. This page

should also be accessible directly from the Turnitin Blackboard interface's student and instructor views. [6, 7, 8, 9]

- 4. Create examples of how instructors can use Turnitin to improve student writing and ability to properly cite source material, include them in DIIA training workshops, and make them available online.** Pilot study results suggest that most students are not receiving instructional benefit from using Turnitin. Greater instructional benefits could be achieved if more instructors used the tool as part of the writing revision process or as part of teaching students how to properly cite source material. If improved student writing and citation skills is one of the expected outcomes of using the tool, DIIA, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, should develop examples and other instructional materials that model how Turnitin can be used to achieve these ends. Such examples should be included in all DIIA training workshops and be made available to instructors online. [6, 7, 8, 9]
- 5. Offer longer training sessions prior to or at the beginning of each long semester but fewer total sessions.** The nine Turnitin training sessions offered by DIIA averaged only 3 attendees each with only two sessions having more than three attendees. The most well attended session was prior to the beginning of the semester. To more efficiently utilize resources, the division should offer fewer total sessions, concentrate session offerings immediately prior to and after the start of the long semester, and make them at least 90 minutes to accommodate the additional content discussed in Recommendation #3 (p. 19). The number and timing of training sessions could be adjusted as the demand for tool instruction changes. [3, 9]

Appendix A

Turnitin Instructor Survey Items

Directions: Please respond to the following questions about Turnitin as completely as possible. Your responses are anonymous and will be used to assess training efforts and evaluate the long-term viability of using Turnitin at UT Austin.

1. Have you used Turnitin for a class assignment?
 - Yes (Go to Ease of Use Section)
 - No

2. What were your reasons for not using Turnitin (Choose all that apply)
 - Turnitin is too complicated to use
 - There were insurmountable technical difficulties
 - The effort required to use Turnitin was greater than the potential benefits
 - Too much work for students
 - Too much student resistance
 - It sends a negative message to students about their integrity
 - Turnitin did not work for my particular assignments
 - I use another form of plagiarism control
 - Plagiarism is not a problem in my courses
 - Other (please specify)

3. Describe how you typically check for plagiarism.(open-ended)

4. What would encourage you to use Turnitin in the future? (open-ended)
(Go to Training Section)

Ease of Use

(Matrix using the following scale: Very difficult, Somewhat difficult, Somewhat easy, Very easy, Did not use)

How easy was it for you to:

5. locate Turnitin on the course Blackboard site?
6. submit drafts/papers to Turnitin?
7. understand the Originality Report (results)?
8. find the source material identified in the originality report?
9. use Turnitin overall?

10. What would make Turnitin easier to use? (open-ended)

11. Did you encounter any technical difficulties while using Turnitin?
 - Yes
 - No (Skip to Usefulness Section)

12. What kind of technical difficulties did you have while using Turnitin (Choose all that apply)?
- Website wouldn't load/display properly
 - Could not upload documents
 - Could not download reports
 - Could not view reports
 - Could not login
 - Could not sync roster
 - Could not remove papers
 - Other (please specify)
13. What methods did you use to resolve your difficulties (Choose all that apply)?
- Sought assistance from ITS support
 - Sought assistance from Blackboard support
 - Sought assistance from DIIA staff
 - Contacted Turnitin technical support
 - Consulted online Turnitin tutorials
 - Consulted DIIA Turnitin training materials
 - Other (please specify)
14. Were your difficulties resolved to your satisfaction?
- Yes
 - No

Instructional Usefulness

(Matrix using the following scale: Not at all, limited extent, moderate extent, considerable extent, very great extent, not applicable)

To what extent:

15. has plagiarism been a problem in your classes in the past?
16. do you think Turnitin helped your students to revise their paper?
17. do you think Turnitin helped your students to avoid plagiarizing?
18. do you think Turnitin helped your students to properly cite source material?
19. did Turnitin help you to evaluate student work?
20. did Turnitin help you to save time?
21. did Turnitin help to reduce plagiarism in your class?
22. For how many assignments have you used Turnitin this semester? (Pull down menu 1-20)
23. List the courses for which you used Turnitin. (open-ended)
24. How useful were the Originality Reports (results) in assessing student work?
- Not at all useful
 - Somewhat useful
 - Very useful
 - Did not use reports for student assessment

25. Please describe how you used Turnitin in your class(es).
26. What benefit did you experience from using Turnitin?
27. What did you dislike about using Turnitin?
28. How does Turnitin compare to other methods you have used to check for plagiarism?
29. Overall, how satisfied are you with Turnitin?
 - Very unsatisfied
 - Somewhat unsatisfied
 - Somewhat satisfied
 - Very satisfied
30. If available, would you use Turnitin again in future semesters?
 - Yes (Go to Training Section)
 - Maybe (Go to Training Section)
 - No
31. Why don't you want to use Turnitin again in future semesters?

Training

(Matrix using the following scale: Not at all useful, Somewhat useful, Very useful, Did not use)

How useful were the following online resources:

32. DIIA recommended use guidelines for Turnitin Web page
33. *Using Blackboard and Turnitin* - Turnitin/Blackboard tutorial
34. *Using Turnitin Originality Reports* - Turnitin/Blackboard tutorial
35. *Preventing and Detecting Plagiarism* Web site (UT Libraries)
36. *Prevent and Detect Plagiarism Seminar* handout (UT Libraries)
37. Have you ever attended a workshop about preventing plagiarism?
 - Yes
 - No
38. Did you attend the Turnitin training sponsored by DIIA?
 - Yes
 - No (Go to the Demographics Section)

(Matrix using the following scale: Not at all useful, Somewhat useful, Very useful)

How useful were the following training components from the DIIA training session in helping you use Turnitin?

- 39. Explanation of Turnitin
- 40. Hands-on exercise
- 41. Handouts
- 42. Email updates

43. What would make DIIA's Turnitin training more useful to you? (open-ended)

Demographics

44. What is your college (pull down menu)

45. What is your academic rank?

- Assistant Instructor
- Instructor
- Lecturer
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Professor

46. How many years of university teaching experience do you have?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- More than 30

Thank You for completing the survey! Please click <DONE> to submit your responses.

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Appendix B

Turnitin Student Survey Items

Directions: Please respond to the following questions about Turnitin as completely as possible. Your responses are totally **anonymous** and will be used to evaluate the long-term viability of using Turnitin at UT Austin.

1. Did your instructor require you to use Turnitin?
 - Yes
 - No

2. Have you used Turnitin for one or more class assignments this semester?
 - Yes
 - No (Go to Demographics page)

Ease of Use

(Matrix using the following scale: Very difficult, Somewhat difficult, Somewhat easy, Very easy, Did not use)

How easy was it for you to:

3. locate Turnitin on the course Blackboard site?
4. submit drafts/papers to Turnitin?
5. understand the Originality Report (results)?
6. retrieve/download you paper?
7. use Turnitin overall?

8. What would make Turnitin easier to use? (open-ended)

9. Did you encounter any technical difficulties while using Turnitin?
 - Yes
 - No (Skip to Usefulness Section)

10. What kind of technical difficulties did you have while using Turnitin (Choose all that apply)?
 - Website wouldn't load/display properly
 - Could not upload documents
 - Could not download reports
 - Could not view reports
 - Could not login
 - Could not remove papers
 - Other (please specify)

11. What methods did you use to resolve your difficulties (Choose all that apply)?
- Sought assistance from my instructor
 - Sought assistance from ITS support
 - Sought assistance from Blackboard support
 - Sought assistance from DIIA staff
 - Contacted Turnitin technical support
 - Consulted online Turnitin tutorials
 - Other (please specify)
12. Were your technical difficulties resolved to your satisfaction?
- Yes (Go to Instructional Usefulness section)
 - No
13. How could technical difficulties be resolved better? (open-ended)

Instructional Usefulness

Directions: For the next section of questions, you should consider *plagiarism* to include any instance of copying or paraphrasing someone else's work without properly crediting (citing) the true author, unauthorized collaboration with another student, or turning in the same paper for more than one course without permission.

(Matrix using the following scale: Not at all, limited extent, moderate extent, considerable extent, very great extent, not applicable)

To what extent:

- 14. did Turnitin help you to revise your paper?
 - 15. did Turnitin help you to avoid plagiarizing?
 - 16. did Turnitin help you to properly cite source material?
 - 17. did Turnitin help you to improve your paper writing skills?
 - 18. did Turnitin help you to save time writing your paper?
 - 19. do you think Turnitin helped your instructor to evaluate your work?
 - 20. do you think Turnitin helped to reduce plagiarism in your class?
21. How do you feel about having to use Turnitin?
22. For how many of your assignments was Turnitin used? (Pull down menu 1-20)
23. How many of your courses this semester use Turnitin? (Pull down menu 1-10)

24. How did your instructor inform you that Turnitin was being used in your courses? (Choose all that apply)
- Verbally, the first week of class.
 - Verbally, when the assignment was given
 - Verbally, after the assignment was completed
 - In writing, in the syllabus
 - In writing, on the course Blackboard site
 - In writing, in the assignment instructions
 - In writing, after the assignment was completed
 - I was never informed that Turnitin was being used.
25. What benefit(s) did you experience from using Turnitin? (open-ended)
26. What did you dislike about using Turnitin? (open-ended)
27. Prior to the current semester, has anyone you know ever plagiarized in a UT Austin course?
- Yes, intentionally
 - Yes, accidentally
 - Unsure
28. Prior to the current semester, have you ever plagiarized in a UT Austin course?
- Yes, intentionally
 - Yes, accidentally
 - No
 - Don't know
29. Would you like to see Turnitin used more in the future?
- Yes
 - Maybe
 - No
30. Please explain your response to question 29. (open-ended)

Demographics

31. What is your college/school (pull down menu)

32. What is your UT Austin status?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate student

33. Is English your first or native language?

- Yes
- No

Thank You for completing the anonymous survey! Please click <DONE> to submit your responses.

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Appendix C Turnitin Workshop Evaluation Form

Instructor(s): _____

Sessions: _____

Date: _____

Work Shop Evaluation Form

1. How well did the course address your interests and needs?

Poor Below Average Average Very Good Excellent

Suggestions for changes to content or additional courses/workshops?

2. How would you rate the instructors' presentations?

Poor Below Average Average Very Good Excellent

Suggestions for improvement in presentation?

3. How would you rate the hands-on activities?

Poor Below Average Average Very Good Excellent

Suggestions for improving the course activities?

4. What ideas presented in the workshop remain unclear to you?

5. What did you best like about the workshop?
