

# More Students Misunderstand The Fundamentals Of Plagiarism

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<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/08/02/more-students-misunderstand-n-666997.html>

For the modern student, plagiarism isn't all it used to be. In fact, many don't see it as an issue in the least.

According to the *New York Times*, technology has fostered a laissez-faire attitude towards the practice. Many students plagiarize -- and many don't think they're doing anything wrong.

The *Times* reports:

*Sarah Brookover, a senior at the Rutgers campus in Camden, N.J., said many of her classmates blithely cut and paste without attribution.*

*"This generation has always existed in a world where media and intellectual property don't have the same gravity," said Ms. Brookover, who at 31 is older than most undergraduates. "When you're sitting at your computer, it's the same machine you've downloaded music with, possibly illegally, the same machine you streamed videos for free that showed on HBO last night."*

In response, some professors find themselves explaining the ethical basics of original work to their students. In April, University of Texas chemistry lecturer [Conrad Fjetland](#) told the *Daily Texan* that some students "don't really specifically understand what plagiarism is" and that he has to explicitly tell his students what constitutes cheating, including use of social learning networks like [CourseHero.com](#).

For their part, schools are doing what they can to ferret out copiers-and-pasters at the door. According to [Inside Higher Ed](#), Penn State University has started screening applications to its MBA program with plagiarism detector software Turnitin. In its first round of use, the program found that 30 applications had evidence of plagiarism.

When the same technology [was applied by researchers to applications to Harvard's medical school](#), it found that five percent of applications had plagiarized parts.

Cultural and attitudinal shifts may be to blame for the seeming increase in plagiarism. Earlier this year, the story of [Helene Hegemann](#), the 17-year-old bestselling author from Germany, captured media attention when it was revealed that she copied entire passages of her book "Axolotl Roadkill." More surprising that Hegemann's plagiarism, however, was her defense of it. She famously told the *Berliner Morgenpost* that she didn't think she did anything wrong: "I myself don't feel it is stealing, because I put all the material into a completely different and unique context and from the outset consistently promoted the fact that none of that is actually by me," she said.

And who could forget the case of [Harvard hoaxer Adam Wheeler](#)? The 23-year-old Delaware man faked credentials to gain admittance to Harvard and to obtain thousands of dollars in scholarships. He was only caught when a professor realized that his application for a Rhodes scholarship had been -- you guessed it -- almost entirely plagiarized.

What are your thoughts on this? Have you unknowingly plagiarized? What's a proper punishment? Add your insights below.