

Datum 4 april 2019
Ons kenmerk Advies OCWB 2019-01
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Onderwerp Advies tegen Plagiaat en Oneerlijk Gedrag



Technische Universiteit Delft

Aan: Dr. R. Delfos
Cc: Prof.dr.ir. J. Hellendoorn
Cc: Prof.dr. T. Baller
Cc: Examencommissie 3mE

Werktuigbouwkunde,
Maritieme Techniek en
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Adres
Mekelweg 2
2628 CD Delft

Geachte heer Delfos,

New digital platforms are enabling new forms of plagiarism and dishonest conduct among our students. In particular, StudeerSnel and Athena Studies are two of these platforms that, while could be useful under a responsible use to support students, are often being abused by students and often breach authors' intellectual rights.

We would like to direct the attention of the direction to the following two issues:

1. **Student's plagiarism:** A non-negligible number of students copy solutions to homework assignments from solutions available at StudeerSnel (and other distribution platforms).
2. **Intellectual property breaches:** StudeerSnel and Athena Studies regularly employ materials developed by TU Delft employees, without asking for permission to do so, and profit from these materials.

The first issue should fall under simple and classical plagiarism. However, cases of students copying solutions from StudeerSnel are often disregarded at the Exam Commission because "the exercises were recycled from old material". It is our stance that these cases are nonetheless plagiarism, and should be treated as plagiarism by the Exam Commission (EC), (particularly when not just the answer is copied, but even the whole argumentation). We would like to know whether you agree with this stance.

We would like to highlight the fact that in many cases the exercises simply cannot be changed from year to year, e.g. practical exercises with real hardware.

Many of such exercises have as sole purpose to force the students to get some contact with the equipment that they may need to use in a project. When students resort to copying the results (from colleagues or older solutions) they don't learn the required skills, which affects their performance on projects. This often also results on an unnecessary overstress on the teaching support (e.g. student assistants) which need to teach the students one by one how to do something they should have learned through a practical.

As the OCWB, we find it important that plagiarism cases like copying old solutions, especially in the case of lab exercises, are treated by the EC as regular plagiarism. We therefore advise you to discuss this matter with the EC, in order to investigate whether it is necessary to clarify or change the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER). We would like to know which steps the Director of Studies can take, and which one he will take, to make sure that future cases will be treated as plagiarism.

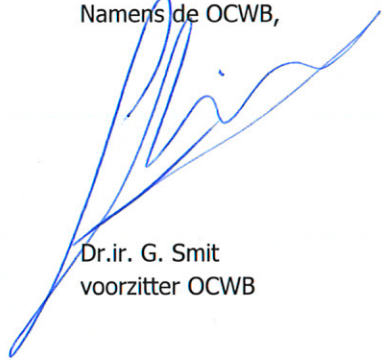
The second issue describes a breach of author's intellectual property with potentially legal consequences for both of these companies. Other examples of such abuse by these companies may include:

- The use of facilities and email addresses of the TU, without permission from the lecturer and the TU.
- The name of the TU is coupled to an exam training. It is stated that it involves in the training lecturers from the TU, while it actually only involves students of the TU.
- The TU systems are used to approach students (e.g. through a forum on Brightspace).

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We are aware of the efforts taken by Legal Affairs on this respect, and we value such steps. The issue and the actions taken by the university are however not known by many in the teaching body. We therefore advice to release a communication on this respect. Such communication should make the lecturers aware of the possibility that their materials are being used without their permission, instruct them on how to check if they are in such situation, and finally provide instructions on how to report to Legal Affairs such violations of their intellectual property. The collection of this information will help Legal Affairs to build a better case against these two companies. The OCWB looks forward to receiving your response on our advice, within 6 weeks.

Met vriendelijke groet,
Namens de OCWB,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr.ir. G. Smit
voorzitter OCWB