# EXPLORING THE MURKY WATERS OF SELF-PLAGIARISM

*Matt Elbeck, Troy University, Dothan*

## ABSTRACT

*Self-plagiarism, the uncited publication of materials previously published by the same author(s), is extensively studied and discussed in Medical, Engineering, Psychological, Computing and Biosciences literature, albeit absent in the Marketing literature. This conceptual paper advances awareness of self-plagiarism for marketing educators by developing a manuscript-based classification based on a survey of the literature and opinions and practices from 26 marketing journal editors. The potential impact of this paper is to educate and offer guidance about self-plagiarism to marketing educators, scholars, editors, reviewers, and publishers.*

*Key words. Self-plagiarism; classification.*

## INTRODUCTION

To help meet reappointment, promotion, and tenure requirements, marketing faculty are encouraged to engage and produce scholarly works expressed as a collection of published manuscripts reflecting scholarship and expertise in one or more fields. Ideally, each of the articles is assumed to be distinctive and original, though as a practical matter, some overlap between the articles will exist, particularly the partial reuse of the literature review and methodology sections. In contrast, the duplicate publication of existing work each surreptitiously presented as original to further ones worth raises a concern that plagiarism or self-plagiarism may have taken place. Though plagiarism and self-plagiarism are related, it is useful to distinguish between these two cheating behaviors. Plagiarism is the use of another's work without giving credit for that work, a form of cheating well known to most educators as a result of the disturbing levels of plagiarized works committed by college students (Born 2003; Braumoeller 2001; Das 2003; Hansen 2003; McCabe 2002), increasing over the years for undergraduate students from 3 percent in 1988 (Karlins et al. 1988), to 13 percent in 2001 (Braumoeller and Gaines 2001) and 21 percent in 2004 (Soto et al. 2004).

A related form of cheating is self-plagiarism, when authors recycle elements of their previously published work without disclosing this fact in subsequently published work (Green 2005; Roig 2008), a grave issue in the biomedical sciences literature whose scholars are purported to engage in self-plagiarism at a level between 10 percent (Steneck 2002) and 14 percent (Schein 2001). A self-plagiarized article dupes the reader into believing the article is original, when it is not; and leads to "the overburdening of the publication process of review and editing, wastefulness, and misrepresentation of one's scholarly record" (Bird 2002, p. 544). As with plagiarism, avoiding perceptions of self-plagiarism requires comprehensive referencing of all material in a manuscript to clearly delineate what is new/original and what is recycled.

This conceptual paper addresses self-plagiarism to help marketing educators become aware of the issue and offer guidance to avoid self-plagiarism. This paper's organization starts with a review of the literature, contributions from scholarly associations and opinions of marketing journal editors to (a) develop an operational definition of self-plagiarism, and (b) offer marketing educators, scholars, reviewers and editors guidance on the recognition and prevention of self-plagiarism.

**Types of Self-Plagiarism**

Self-plagiarism has attracted a variety of descriptive terms (Collberg and Kobourov 2005; Langdon-Neuner 2008), and as many nuanced definitions as there are societies and journals. For example, the editor-in-chief of *Ground Water* limits determination of self-plagiarism to "as long as most of the figures and tables are different, the accompanying text also must be different. Suspicion about overlap grows if two or more figures/tables are the same in both papers" (Anderson 2006, p. 623). A review of the literature by Bretag and Mahmud (2009, p. 198) identify 14 types of self-plagiarism, with five of the more popular ones are explained below.

*Salami-Slicing or Data Fragmentation.* Breaking up a large study dataset into two or more publications may lead readers to believe the results are from two or more studies and/or samples forcing authors to question whether a manuscript containing all the data would better serve a journal's readership (Kassirer and Angell 1995).

*Data Augmentation.* After a study is published, the authors collect additional data to strengthen their original effect and publish as a new study misleading readers that two independent studies have been carried out (Roig

2006). By simply citing the prior work(s), the reader appreciates the development of the work and any notion of self-plagiarism is dismissed.

*Cryptomnesia.* Unknowing reuse of material by an author of their previously published work (Carpenter 2002). In today's information age, a simple online search using the same keywords and author(s) names will help overcome this type of error.

*Recycling.* Covers the gamut from recycling papers presented and/or published at a conference, to repeating the literature section. This includes repeating verbatim sections such as methodology from one paper to another without bothering to make subtle changes to reflect differing data sets (Biros 2000).

*Breach of Copyright.* Title 17 of the United States Code, Sections 102, 401 and 405, Standler (2000, section 3) notes that "Any work created in the USA after March 1, 1989 is automatically protected by copyright, even if there is no copyright notice attached to the work." A generally accepted description of self-plagiarism is the duplication of an author's previously *copyrighted* publication. The act of signing a copyright release form draws legal implications (Biros 2000) whose threat is weak for two reasons. First, the growing number of open access journals limit copyright claims to reproductions for commercial gain (Elbeck and Mandernach 2008); and second, the original author as defendant makes litigation rare because copyright is intended to protect economic rights, not ethical guidance (Bird and Sivilotti 2008). For example, "Gross vs. Seligman (decided in 1914) seems to be the only case in the U.S. copyright history in which the owner of a copyright work won an infringement lawsuit against a self-plagiarist" (Samuelson 1994, p. 22). As such, a manuscript rejected on the grounds of self-plagiarism (copyrighted or not) is at a minimum an example of unethical conduct.

### Detection of Self-Plagiarism

As witnessed in the Scientific literature, "a growing minority are seeking to bump up their CVs through dishonest means" (Giles 2005, p. 258), a similar case may exist in the field of Marketing given similar publication demands placed on marketing faculty.[1] The existence of self-plagiarism in the Sciences and other disciplines has motivated the development of self-plagiarism detection software offered free to editors and reviewers such as WCopyfind (Arts and Geus 2003), CopyCatch (Bull et al. 2001), and the Self-Plagiarism Detection Tool (SPlaT) developed by Collberg et al. (2003); for a fee, CrossCheck and CrossRef developed by iParadigms (Rampell 2008); and publishers developing their own mechanisms such as Elsevier, Blackwell (American Society of Plant Biologists Newsletter 2005) and Emerald. As with any product, one must be mindful of exaggerated claims. Weber-Wulff (2007) applied 10 self-written manuscripts to 14 plagia-

rism detection software products, concluding there were no unequivocally superior self-plagiarism detection software products. Furthermore, the use of Turnitin software to detect self-plagiarism not recommended since once a manuscript is screened, a database entry is made, such that when the manuscript is screened again (in the case of a rejected paper submitted to another journal), the output is a false red flag (Evans 2008; Gerald 2006; Humes, Stiffler, and Malsed 2006; Carbone 2002).

Using self-plagiarism detection metrics such as percentage of material copied and number of separate word strings copied verbatim (Warn 2006); some authors have suggested up to 30 percent of the text may be safely copied from a previous article (Boisvert 2006; Samuelson 1994; Scanlon 2007). Naturally, if the manuscript is a follow-on study, or a replication study, editorial discretion may raise the hurdle to perhaps 60 percent. Relying exclusively on software to detect self-plagiarism will produce false positives and is therefore at best a preliminary but not final test. Furthermore, the use of self-plagiarism detection software may save time, but may backfire as authors perceive an indiscriminate "gotcha" policy (Levin 2003) that is unequivocally faithful to a metric (percentage copied from a previous article without citing that article). Such a process overlooks contextual issues such as the necessity to copy large sections of the literature, methodology and perhaps analytic methods from one's prior work as a means to further the research stream to discover hitherto novel results. In concert with Purdy's (2005) recommendation to balance technology with academic judgment, what is needed is a complementary qualitative description of self-plagiarism covering the gamut from literal copying to poor judgment in paraphrasing work (Park 2004; Nitterhouse 2003; Barnbaum 2002; Braumoeller and Gaines 2001).

### Self-Plagiarism Policies

A handful of scholarly marketing journals have codes of ethics specifically referring to self-plagiarism such as the *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, Journal of International Marketing, Journal of International Business Studies, Young Consumers, International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, and the *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction & Complaining Behavior*.

Policies on self-plagiarism have been developed by publishers such as Emerald Group Publishing Limited and Elsevier, and finally, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) offers materials on publication ethics in science journals including flowcharts to help editors manage self-plagiarism (COPE 2008).

Marketing educator organizations such as the Marketing Management Association, Association for Consumer Research, Academy of Marketing Science, the European Marketing Academy and the Academy of

Marketing do not address self-plagiarism on their web site or in their various publication submission guidelines. Though the American Marketing Association's web site includes references regarding student plagiarism, they do not address the issue of self-plagiarism. In contrast to the various marketing associations, Table 1 summarizes the policies of four leading scholarly societies; the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), and the American Psychological Association (APA).

While the WAME embraces a flexible approach, the sizeable constituencies represented by the ACM, IEEE, and APA consider self-plagiarism a *faux pas* with consequences ranging from permanent blacklisting of the author(s), online announcements of the offending article on the journal's website and communicating the details of self-plagiarism to the educator's Dean and/or Chair.

## Marketing Journal Editor Opinions

To help develop a qualitative approach to self-plagiarism detection; an exploratory study was conducted to discover the opinions and experiences of marketing journal editors. Two sampling frames were used, the first based on a world-wide ranking of 49 marketing journals by Hult et al. (2009), and the second and additional 49 marketing journals purposely selected for their coverage of marketing areas from 261 marketing related journals listed in *Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Marketing* (Cabell 2007). The two samples represent a continuum of marketing journals from the prestigious to the important together with a wide assortment of marketing areas.[2] Each of the 98 journal editors received an invitation e-mail containing a six-item survey[3] seeking editors' opinions and experience about self-plagiarism. The data were collected from February 4 to February 25, 2009. Twenty-six marketing journal editors participated in this study (26% response rate), with half requesting a copy of the results.

*Internationally Ranked Journals.* Fifteen editors and one ex-editor responded (28% response rate) representing the following journals (in alphabetical order): *Marketing Management Journal, Marketing Letters, Marketing Science, Journal of Advertising, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Marketing Education, Journal of Services Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of International Marketing, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of Business Logistics, Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, International Marketing Review, International Journal of Market Research,* and *Industrial Marketing Management.*

Three journals have a policy on self-plagiarism stated in author guidelines, editorial policies and in a code of ethics; one journal plans to implement a policy, while four journals infer policy in copyright documentation and one journal bypasses any self-plagiarism monitoring by focusing on the incremental contribution to the literature. When asked to describe self-plagiarism, consensus from ten editors centers on *uncited substantial similarity with previously published (copyrighted) material.* It is noteworthy that numerous exemptions were included such as replication studies, application of original research questions and conceptual models to existing data sets, conference proceedings which have been revised and improved, reprints, invited papers, and publication of addresses to learned bodies.

*Important Journals.* Ten editors responded (20% response rate) representing the following journals (in alphabetical order); *Consumption Markets and Culture, International Journal of Bank Marketing, International Journal of Advertising, International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction & Complaining Behavior, Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising, Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce, Journal of Internet Commerce, Journal of Strategic Marketing,* and *Young Consumers.*

Three journals have a policy on self-plagiarism, two of which are provided by the publisher. When asked to describe self-plagiarism, seven editors proposed *various degrees of "copy and paste" from previously published copyrighted material.* The editors are keen to point out that the severity of "copy and paste" is limited to data, introduction, model development and conclusions. One editor noted the frustration reviewing an unpublished manuscript already accepted for publication elsewhere. Seven journals safeguard against self-plagiarism using reviewer and editor vigilance, two journals apply self-plagiarism detection software (Turnitin and iThenticate).

*Summary of Findings.* The high 74 percent nonresponse rate may reflect time pressures on editors consumed with various governance, service or scholarly duties, or disinterest in the topic. As shown in Table 2, the majority of editors (18) describe self-plagiarism in terms of substantial reproduction of material from previously published work versus a minority (2) describing self-plagiarism in terms of a percentage of duplication. This finding suggests a qualitative bias to judgments about self-plagiarism.

Over half the editors (16) concede a minimal amount of self-plagiarism in the marketing literature, with a majority of violations relegated to lower tiered journals suggesting two schools of thought about self-plagiarism;

1. The issue is trivial given the rarity of self-plagiarism in high impact journals; this represents 20 percent of the participating editors.
2. The *discovery* of a self-plagiarized manuscript by editors representing 80 percent of the participating editors effects one of two responses;
   a. Self-plagiarism should be addressed in some

**TABLE 1**
**LEARNED SOCIETIES WITH DEFINITIONS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS AGAINST SELF-PLAGIARISM**

| Society | Definition | Implementation |
|---|---|---|
| Association for Computing Machinery (2009). | Verbatim or near-verbatim reuse of significant portions of one's own copyrighted work in subsequent papers where the authors have not disclosed in the subsequent paper the previous publication | Automatic rejection of all current and future submissions for some extended period of time, penalties prescribed by the ACM Codes of Ethics, and possibly statutory/ injunctive relief. |
| World Association of Medical Editors (2009). | Practice of an author using portions of their previous writings on the same topic in another of their publications, without specifically citing it formally in quotes. This practice is widespread and sometimes unintentional, as there are only so many ways to say the same thing on many occasions, particularly when writing the Methods section of an article. Although this usually violates the copyright that has been assigned to the publisher, there is no consensus as to whether this is a form of scientific misconduct, or how many of one's own words one can use before it is truly "plagiarism." | If journals have developed a policy on this matter, it should be clearly stated for authors. |
| Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (2002). | If authors have used their own previously published work(s) as a basis new submission, they are required to cite the previous work(s) and very briefly indicate how the new submission offers substantial novel contributions beyond those of the previously published work(s). | It (self-plagiarism) is unacceptable. |
| American Psychological Association (2009). | Duplicate publication involves publishing the same data more than once. Fragmented (or piecemeal) publication involves dividing the report of a research project into multiple articles. Duplicate or fragmented publications are misleading if they appear to represent independent instances. They can distort the scientific literature, especially in reviews or meta-analyses. | Imitation without appropriate attribution (e.g., Colton, 1820–22, cited in Bartlett 1992, p. 393) is not acceptable. |

way beyond editorial and reviewer diligence, or

b. Self-plagiarism is offensive and must be dealt with aggressively to include rejection of the manuscript, a ban on the author(s) and sharing the evidence with the author(s)' Chair and/or Dean.

For the first school, a simple descriptive analogy would be a naiveté toward unethical conduct – as long as there is no discovery, why bother with preventative measures? The second school expresses divergent responses to self-plagiarism reflecting each editor's unique self-imposed standard of appropriate conduct. Two of the editors recently dealt with substantive self-plagiarism by implementing expedient changes to manuscript submission guidelines and/or ethics policy. The lesson is to focus on proactive education versus reactive but necessary experientially-based solutions.

## TOWARD AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF SELF-PLAGIARISM

In spite of guidance offered by the Commission on Publication Ethics on responding to cases of self-plagiarism following a manuscript review,[4] an operational definition of self-plagiarism remains elusive. In line with guidance on elements of a conceptual paper (see Yadav 2010), we start with a definition of self-plagiarism;

*Self-plagiarism is when an author(s) presents a manuscript (or article) as original that is wholly or in major part a verbatim and uncited copy of their previously publically available work without alerting the editor and readers to this fact.*

In light of this conceptual definition, there are three key points to make. First, the term *previously publically available work* highlights the need to reference one's prior work to include not only that published in peer review scholarly journal(s), but to include non scholarly and non-peer reviewed works as are present in blogs, working papers, newspaper articles, trade magazine articles, etc. Second, copying parts of a previously published manuscript(s) is a minor transgression (see the section entitled 'narrative recycling'), and third, regardless of the motive, failing to reference one's prior work is misleading and unethical, and when intentional, is a form of cheating.

To help authors, editors and reviewers manage self-plagiarism, a novel classification is proposed; one based on the elements of a typical manuscript[5] as opposed to a catalog of self-plagiarism examples as has been the case in the literature. This four-part classification is contextually based on the elements of a typical manuscript (literature review, research question, method, data, analysis, results, and conclusions). The following sections start with the gold standard (original manuscript) followed with its polar opposite (duplicate manuscript), then data recycling and narrative recycling.

*Original Manuscript.* At first glance, defining an original piece of work may seem straightforward, though to date there is an absence of consensus (Ireland 2009; Bretag and Carapiet 2007). The following discussion is offered as a starting point. Original is defined in many ways, perhaps the following two definitions from *The Free Dictionary* (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/original are well suited to the issue of self-plagiarism;

- Preceding all others in time; first (adjective).
- A first form from which other forms are made (noun).

These manuscripts contain novel research questions and conceptual models applied to original data resulting in a unique set of conclusions. The complete absence of

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**TABLE 2**
**SUMMARY OF JOURNAL EDITOR FINDINGS**

| Issue | Response |
| --- | --- |
| Description | Qualitative: 18 editors describe self-plagiarism as substantial reproduction of material from previously published work.<br>Quantitative: 2 editors describe self-plagiarism as percentage duplication. |
| Policy | Six journals have a policy. |
| Safeguards | Twenty-one journals safeguard using editor and reviewer vigilance; 3 use detection software. |
| Action | Twenty-one editors will reject *severely* self-plagiarized manuscripts, 4 editors will forward evidence to the author's Dept. Chair and Dean. |
| Prevalence | Fifteen editors' estimate of self-plagiarism in *all* marketing journals to vary from 1 in 5,000 up to 30 percent for lower tiered journals. |

duplication allows editors and reviewers to focus on the *contribution* of the material to the literature. Practically, this standard may be untenable given the stream of related works a faculty member is often encouraged to publish as a demonstration of both scholarship and expertise, or when development and refinement of existing work is needed (such as presenting work at a conference for helpful feedback). In such cases, it becomes imperative for the author(s) to reference all of their prior publically available work as it appears in the manuscript to include published working papers, blogs, magazine articles, or any other form of publication whether peer reviewed or not. In sum, an original manuscript will always contribute in a meaningful manner to the extant literature.

*Duplicate Manuscript.* Also known as redundant or dual publication, the author submits a verbatim copy or one with cosmetic alterations (title, repositioning sentences, paraphrasing) of their previously published work and submits for publication as an original work in one or more journals, either simultaneously or sequentially. There are those who would turn the other cheek when a self-plagiarized manuscript is published, arguing that manuscript duplication is necessary to reach a much larger audience than a single journal might offer. There are two counter arguments to this erroneous assertion. The first is not to overlook world-wide access to scholarly works provided by libraries with online scholarly databases – a topic not lost on most Business School accrediting agencies requiring adequate library resources for faculty scholarship. Second, the inevitable online search will generate two identical articles begging the question – *which* article is the original?

When submitting a manuscript to a peer review scholarly journal, the same argument holds true for a published conference proceeding or a collection of previously published articles reworked as a single manuscript, because the reader is expecting an *original* article, which they are not. Alternatively, author(s) manipulate their previously published work to arrive at a different conclusion and submit that as an original piece. Specifically, "this is not self-plagiarism if the complete work develops new insights. It is self-plagiarism if the argument, examples, evidence, and conclusion remain the same in two works that only differ in their appearance," (Hexham 1995, p. 1).

The duplicate manuscript attracts a variety of exceptions as suggested by Samuelson (1994), such as the previous work needs to be restated to lay the groundwork for a contribution in the second work, portions of the previous work must be repeated in order to deal with new evidence or arguments. In the same vein, Master and Doctoral dissertation authors are encouraged to extract material for publication to jump start their publication record. As long as the article is not a verbatim copy and paste of a dissertation chapter(s), and if the author(s)

include a footnote in their manuscript noting the original source, then this level of disclosure dismisses any allegation of self-plagiarism.

Editorials, book and software reviews, reprints, invited papers, and published conference addresses are examples of duplication, but convention holds that the reader is not expecting original work and is therefore not deceived. Additional exceptions to duplication exist, as is the case with textbook authors who do this routinely, particularly when their textbooks are translated into other languages in an effort to reach new audiences (Wen and Gao 2007), and importantly, the reader is *not* expecting original work. The exception occurs when authors publish a substantively recycled textbook with a *new* publisher. In this case, authors must give full reference to the original text.

The acid test contrasting an original from a duplicate manuscript occurs when submitting a manuscript for peer review; the work is assumed as original, never previously published in whole or in part elsewhere, nor under consideration by another journal (Fischer and Zigmond 1998). A *de facto* original manuscript is one without prior existence in whole or in part, though for practical purposes such a manuscript may well include the author(s) previously publically available work that must be referenced. Clearly, any allegation of self-plagiarism must be considered in context of the work and whether sufficient information has been offer to assure the reader that though parts of the manuscript have been previously publically available, there is enough material of substance to merit the work as a contribution to the literature. To expand an understanding of the multiple cases of exception are the constructs of narrative and data recycling that are discussed in the following sections.

*Data Recycling.* These manuscripts exhibit reuse of data. For example, an author(s) may have conducted a multi-faceted study resulting in a rich data set, or drawn data from large private and public databases. Generating articles from a large data set (salami-slicing) is not discouraged, particularly when each article is sourced from a different part of the data set. What is questionable concerns the use of alternative research questions, conceptual models or analysis on the original data (*without* citing the original study) resulting in different conclusions leading readers to believe two different samples were used. For data recycling cases, there should be no reason to red flag the manuscripts as long as the data source is provided, and in some cases, justification as to why only a part of the data-set was used.

*Narrative Recycling.* These manuscripts contain reused research questions, conceptual models and generally, similar conclusions applied to different sets of data (e.g., replication studies, longitudinal studies, cross-cultural studies and related works geared to update prior findings) to reinforce previously published conclusions or update the status quo, presented as a paradigm shift or

change. Clearly, not citing the original article misleads the reader into believing each follow-on article is original. Nonetheless, the question at hand is "who much is too much?" Verbatim recycling the introduction and the literature sections may simply reflect laziness on the part of the author not wishing to rephrase material and update the literature. Other sections such as methodology may have previously been written in such a way that improvement in clarity is not considered possible, and finally, the analysis section may be copied from work not related to the topic at hand and may meet the argument for methodology recycling.

*Summary*. As each of the four classes of self-plagiarism manuscript-based constructs (original, duplicate, data recycling and narrative recycling) are shown to attract a variety of exceptions, it should be clear that any metric used as a marker for self-plagiarism must be treated with extreme caution. Given narrative and data recycling are likely to meet the standard of an original manuscript, an original manuscript may contain up to 30 percent uncited duplication. For a duplicate manuscript, over 60 percent uncited duplication would red flag the manuscript and require an explanation from the author(s). Furthermore, even if a *prima facie* case of self-plagiarism is presented, the onerous task is to determine motive as a prelude to any charge of cheating, in spite of the likely allegations of unethical and deceitful conduct. Is the self-plagiarism the result of a faculty member unaware of self-plagiarism, were the co-author(s) also unaware? If self-plagiarism is based on intent to deceive (typically expressed as one's resume or citations list containing multiple cases of self-plagiarized articles), then culpability as a cheat and an appropriate remedy is the likely result.

Table 3 summarizes the preceding discussion by presenting a rubric summarizing the previous sections to help understand the various forms of manuscript self-plagiarism together with questionable areas and exceptions which may be used as a reference for authors, editors and reviewers alike.

## DISCUSSION

By concealing prior publication(s), authors self-plagiarize by duping the reader into believing the article is original. The following sections offer advice to editors and authors to proactively manage against self-plagiarism.

### Journal Guidance

The focus on manuscript elements to establish self-plagiarism is consistent with a focus on *substantive duplication of copyrighted material* voiced by the majority

**TABLE 3**
**A RUBRIC FOR SELF-PLAGIARISM**

| Form | Description | When questionable | Exceptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Original Manuscript | Novel research questions and conceptual models applied to original data resulting in a unique set of conclusions. | *Never*. | Up to 30% duplication allowed. |
| Data Recycling | Manuscripts based on portions of a large data set or massaging data to arrive at new conclusions. | Diminishing returns – may fail to contribute to the literature. | If the recycled data source is cited. |
| Narrative Recycling | Reused research questions, conceptual models and generally similar conclusions applied to *different* sets of data. | Diminishing returns – may fail to contribute to the literature. | Replication, cross-cultural, longitudinal and update studies. |
| Duplicate Manuscript | Over 60% verbatim copy or cosmetic alteration (title, repositioning sentences, paraphrasing) of prior publication(s) submitted for publication as original work in one or more journals, either concurrently or sequentially. | *Always* when submitted to a peer review journal. | Dissertation extracts, textbooks, editorials, book and software reviews, reprints, invited papers, published conference addresses, conference presentation. |

of journal editors. The degree of duplication is naturally a function of context and so the following two-step approach embraces both quantitative and qualitative approaches to deal with rare cases of self-plagiarism.

1. The availability, ease of use and continual improvement of self-plagiarism detection software (iThenticate, SPLaT, CrossCheck, CrossRef) makes a test of each submitted manuscript appropriate for clerical staff. The purpose at this stage is to uncover *gross* cases of self-plagiarism where duplication of the entire manuscript exceeds some cutoff, such as 80 percent. This step is followed with a desk review by the editor to determine the integrity of the software findings, and notwithstanding any problem, decide whether to submit the manuscript for peer review.

2. Based on the proposed self-plagiarism classification and opinions expressed by journal editors, there are two manuscript elements suitable as key markers for self-plagiarism detection. These are narrative recycling elements of *research question(s)* and *conclusions* which should not impose additional burden on editors and reviewers given their familiarity with the literature. It is during the review process where homage must be paid to the critical contribution of high caliber reviewers who serve as the journal's beacon of ethical and scholarly excellence.

Unlike the learned societies listed in Table 1, marketing educators lack a discipline-wide policy on self-plagiarism. As an interim measure, marketing journals might consider the following two interventions to proactively help minimize or eliminate the threat of self-plagiarism.

1. Once a manuscript is submitted for (desk) review, most journals invite authors to confirm their manuscript is not under review or published elsewhere. A more focused phrase would be "a *similar or exact copy* of the manuscript is not under review nor published elsewhere."

2. Once the author is notified of acceptance for publication, a statement to the effect "a *similar or exact copy* of the accepted manuscript will not be submitted for review or publication elsewhere without the express permission of the editor," serves to remind authors of the inappropriateness of self-plagiarism.

Interestingly, the *New England Journal of Medicine* demands authors submit to the editor related manuscripts in preparation or submitted/published elsewhere (Kassirer and Angell 1995). This approach would overwhelm most journal editors lacking the human resources to manage such a task.

Naturally, any allegation of self-plagiarism must start with an invitation to the author(s) to explain the duplica-tion. For mild forms of self-plagiarism the journal editor may exercise discretion by inviting the author to offer an explanation or revise. Finally, it is worth noting that in any case, care is taken particularly when two or more authors are involved, as the perpetrator of self-plagiarism may not include all the authors. Editorial decisions regarding the management and possible remedy against self-plagiarism must not be taken lightly, as the final arbiter of self-plagiarism are you and I, the consumers of published scholarly works.

**Author Guidance**

If one assumes the highly selective "A" journals will limit publication to high quality original works, then there exists those journals will review and publish works which *may* be self-plagiarized. The following two pieces of advice will help avoid perceptions of self-plagiarism.

1. If in any doubt, advise the editor that the submitted work is based on prior work which is cited in the submitted manuscript. This is particularly important when the work has been published in a conference proceeding (copyrighted or not).

2. Treat your prior publications (peer reviewed or not, scholarly or not) by citing your work as you would cite any other work.

Transparency is welcomed by editors who will likely invite authors to recast their manuscript as reported by a number of journal editors participating in this study.

*Preventative Education:* Marketing journal editor opinions suggest that authors are on their best behavior when submitting manuscripts to the more prestigious journals; relegating self-plagiarism as a rare event. However, there may be a group of self-plagiarizers who target the very low impact and more obscure journals. It is up to the moral compass of all marketing journal editors not to throw caution to the wind, but exercise care when judging a manuscript. If prevention cures, it behooves journal and conference proceedings editor(s) and Marketing associations to act proactively by educating prospective authors in a suitable forum such as manuscript submission guidelines as well as panels or discussion boards to discuss what is and what is not acceptable.

Additionally, marketing educators should educate one another and their students. The latter might be served by introducing self-plagiarism to master's and doctoral students in an ethics course or as part of a research design course. Finally and ideally, established scholars must avoid any perception of self-plagiarism in their status as role models for up and coming scholars.

**The Future**

Self-plagiarism has spawned numerous studies confirming its existence; examining the merits of self-plagiarism detection software; estimating the proportion of

those who self-plagiarize; and seek out scholars with questionable publication records. In contrast, we need studies to design and test strategies to *prevent* self-plagiarism such as;

- Guidance as part and parcel of a journal submission and manuscript acceptance process,
- Preventative education, and
- The influence of role models such as highly cited marketing scholars.

Whether marketing educators should make a big fuss about self-plagiarism and its ethical implication is up to the body marketing. The lure of self-plagiarism manifests itself as a near effortless opportunity to pad resumes and to meet or exceed imposed publication demands. It is not inconceivable that developments in self-plagiarism detection software together with the power of the Internet will cause pause for those contemplating self-plagiarism, a perception of which may influence decisions about appointment, reappointment, promotion and tenure. It is imperative that what is and what is not considered self-plagiarism is well communicated as a means to focus attention toward *bona fide* contributions to the marketing literature. Scholars must not mislead readers in a self-indulgent quest to enhance their self-worth.

## ENDNOTES

[1] The author has personally witnessed four cases of self-plagiarism; two cases of multiple article duplication resulted in faculty employment termination, one case of a duplicate manuscript resulted in the manuscript's rejection, and one case of an 'A' journal article submitted for a conference proceeding – outcome unknown.

[2] Suggesting one sample contains 'better' journals than another is premature given that a universally applicable set of journal ranking may not be possible (Polonsky and Whitelaw 2005), and a review of 16 different ranking studies show rank consistency for the top three to six marketing journals, and widely divergent results for the remaining set of marketing journals (Hawes and Keillor 2002).

[3] A copy of the survey is available by contacting the author.

[4] For manuscript review, see [http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/01A_Redundant_Submitted.pdf], and once published, see [http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/01B_Redundant_Published.pdf].

[5] The move toward a balanced approach to self-plagiarism in part draws from the Guidelines on Good Publication Practice (Committee on Publishing Ethics 2003, p. 200) who defines redundant publication as "when two or more papers, without full cross reference, share the same hypothesis, data, discussion points, or conclusions."

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