

The background of the slide features a close-up photograph of a white ceramic coffee cup filled with dark coffee, sitting on a wooden desk. In the foreground, a spiral-bound notebook with lined pages is open, and a bright blue pen lies diagonally across it. A laptop is partially visible in the background, out of focus.

How to avoid Self-plagiarism

**Anthony
Hunziker**
EPFL Library

**Coffee Lecture
#09**
18th May, 2021

- Understand what is and what is not self-plagiarism

Plagiarism and self-plagiarism: definition

- Plagiarism is letting the readers believe that you are the author of what they read though you are not
- Self-plagiarism is letting the readers believe that what they read is a new input of yours though it's not
- Both can be done intentionally or by negligence

Does everything should be new?

- Referring to our own previous works is quite inevitable and even useful
- Not a problem as long as it's done appropriately

Solutions to self-plagiarism: self-quotation

- Extract highlighted in the text (e.g. in quotes, etc.) and referenced
- Doesn't require an authorization (citation is a right)
- Problems :
 - too much self-quotation can be unacceptable to some editors
 - can be awkward

Solutions to self-plagiarism: paraphrase

- Extract rephrased and referenced but doesn't need to be highlighted in the text
- Doesn't require an authorization (citation is a right)
- Problems :
 - can't always be done
 - result less clear or even altered
 - can be felt as a waste of time

- Definition by the Text Recycling Research Project (TRRP):
“Text recycling is the reuse of textual material (prose, visuals, or equations) in a new document where (1) the material in the new document is identical to that of the source (or substantively equivalent in both form and content), (2) the material is not presented in the new document as a quotation (via quotation marks or block indentation), and (3) at least one author of the new document is also an author of the prior document.” (TRRP, 2020)

Text recycling ≠ self-plagiarism

- Self-plagiarism:
 - Unethical
 - Done intentionally or by negligence
- Text recycling:
 - Neutral term
 - May be appropriate or not according to different factors

- TRRP is currently working on setting guidelines for editors and authors
- Guidelines for editors by BioMed Central in collaboration with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE):
 - “ How much text is recycled
 - Where in the article the text recycling occurs
 - Whether the source of the recycled text has been acknowledged
 - Whether the article is a research or non-research article
 - Whether there is a breach of copyright
 - In some circumstances, cultural norms at the time and place of publication” (BioMed Central)

- Self-plagiarism is a complex issue
 - Detect similarities is easy
 - Formally declare the presence of self-plagiarism is not easy
 - Each case must be handled individually
- Transparency: best cure against self-plagiarism
 - Be clear on your intentions
 - Communicate with the editors
 - Send copies of every of your related works when submitting

- BIOMED CENTRAL. *Text recycling guidelines* [online]. [Accessed 14 May 2021]. Available from: https://publicationethics.org/files/Web_A29298_COPE_Text_Recycling.pdf
- TEXT RECYCLING RESEARCH PROJECT, 2020. What is Text Recycling? – Text Recycling Research Project. [online]. [Accessed 11 May 2021]. Available from: <https://textrecycling.org/what-is-text-recycling/> Communicate with the editors

- COPE, 2020. *Understanding text recycling: COPE August 2020 webinar* [online]. [Accessed 14 May 2021]. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pvbn5M0eENA>
- EPFL, 2021. *Directive concerning research integrity and good scientific practice at EPFL* [online]. 1st May 2009, status as at 25th January 2021. LEX 3.3.2. [Accessed 14 May 2021]. Available from: https://www.epfl.ch/about/overview/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/3.3.2_principe_integrite_recherche_an.pdf
- TEXT RECYCLING RESEARCH PROJECT, 2021. *Text Recycling Research Project – A multi-institution, NSF-funded initiative investigating text recycling in STEM research*. [online]. [Accessed 14 May 2021]. Available from: <https://textrecycling.org/>

Thank you !

go.epfl.ch/coffee-lectures

Contact & credits

- Anthony Hunziker
Anthony.hunziker@epfl.ch



2021 Anthony Hunziker.
This is an open-access document
distributed under the terms of the
Creative Commons Attribution License