

Do you want to avoid plagiarism in academic activities? This startup found how to do it

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Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention service that promotes academic integrity, efficient assessment and feedback, and supports the advancement of academic results in all subjects and educational levels.

The company was created in 1998, when four students from the University of California, Berkeley made an application in order to review work between students.

The students had to hand in their projects and they made comments to each other, but these young people discovered that their classmates loaned their work and copied it. To help end this situation, they launched this review instrument in 2000.

Today Turnitin is an ally in fostering original thinking and authentic learning by developing cutting-edge technology that enables institutions to discourage plagiarism, provide formative feedback, obtain comprehensive reports, and investigate academic misconduct. It currently serves more than 15,000 institutions around the world and is headquartered in Oakland, California, with international offices in the UK, the Netherlands, Australia, Korea, India, and throughout Latin America.

How does it work?

Turnitin uses state-of-the-art technology to do different activities, one is to check the coincidence and similarity between texts. "A piece of writing is taken and we review it against databases that the Internet has, which has published articles, scientific journals and works by other students. Similarly, we have additional technology to determine authorship, checking if they are the words and the student's work itself," says Catalina Londoño, manager of Professional and Educational Services for Latin America of the company. They also have technology to evaluate student work.

Comprehensive and remote evaluation

Gradescope is Turnitin's tool to lessen the burden on teachers. "It is a way to collect and review information and make it digital; after making a transparent and rapid evaluation of the students, then reviewing the performance of the students in those activities that we are evaluating them," says Londoño.

Gradescope strengthens the entire assessment process, works digitally and even with the help of artificial intelligence to group student responses. It also reduces evaluation time by up to 80% and offers advanced learning statistics. This means that the one who makes the evaluation is not the machine, but the teacher, but the former helps them to group the works. The use of dynamic rubrics for scoring and the flexibility of the tool promote transparent, rapid and quality evaluation.

The experience of teachers has been positive, as is the case of Rómulo Chumacero, associate professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Chile, who shares how he uses the tools with his students.

"With the Turnitin similarity check, I can do a quick and

rigorous check of the work submitted by students and compare it with databases of documents from all over the world,” Chimacero says in a statement.

“Gradescope has been the most pleasant surprise that I had in terms of digital tools. It is a tool that allows you to design and correct evaluations from a friendly platform. It allows always applying the same standards to the evaluations of all students, it is very flexible regarding the type of evaluation to be carried out and it is very easy for students to use ”, he adds.

Courtesy Turnitin

Academic integrity

Originality was released in 2020 and uses similarity check technology. On this platform, students are allowed, through Draft Coach, to be able to self-manage and review the quality of their sources, their citation and referencing practices, to be able to observe the percentage of similarity of their works and to support their learning process, improving the habits of writing and cited.

With this tool, teachers have more time to ensure the quality of projects and academic integrity in their classes, by providing relevant and timely information that facilitates the identification of opportunities for dialogue and detection of faults of students who require more help.

Academic and educational trends

The interviewee points out that the pandemic accelerated digitization in the academic world. “We have seen changes in the way our clients have implemented their services in times

of pandemic. We have seen changes in the way we use them, obviously we are forced to move to this virtual world. It seems that digital is a trend that will remain, until we feel comfortable to return to the classroom and the face-to-face world... We will probably end up in a hybrid and well-globalized model ", explains the executive.

The great thinkers of the institutions in Latin America and worldwide can distinguish an opportunity to communicate and have the possibility to share courses between institutions. "Surely at some point a mix can be made and the idea is that integrity can also be guaranteed in these new virtual and eventually hybrid versions, which seems to be the trend from now on", adds the expert.

The pursuit and promotion of academic integrity has three important components, Londoño says. The first has to do with institutional and governmental policies to promote the integrity of good practices, the second is the pedagogical tools, that of the teacher with the student in their daily work; and the third is the technology to mix these three elements so that the promotion of academic integrity is a complement among all the ingredients.

From Mexico to Latin America

Currently, the company has clients that include higher and higher education institutions, on average 15,000 globally and more than 34 million students worldwide. Turnitin supports institutions and empowers teachers to efficiently evaluate and safeguard institutional reputation.

Among the most prominent clients in Mexico are: Editorial UNAM, Metropolitan Autonomous University, University of Monterrey, Autonomous University of Nuevo León, Anáhuac University, among other institutions.

The most important and largest Turnitin office in Latin

America is in Mexico where they have a specific Latin American team that will serve the Mexican and Spanish market.

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