Copyrights, Digital Rights Management and Plagiarism

Copyright and digital rights management are perhaps the most 'ambiguous' areas for e-learning. Although printed resources like books, journals and novels as well as music pieces and movies are protected in terms of copyright and intellectual property rights for many years, this is not the case for digital resources. Violation of the rights in digital media is frequently seen, and many digital media products can be easily copied and shared without permission.

Since it is particularly difficult and time consuming to design and produce digital instructional materials, it seems like an appropriate solution to use existing materials especially for developing countries. Based on the assumption that the general purpose of the Internet is to provide access to information and to share it, it is quite rational to produce digital instructional materials under a special license, and to allow re-usage and as contributions to other resources. As long as instructors prepare digital instructional materials and share them with others, both instructors and students as well as institutions will benefit from this process. Although it seems like a sensible model, the rights of the material providers should be taken under protection.

The whole education system is shaped around continuous change, development, learning and innovation. Dissemination of innovation and development is only possible by contributing to the existing ideas to enrich them with new dimensions via using, improving and advancing the existing resources.

1. Copyright

Copyright does not protect the ideas, but protects the way used to present these ideas. There are two important purposes of copyright: personal and social. Personal copyright is to award and encourage those who create, produce or design works via copyright, so as to allow them to create more. Social copyright, on the other hand, is to provide access to original and innovative works by everybody after a certain period of time (Tonta, 2003).

There are so many information resources on the Internet, yet this does not mean that they can be used freely without permission. It is practically very easy to access, download and copy many e-books, journals and multimedia applications, in which case copyright is violated due to use without permission (Yılmaz, 2005). Hence, one needs to obtain permission from the creator, owner or designer for using their information, work or idea, and to cite references properly.

Instructors may want to use some parts of books, original articles, images found on the web etc. in their e-course content. When such materials are used for academic and educational purposes, there is a certain amount of freedom in terms of copyrights. Audio and visual materials are allowed to be used in face-to-face learning environments. In the e-learning process, on the other hand, photos, maps, cartoons and other printed materials can only be used with the condition that they are not used in the same order with the copyrighted programme (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright & Zvacek, 2003).

2. Intellectual Rights

Nowadays, intellectual rights are considered as a bridge between technology, economics and commerce. Intellectual rights, in general, are rights on such products as trademarks, patents, works, production and publications. Regulations about the intellectual rights are for the benefits of society. Studies on intellectual property are globally carried out by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

3. Digital Rights Management

Digital Rights Management (DRM) has been developed to take license rights of digital media (e.g. movies, music) under control since it is very easy to copy and use such media without permission. DRM is a technology used to control the use and distribution of digital products you can buy from online stores such as songs, albums, movies, software or games. It works on the basis of encryption and other similar computer technologies.

4. Creative Commons

Creative Commons (CC) is a non-profit organisation devoted to expanding the flexibility and sharing of creative works on legal terms. Creative Commons movement has been started by a group of experts on intellectual rights, with the support of the Public Domain Organisation. It has enabled the release of several copyright licenses, known as Creative Commons licenses, to the public free of charge where creators share some of the rights they reserve with the public under specially designed contracts. Designed and developed on the basis of Free Software Foundation's GNU General Public License (GNU GPL) texts, Creative Commons licenses help you share your work freely with the public for certain uses and under certain conditions without totally or partially renouncing them.

Creative Commons' free, easy-to-use copyright licenses provide a simple, standardized yet unusual way to give public permission to share and use creative work of others on certain conditions determined by themselves. Supporting the non-commercial use of works, Creative Common licenses have taken a big step from traditional concept of "all rights reserved" to "some rights reserved" (creativecommons.org).

Table 7.1. Creative Commons License Types

Short Name	Logo of License	Conditions	Information
By-nc-nd		· Specify the first owner of the product · Not use commercially · Protect the original version	This license is the most restrictive of all six main licenses. It only allows others to download your work and share it with others provided that they credit you, yet they cannot make changes in any way or use it for commercial purposes.

By-nc-sa		· Specify the first owner of the product · Not use commercially · Protect the first license model	This license allows others to remix, tweak or build upon your work provided that they credit you, they do not use it for commercial purposes, and they license their new creation under identical terms.
By-nc		· Specify the first owner of the product · Not use commercially	This license allows others to remix, tweak or build upon your work provided that they credit you and they do not use it for commercial purposes, yet they do not have to license their derivative works on identical terms.
By-nd		· Specify the first owner of the product · Protect the original version	This license allows others to redistribute your work for either commercial or non-commercial purposes, provided that its original form is kept, and they credit you.
By-sa		· Specify the first owner of the product · Protect the first license model	This license allows others remix, tweak or build upon your work even for commercial purposes provided that they credit you and license the new creation under identical terms. This license is often compared to 'copyleft free and open source software licenses. All new works based on yours are to carry the same license, so any derivatives shall also allow commercial use. This is the license used by Wikipedia, and is recommended for materials that would benefit from incorporating content from Wikipedia and similarly licensed projects.
By		· Specify the first owner of the product	This license allows others distribute, remix, tweak and build upon your work, even for commercial purposes, provided that they credit you for the original work. This is the most accommodating of all licenses offered. It is recommended for maximum dissemination and use of licensed materials.

Source: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/?lang=en
http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_Commons

5. Academic Ethics and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism by students used to be easily spotted before the widespread use of the Internet when they could not reach 'off-the-shelf' homework on the web. Today, the main purpose of information technologies has unfortunately become 'information plagiarism' instead of 'information sharing'.

As mentioned by Kökdemir (2003), American Psychological Association (http://www.apa.org) offers some suggestions to educators about this subject:

1. Give information to your students about plagiarism. Although it is a slight possibility, some students do not know that plagiarism is unethical.
2. Apply clear sanctions in case of plagiarism. In most universities, students that commit plagiarism fail the class, even though they fulfil all other criteria to pass.
3. Limit the resources. Instead of saying "you can find information wherever you want", guide them to use specific books, journals or websites while doing their homework. This is an important approach for preventing internet plagiarism.
4. Check their homework for real.

As mentioned by Güngör-Kırçıl and Karagüler (2007), Hexham (2005) lists plagiarism and types of plagiarism as follows:

1. Straight plagiarism

   It is the most commonly used form of plagiarism. One or two words are removed from or added to the original sentence. As the original author is not specified, quotation marks are not used.

2. Plagiarism using a citation

   Although the real author is acknowledged, there is plagiarism because the original text is reproduced with only minor changes without using either quotation marks or footnotes.

3. Simple plagiarism using a footnote

   References are used, but quotation marks are still not used. There are some differences in words so the new paragraph looks different from the original.

4. Complex plagiarism using a footnote

   There may be more different words previously, even new sentences added.

5. Plagiarism with hanging quotations

   Quotation marks are used for only one part of the text, not for all.

6. Paraphrasing as plagiarism

   This form of plagiarism is committed by reconstituting the text in author's own words.

7. Self-plagiarism

No one can be expected to plagiarise his/her own work, yet revised thesis, articles, etc. may be examples.

There are software programmes for detecting plagiarism, which give detailed information about the degree of plagiarism in a text. Turnitin, Ithenticate and search engines like Google are among commonly used plagiarism software.

6. Conclusion

Cheating on the Internet is very easy, so it is tempting for students. We should inform our students about copyright as well as ethical issues. As instructors, we can also use plagiarism detection software to reveal unwanted attempts, and to make learners aware of what they are really doing.

7. References

Güngör-Kırçıl, A. & Karagüler, T. A. (2007). Ödev Kopyacılığında İnternetin Rolü Ve Önlemler. IX. Akademik Bilişim Konferansı Bildirileri, Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, Kütahya.

Hexham, I. (2005). "The Plague of Plagiarism: Academic Plagiarism Defined". Department of Religious Studies, University of Calgary. URL: http://people.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/content/articles/plague-of-plagiarism.html

http://creativecommons.org/about/history

http://www.apa.org/monitor/feb02/plagiarism.html

http://www.eimza.gen.tr/templates/resimler/File/arastirma_dosyalari/Sayisal_Hak_Yonetimi_Raporu.pdf

http://www.elearnspace.org/managing/copyright.htm

Kökdemir, D. (2003). Aşırmacılık (plagiarism) ve İnternet. PiVOLKA, 2(10), 19.

Simonson, M. R., Smaldino, S. E., Albright, M. & Zvacek, S. (2003). Teaching and Learning at a Distance: Foundations of Distance Education (2. Baskı). USA: Prentice Hall.

Tonta, Y. (2003). Elektronik Bilgi & Telif Hakları. 30.07.2009 tarihinde http://yunus.hacettepe.edu.tr/~tonta/courses/fall2003/kut655/telif2003.htm adresinden erisilmistir.

Yılmaz, M. (2005). Teknik Açıdan İnternet ve Telif Hakkı. Türk Kütüphaneciliği, 19(1), 128-138.