



Plagiarism detection has increased awareness at CBS

With its 20,000-plus students, the state-run Copenhagen Business School (CBS) is the biggest school of economics in northern Europe. It has a very strict policy on plagiarism of research and student theses. Last year, following thorough evaluations, CBS decided to start using URKUND to identify textual similarities in submitted student theses – a move that quickly increased the detected volume of plagiarism.

Joshua Kragh Bruhn is an information specialist at CBS, and is responsible for the administration of URKUND. He also supervises the staff in their use of the plagiarism-detection program.

“We switched to URKUND in spring 2014, having previously used a competing tool. We were very dissatisfied with the previous plagiarism detection program, so we carried out a methodical review to find the right program,” says Joshua Kragh Bruhn.



The number of incidences of plagiarism detected in student essays has increased since URKUND was introduced, and this has led to discussion and increased awareness,” says Joshua Kragh Bruhn, an information specialist at CBS.

Support and user-friendliness very important

Joshua says that he found deficiencies in all the plagiarism-detection programs they investigated, and that it is hard to achieve perfect textual matches. But the crucial factors were user-friendliness and support, and URKUND proved superior in these respects.

“URKUND is extremely easy to use. It is email-based, submission of texts is easy, and you get a very clear report back. This is very valuable to us – the more complicated the system the less willing our staff will be to use it,” says Joshua.

He says that helping staff with plagiarism detection and giving them guidance used to take a great deal of time. This led to considerable reticence about using the tool.

Some of CBS's essays are still submitted as hard copy, though the university will gradually be introducing complete digital submission. The digital essays are submitted using the learning platform Moodle, which Joshua thinks is very compatible with URKUND.

"The hard-copy essays must first be scanned before they are run through URKUND, and you don't have to go through the learning platform – it's a straightforward process that is run directly via email," says Joshua.

Punitive or pedagogical tool?

The number of incidences of plagiarism detected increased significantly during the initial period of use of URKUND.

"We've definitely noticed an increasing incidence of plagiarism since URKUND was introduced, and previously there was of course a high level of undetected incidence. It was far too time consuming for the teaching staff to carry out their own plagiarism checks. The automation has led to a bigger haul of perpetrators," says Joshua.

Given the increased volume of detected incidences of plagiarism, the ongoing discussion at CBS is about how the teaching staff are to use URKUND – as an indicative pedagogical tool or as a punitive detection system?

"Some teachers use it as a detection system, but most of them use URKUND's plagiarism reports as a basis for discussion with the students about plagiarism. My personal view is that plagiarism detection should be the final stage in a programme of preventive measures to combat plagiarism. And I'm convinced that CBS is moving in this direction," says Joshua Kragh Bruhn.

