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Turnitin: Friend, not foe

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RIT students come from a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds. In my experience, students are conversant at various levels in their citation skills. Some cultures have different expectations when using other people's scholarship. Faculty who are teaching classes where there are written assignments and projects, it is imperative that students have an understanding of how and when to give credit to an original author. If students do not give attribution to their information sources, plagiarism has taken place. Plagiarism is using another person's ideas or creative work without giving credit to that person.

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In Reporter's February 23, 2007 issue (page 7), Brian Adeloye criticizes the use of Turnitin at RIT. During a phone conversation with Brian on February 14, 2007 concerning various aspects of Turnitin, he stated that he has never used the tool. To have a valid opinion about Turnitin's academic value, I believe that it is important to use the tool to understand where its value (or not) may lie. RIT faculty use of Turnitin is one of the most reliable and swiftest ways to evaluate student work and to prevent awarding fraudulent grades, a fair practice for ALL students. RIT faculty have an obligation to ensure that students are honestly creating their own work by correctly using others' scholarship.