



Paper Mills Sites as Learning Tools

“The papers on the paid sites are better than those on the free ones, but that’s not saying much. The first essay I encountered at one site cost \$25.95 and still had two errors in the title alone.”

--David Plotz

“New Frontiers in Cheating”

Search the BigNerds web site (<http://bignerds.com/index.php>) or School Sucks (<http://www.schoolsucks.com>) to find a research paper or essay similar to one that might be required for your class. Unfortunately, you need to register for both the BigNerds and School Sucks websites; a process that requires you to use your e-mail address. My suggestion is that you create a separate e-mail account to use for this purpose. Because paper mill sites would prefer that you buy a paper rather than accept one of the free papers, most “free” paper mill sites only offer a limited selection of free papers. Big Nerds and School Sucks are no exception. Therefore, you might have some trouble finding a Big Nerd or School Sucks paper that exactly fits your subject.

Please Note: BigNerds, like most paper mill sites, tries to direct you to papers for which you will have to pay. The search engine clearly visible on the top of the page does not take you to free papers. Make sure you are searching for free papers; not being directed to a pay-for-paper website.

Once you have found an appropriate paper, evaluate the quality of the paper using the Core Skills Writing Rubric; the rubric I will use to evaluate your papers. You may obtain a copy of this rubric at <http://writing.stevenlberg.info/tutorials/core/>.

As you evaluate the paper, assume that the BigNerds or School Sucks paper was written by one of your colleagues in class. What grade do you think I would award? What advice would you give the author to improve the paper? If you cannot find an appropriate paper at BigNerds or School Sucks, Margaret Fain and Peggy Bates (2005) have identified approximately “250 Paper Mill Sites” on the Internet as well as “71 Subject Specific Paper Mills.” You could always try to find a paper at one of these sites.

Teaching Students to Cheat?

Some might question the wisdom of providing students with the directions about how to find Internet paper mills. Especially because a paper mill web site frequently is one of the first links that come up after doing a Google search, students already know that such sites exist.

Professors can comfortably use the papers at the paper mill sites for educational purposes. That is the reason these sites claim to exist.

References and Resources

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Last updated: 22 July 2013

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