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## Comparing Notes: AI Detectors

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**Dale Pike** 12-10-2024 02:45:00 PM

What is the current sentiment surrounding AI detection applications on your campuses? At Virginia Tech ...

### 1. Comparing Notes: AI Detectors

0 Like

Dale Pike

EDUCAUSE Mentor

Actions ▼

Posted 12-10-2024 02:45:00 PM

Reply



What is the current sentiment surrounding AI detection applications on your campuses? At Virginia Tech we've decided not to provide AI detection software due to demonstrated unreliability and the potential consequences of false positives. I know of several other universities that have taken a similar position, but I'm also aware of many that provide access (many through TurnItIn's AI detector) and try to make sure faculty understand the limitations of the technology.

I am confident that we've acted in a principled way, but I'm not happy with the dilemma this  
**EDUCAUSE** faculty. Without institutional tools, many have likely turned to free web-based AI detectors - a concerning trend that raises serious questions about student privacy and intellectual property rights. Those who avoid these unauthorized tools must either navigate academic integrity concerns while relying purely on intuition or just ignore the problem. Our long-term focus is on considering different assessment strategies, but the short-term reality is incredibly ambiguous.

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Dale Pike  
Associate Vice Provost  
Virginia Tech  
[dalepike@vt.edu](mailto:dalepike@vt.edu)  
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## 2. RE: Comparing Notes: AI Detectors

0 Like

PH

Patrick Hymus

Posted 12-11-2024 06:15:00 AM

Reply



Hi Dale,

I propose a third option to either viewing this as an academic integrity concern or ignoring the problem. Our institution has been encouraging educators to frame this challenge as an opportunity to create a culture of integrity, emphasizing the need for critical thinking with a focus on critiquing AI tool output. Encourage ethical, transparent use of tools when appropriate and integrate additional assessment methods to complement written ones for a more thorough assessment of learning.

AI content detectors do not work. Viewing AI tools solely through the lens of academic integrity is a game of cat and mouse. You'll only catch the uninformed user or English language learner. The only solution is changing how learning is assessed. And the starting point is for all educators to learn how these tools work and begin stress test their existing assessments to identify vulnerabilities and opportunities to invigilate, moderate, or integrate tools into assessment strategies.

**EDUCAUSE** s

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### 3. RE: Comparing Notes: AI Detectors

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JV

Jennifer VanWagner[Actions](#) ▼

Posted 12-11-2024 06:25:00 AM

[Reply](#)

Dale, we use Copleaks. It enables both plagiarism and "AI detection." Even though we provide it, it is stressed that this should not be the measurement of integrity. As you mentioned, even if we had not offered it, others may use other detection tools and we would not have any "consistency." I also stress that no AI detector is 100%. As AI is changing every day, by the time a company deploys changes, there could have been three to four updates, and it is already behind. The amount of information that is added daily to AI is nearly impossible for detectors to keep up with (in my opinion).

Even before the swarm of the availability of AI tools, there were existing tools that could "rewrite" information found from Google. I relate it to the first days of Google where we didn't have to go to libraries any longer to find information. Google was "cheating" at first. Now, it is normal. It has become the new technical adjustment and as you mentioned, it can be ambiguous for the immediate future. This was an article I shared on LinkedIn. All I can do is stress how important it is to review with an open mind and caution. As things that I tested with full AI were identified as human and the full human was identified as AI.

Jennifer VanWagner  
Educational Technology Manager  
Ohio Northern University  
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#### 4. RE: Comparing Notes: AI Detectors

1

Like

HB

Heather (HB) Brown

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Posted 12-11-2024 07:03:00 AM

Reply



Hi Dale,

GO HOKIES...alum here '90 and '94. :)

Ah, the AI detector dilemma! I follow the thoughts of Ethan Mollick, Laura Dumin, and many others in the education field = AI detectors do not work. And students already use ways around these tools such as [Humanize.ai](https://humanize.ai)

At our institution, we use Turnitin's AI Indicator as part of our broader Turnitin suite for plagiarism detection. While I personally share concerns about the reliability of AI detection software as mentioned above, the decision to enable this feature was not mine to make. Faculty have discretion over whether or not to consider the AI Indicator in their evaluations, and we provide clear recommendations for its use. Specifically, we emphasize that the AI Indicator should never be used as sole evidence of AI usage; instead, it should serve as a starting point for dialogue with students. In my opinion, we need to be COACHES not CATCHERS of unethical use of AI generated content.

We encourage faculty to approach the AI detection issue with a focus on education and transparency:

- Engage students in conversations about the ethical use of generative AI tools, emphasizing their limitations and the importance of proper attribution and citation.
- Highlight that AI tools do not "understand" content but predict plausible text, making fact-checking essential when using these tools.
- Reinforce academic integrity principles by explaining why misrepresenting AI-generated work as one's own is unethical.

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Your concerns about faculty turning to unauthorized, web-based AI detectors is warranted. We have consistently shown that AI detectors have high error rates, including false positives that unfairly implicate students and false negatives that fail to identify actual misuse. Moreover, some research suggests these tools may disproportionately flag work by non-native English speakers-an equity concern.

I think the AI indicator gives faculty a false sense of 'security' and reliability in that they see this indicator much the same way as the Turnitin plagiarism checker that they've been accustomed to using for YEARS because it has been extremely reliable. But were in a different space now, and AI detection/plagiarism isn't the same thing.

I'm not sure if this helped or added to this complex situation. What I do know is that assessments will need to change in education and that's the hard truth. And change is hard...I see all of this as a behavioral change issue, because without addressing behavioral change, even the most well-planned out initiatives will probably fail. We tend to resistance change due to psychological factors like **fear of the unknown, loss of control, or disruption of routines...**

Apologize for the lengthy response...looking forward to what others say about all this. Heather

**Heather M. Brown, Ph.D.**

Instructional Designer  
Center for Teaching Excellence  
Tidewater Community College

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➤ Original Message

**5. RE: Comparing Notes: AI Detectors**

1

Like

LN

**EDUCAUSE**Leif Nelson

Actions ▾

Posted 12-11-2024 09:01:00 AM

Reply



Hi Dale!

Boise State participated in the TII pilot last year (or rather we didn't opt out of the new feature release) but ultimately decided not to continue with licensing AI detection, borrowing a lot of our talking points from Vanderbilt's guidance on the topic at the time.

Just a few months ago, we revisited the topic, for some of the same reasons you've mentioned. After reviewing the current literature, participating in some vendor demos (GPT Zero, Turnitin), and discussing with our faculty senate and other relevant committees, we recommitted our stance against AI detectors.

It continues to be a challenge, but we feel that our rationale is defensible:

- The margin of error, and risk of false positives (and false accusations, especially with regard to certain populations) is too high.
- The alternatives like good (e.g., transparent) assignment design and open communication with students about academic integrity, while imperfect, are also good pedagogy.

Here is a page summarizing the stance in context with training and other resources.

--

**DR. LEIF NELSON**

Executive Director

Learning Technology Solutions

Research Computing

Office of Information Technology

Boise State University

[▶ Original Message](#)**6. RE: Comparing Notes: AI Detectors**

0

Like

MJMark Jones

Actions ▾

Posted 12-11-2024 09:04:00 AM

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Reply



Total agreement.

[➤ Original Message](#)

## 7. RE: Comparing Notes: AI Detectors

1

Like

DS

Dave Strite

Actions ▾

Posted 12-11-2024 06:14:00 PM

Reply



Hi Dale, Here is an FAQ from the Provost's Office at University of Virginia.  
(<https://provost.virginia.edu/subsite/genai/faqs>)

May I use software tools to detect if a student has used Gen-AI on an assignment?

**Answer:** The University discourages instructors from using Gen-AI detectors for the purpose of detecting academic fraud. The task force report notes that "these [detecting] tools are notoriously unreliable and hence using them is usually counterproductive and can be risky." (p. 6) Most detectors add submitted content to their databases; because students' original work is (in most cases) their intellectual property, instructors may not upload a student's original work to those detectors. Guides for students on how to "trick" AI content detectors are widely available.

-----  
Dave Strite

AVP for Support Services and Learning Technologies

University of Virginia

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