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ALGONQUIN COLLEGE
Senior Vice President, Academic

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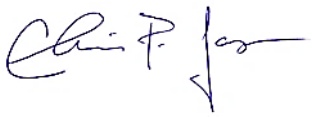
**DATE:** January 2nd, 2024

**TO:** Faculty, Chairs, and Deans, Associate Vice President, Experiential Learning & Innovation, Associate Vice President, Global, Online & Corporate Learning

**FROM:** Chris Janzen, Acting Senior Vice President, Academic



**SUBJECT:** Update on the Use of Turnitin AI Detector

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Dear academic colleagues,

I am writing to advise you on the decision regarding the ongoing use of the Turnitin ("TII") AI Detection feature. In April and again in September, I issued a message regarding the release of a new “originality detection” feature in Turnitin and cautioned against its use as the sole basis of any academic misconduct claims. Today, I am letting you know that we will **not be** adopting the AI Detection feature. I would like to share with you what informed that decision.

- At the time of initial release in April 2023, TII communicated that the AI Detector feature would correctly identify 85% of AI-generated text with a false positive rate of 1%. The feature’s false positive rate was later increased from 1% to 4% when the analysis was done on a sentence-by-sentence basis. As large language models become more sophisticated, it appears the feature will become less capable of identifying AI-generated text, combined with an increasing false positive rate.
    - AI Writing Detection (turnitin.com);
    - turnitin.com/blog/ai-writing-detection-update-from-turnitins-chief-product-officer (May 23, 2023);
    - turnitin.com/blog/understanding-the-false-positive-rate-for-sentences-of-our-ai-writing-detection-capability (June 14, 2023).

- TII is not the only AI detector that is unable to accurately and reliably identify AI-generated text. To our knowledge, there are no products on the market that are

regarded as being suitable for use in higher education. Notably, OpenAI, the creators of ChatGPT, have abandoned development on their own AI writing detection tool.
    - [2303.11156] Can AI-Generated Text be Reliably Detected? (arxiv.org);
    - OpenAI discontinues its AI writing detector due to "low rate of accuracy" | Ars Technica.

- Connected to this, controlled studies have demonstrated that non-native English speakers are disproportionately impacted by false positive results.
    - GPT detectors are biased against non-native English writers - ScienceDirect.

Based on our own analysis of TII's performance:

- Applying TII's own published accuracy rate (85%): 1753 assignments would include AI-generated text but would be undetected.
- Applying TII's own published false positive rate (4%): 397 assignments would be false positives.

Given these concerns, I believe the use of this tool could do more harm than good, potentially derailing the educational journeys of many students. In my view, this is an unacceptable risk.

Generative AI is here to stay, and it will grow and continue to influence and disrupt our way of life. I am excited by the opportunity this presents for us as an educational institution but recognize that it comes with its challenges. To address this, I have struck a task force to review the impacts of generative AI on teaching and learning from various perspectives and to make recommendations. More details on this activity will be forthcoming and I encourage you to participate as the opportunity presents itself.

In the meantime, I strongly urge you to explore generative AI, and access the AI resources and training from Learning and Teaching Services, the Academic Integrity Office and Library. Your involvement in ongoing conversations about the impact of AI tools on teaching and learning is invaluable.