

2011 Showcase in Excellence Award Recipient

Rio Salado College *“Preserving Academic Integrity: Rio Salado’s Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection System”*



Organization Information:

Highest Ranking Official:
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President

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Type of work:
Rio Salado College is a part of the Maricopa Community College District. With numerous locations throughout Maricopa County, Rio Salado provides flexible educational services for more than 70,000 students annually, with an emphasis on underserved populations.

Workforce: (# of employees)
503 board-approved
1,383 adjunct faculty
200+ part-time/temporary

Testimonial of Value of the Arizona Performance Excellence Award Program

“Participating in the AQA Showcase Award process was invaluable in promoting quality assurance and relentless improvement, which are an integral part of the Rio Salado culture. As a result of our participation, the college was able to make our Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection Process even more efficient to fortify academic integrity and better serve our students and the community.”

Dr. Chris Bustamante, Rio Salado College President

Highlights of Organizational Process:

The Rio Salado Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection System is designed to identify students who have copied and submitted another student’s work as their own and report them to faculty for follow-up.

Holding students accountable for creating their own work and detecting cheating through the peer-to-peer plagiarism detection process has allowed the college to uphold strict academic standards. Greater accountability encourages students to complete their own work instead of copying from one another. Detecting dishonest students promotes academic integrity and preserves the value of Rio’s courses and educational system, increasing student success and learning.

Quality Assurance and Relentless Improvement

Rio Salado utilizes a Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle (PDCA) for quality assurance and relentless improvement. During design and testing, the peer-to-peer system was closely monitored, and the data were analyzed to determine if the system was functioning as intended. Several improvements were made based on the data. These included:

- Adjusting the date range for comparison assignments
- Eliminating false positive results and color coding reports
- Filtering assignments using the five most frequently used words for faster processing

In-House Development

The plagiarism detection system was developed, programmed, tested, and implemented completely in-house. This development method controlled costs and allowed major benchmarks to be met in a timely manner. The system created long-term savings by avoiding licensing and support fees which would have been required by an outside vendor. In-house system maintenance allows necessary changes to be made effectively and efficiently, and useful data are collected to improve the process. Faculty Chairs across Rio's various departments can also adapt the plagiarism reporting system to meet specific discipline needs.

Number of Assignments Scanned

Prior to the launch of the peer-to-peer system, Rio Salado did not have a formal process in place to detect this specific type of plagiarism. From August 2009 through May 2011, 5,263,404 total assessments were taken at Rio Salado College. During that same time period, the number of assessments scanned monthly through the peer-to-peer detection system ranged from a low of 35,790 in December 2009 to a high of 50,817 in October 2010. The table below shows the number of assignments scanned per month. More than **900,000** assignments have been checked for peer-to-peer plagiarism since the system was launched.

Date	Number Scanned	Date	Number Scanned	Date	Number Scanned	Date	Number Scanned
Sep-09	43,117	Mar-10	45,840	Sep-10	45,919	Mar-11	49,321
Oct-09	45,742	Apr-10	46,870	Oct-10	50,817	Apr-11	50,221
Nov-09	46,432	May-10	42,077	Nov-10	48,858	May-11	41,462
Dec-09	35,790	Jun-10	42,158	Dec-10	36,738	Total Scans	907,306
Jan-10	38,469	Jul-10	38,941	Jan-11	39,878		
Feb-10	41,495	Aug-10	35,463	Feb-11	41,698		

AQA Core Values

Rio Salado's Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection Process aligns with the following AQA core values:

Managing for Innovation - Due to the unique "one course, many sections" model utilized at Rio Salado, the Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection System was implemented to detect plagiarism occurring from student to student in multiple sections of identical online courses. The Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection System received two awards in 2010 for its innovative design.

Management by Fact - Data created by the plagiarism detection system is continually analyzed to drive process improvements. Tracking the number of plagiarism cases allows Rio Salado to make informed decisions about the level of resources necessary to combat this problem and where to focus plagiarism prevention efforts.

Agility - Rio Salado can quickly adapt instructional tools to meet the needs of customers involved in the online learning process. The planning, development, testing, and implementation of the Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection System were accomplished in a short five months using only existing internal staff. This demonstrates the institution's ability to see a need and work quickly to meet that need.