How to avoid plagiarism

Ronald G. Driggers

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Today (June 19, 2012), the *Chicago Tribune* reported that Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta said he would not resign over accusations of plagiarism against him. The *Tribune* explained that "*Nature* said it had seen documents indicating that more than half of Ponta's 432-page, 2003 Romanian-language thesis on the International Criminal Court for his doctorate at the University of Bucharest consisted of duplicated text."

Ironically, a week ago, a friend and colleague of mine, Akhlesh Lakhtakia, sent me an editorial entitled "Avoidance of plagiarism." Akhlesh describes how the German defense minister and the president of Hungary recently lost their jobs following allegations of plagiarism. Akhlesh is the editor of the *Journal of Nanophotonics*, and he wrote the editorial as a result of discussions with graduate students, which eventually led to the development of a guide on how to avoid plagiarism. I found the editorial very useful and I think many of the readers of *Optical Engineering* will also find it useful.

I am keeping this editorial short as I hope you will take the time to read "Avoidance of plagiarism" at http://dx.doi.org/10.1117/1.JNP.6.069901. I also hope that many of you will provide this editorial to your graduate students and junior scientists and engineers. While plagiarism is a very serious issue that can result in senior leaders losing their jobs and careers, the behavior often begins in early career, and we all have a stake in mentoring our young people. As always, education can be a first step. I would like to thank Akhlesh Lakhtakia for writing such a useful guide.

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