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Augusta Richards: Responding to Plagiarism (A)

Augusta Richards (her friends call her Dusty) is a tenured professor of strategy at the Boston University School of Management. She has been a professor for over fifteen years, developing a reputation as a top scholar in her field of entrepreneurship by writing many articles and books. As a top scholar, she knows, or knows of, most of the other senior scholars in her discipline. And likewise, most know of her and her work. This community of scholars meets regularly at academic conferences, reads each other's work in academic journals and communicates often through e-mail and Listservs. Interaction stretches across North America, Europe and the Far East.

On August 12, 2001, she received an e-mail from a professor in Norway she had never met before. It read simply,

Dear Professor Richards,

Are you aware that several sentences and full paragraphs from your 1996 paper in *Advancements in Entrepreneurship* were copied in a paper by Professors Alpha, Beta, and Gamma in the *Basic Handbook of Entrepreneurship Research, 2000*?

Best,
Olav Gustafson
Norwegian School of Business

It was a short message, startling for its brevity and its bluntness. Dusty was stunned. She e-mailed to thank the Norwegian scholar and quickly referred to her paper, an article she had published five years earlier. The Alpha, et al, paper proved more difficult to find. The *Basic Handbook of Entrepreneurship* was an obscure book, and she had to wait for two weeks while interlibrary loan acquired a copy for her. When she finally had a chance to sit down with both papers for a comparison, her outrage grew with each overlapping sentence. This was as blatant an act of plagiarism as she had ever seen or heard about (see **Exhibit 1**).