Heatmap to show the text differences

We examined a case in which a high school student cheated with her thesis.

Part of her thesis was done by herself, but the biggest part was typed by a ghostwriter. The ghost writer did not get his money and as a kind of revenge to the student he sent an email to the school. He attached the thesis that partially was written by him as a Word document to the email message.

We wanted to compare the thesis from the ghost writer with the version of the student.

We found out that the tool 'Diffdoc', could do the job for us.

This great tool is able to show all the differences in many document formats f.e. Word and Excel.

After we found out were the differences were, we used Microsoft Word to be able to make a heat map. Therefore we opened the student version of the thesis and use the zoom function and set this to 'many pages'. We got an overview of all 66 pages and placed a coloured page border on all pages. We used a green border for every page that differed from the thesis sent by the ghost writer and a red border for all pages that were the same. We used a blue border for pages that had some differences.

We showed this result to the chairman of the examination committee of the high school. This simple graphic was telling more than a whole report about the text differences in the two documents that were examined.