
Computer-Generated Bibliographic Citations

David Kent, Librarian

July 2008



PENINSULA
COLLEGE

Bibliographic References are also called "Citations". Why Cite?

ETHICS & CREDIBILITY & LEGALITY

- Citation acknowledges the work of others. Citation lets the reader know you have reviewed the literature, that you are engaged in a dialogue with a community of scholars, and gives your work credibility.
- Citation also helps you avoid plagiarism.

Why Cite?

LOCATION

- Citation provides sufficient bibliographic information to allow the reader to access and read the original article or book being cited. The reader can check on the sources used to support an argument in the text and decide if they are used in a valid manner.

Basic Citation Elements

- Author
- Date
- Title
- Source

Citation Formats Vary by Style

- **APA** (American Psychological Association)

- Author. (Date). Title. Source.

- **MLA** (Modern Language Association)

- Author. Title. Source. Date.

Note that each citation element ends with a period.

Examples of Three Popular Styles

APA (used in social sciences)

Doe, J. D. (2008). *Book title*. Mesa, AZ: Wiley.

Chicago (Author-Date) (preferred by historians)

Doe, John D. 2008. *Book title*. Mesa, AZ: Wiley.

MLA (used in humanities)

Doe, John D. Book Title. Mesa, AZ: Wiley, 2008.

These styles use italicizing or underlining of book titles.

Examples of Three Scientific Styles

CSE (Council of Scientific Editors; used in sciences)

Doe, JD. 2008. Book title. Mesa, AZ: Wiley.

NLM (National Library of Medicine)

Doe, JD. Book title. Mesa, AZ: Wiley; 2008. 411p.

AFS (American Fisheries Society)

Doe, J. D. 2008. Book title. Wiley, Mesa, AZ.

There are hundreds of bibliographic styles!

(These scientists want just the title -- no underlining or italicizing!)

Rules for a Bibliography

- **Cite all sources with the same style**

- either the style you choose, or the style you are assigned to use. Formatting in results lists will vary. Don't just copy/paste from a results list. Take the elements from the results and create a proper citation.

- **Cite the exact document you consulted**

- same edition, same publisher, same date, correct URL, etc. Give all the information needed for the reader to find the exact original you consulted.

Automatic Citation Formatting

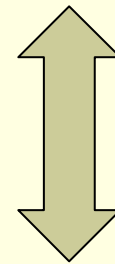
- WorldCat <http://worldcat.org>
- Zotero <http://www.zotero.org>
- Library Databases
 - Academic Search Premier, ProQuest, etc.
- Commercial Software
 - EasyBib / MyBibPro (\$7.99/year)
 - Landmarks Son of Citation Machine (free, but manual data entry)
 - EndNote / ProCite / Reference Manager (\$\$)
 - Ref-Grab-it / RefWorks (\$\$)

Can computer-generated citing get it right? Let's see.

Machine-produced APA citations. Machines err. Check for accuracy!

Zotero

Powers, R. (2005). *Mark Twain : a life*. New
York: Free Press.



WorldCat

Powers, R. (2005). *Mark Twain: a life*. New
York: Free Press.

Should not have a space before the colon. **WorldCat** got it right.
Should capitalize the first word following the colon. Both wrong.

Machine-produced APA citations. Machines err. Check for accuracy!

Zotero

Powers, R. (2003). KEEPING UP WITH MARK TWAIN.
SMITHSONIAN, 34, 74-83.

WorldCat

Powers, R. (2003). KEEPING UP WITH MARK TWAIN.
SMITHSONIAN. 34, 74-83.

Can you see the errors in these citations? Machines are dependent upon human input. GIGO: garbage in, garbage out.

Machine-produced APA citations. Machines err. Check for accuracy!

Zotero

Powers, R. (2003). KEEPING UP WITH MARK TWAIN. *SMITHSONIAN*, 34, 74-83.

WorldCat

Powers, R. (2003). KEEPING UP WITH MARK TWAIN. *SMITHSONIAN*. 34, 74-83.

Should not have all caps in article and publication titles. Both wrong.

Should have a comma following publication title. Should have an italicized volume number. **Zotero** got it right.

Tip

- University Online Writing Labs often have web sites which provide examples of styles:
- The OWL at Purdue University:
 - **APA Formatting and Style Guide.**
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
 - **MLA Formatting and Style Guide.**
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>

This ends the Computer-Generated Citations tutorial.