

Citing the Uncommon Information Sources in APA Style

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Abstract:

The citation standards in the scholarly communication are significant mainly in the context of academic research writing. The citation standards are being used while writing research papers, research projects, articles, monographs, books etc. for bringing uniformed references to the sources cited by the authors. Therefore, understanding at least one standard citation style (meant for manuscript structure, style and crediting information sources) is necessary.

Key Words: Citation, Citation Standards, Citation Style, Citation Manual, APA Style

Introduction:

Crediting the information sources, as per the citation standard, is one of the important responsibilities of an author. To do this, standardized citation style needs to be followed to bring uniformity in quoting sources, formatting the paper, adding authenticity to the work and avoiding plagiarism (Hulagabali, 2014).

Citing a source, usually referred to either borrowing an idea or the text to substantiate the argument or build a supportive literature to express more authoritatively, is necessary as professional and ethical practice. To do so, the researchers not only need to know any one particular international citation standard, but also need to pay attention to the different citation formats required for different type of information sources or documents viz. government reports, statutes, blog posts, comments on social networking sites, e-mail messages, interviews, news clippings etc. But the issue is that not all the citation standards offer solutions to such kind of information sources.

Let us take an example of interviews. A researcher undertakes a study on 'rural working women and their work culture'. The researcher gathers lots of information about the topic by interacting with the women in the form of interviews. When he writes the research report he needs to cite the excerpts of the interviews. But to do so, he needs to cite the excerpts of the interview in an accepted citation style.

Another example is of blog posts and blog comments. A journalist who is undertaking a study on 'the blogs of the celebrities', is taking note of the contents and pattern of blog posts about the celebrities and also comments posted by their fans/followers. When this journalist prepares a research report, he needs to cite the blog posts and comments in a requisite citation style.

The above instances clearly highlight the fact that a researcher comes across such sources of information that are to be enumerated or expressed in research work in a specified format or standard. Thus, researchers need to know citation style for such uncommon information sources.

This article covers selected uncommon information sources that are crucial while citing in any of our research reports or papers with the help of Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) (VandenBos, 2010). The style formats of the examples given in this paper against each information source are in accordance with the APA style (and the text in the examples is imaginary in nature). For understanding more number of uncommon information sources and their details, researchers can refer to the APA style manual (Pages from 193-224: (VandenBos, 2010)).

Uncommon Information Sources

Researchers are generally aware of the citation format for the information sources like books, journal articles, conference proceedings etc. But there are other sources where researchers find difficulty in citing them in a standard format. Thus the term 'uncommon' in this paper is used intentionally as to highlight some selected forms of information sources. This paper introduces citation solutions for fourteen uncommon information sources. They are discussed under the following heads.

1. **Interviews:** The interview notes are considered as qualitative information. It is usually classified as personal communication as they are not published, but used for getting the ideas/experiences from a respondent/s. Therefore, the author need to use them as 'personal communication' (McAdoo, 2009). Though the interview text can be used and interpreted as qualitative data but the exact citation style for citing interview is required. The following example shows how the excerpts of the interview can be cited. This applies to both verbatim citation (quoting text as it is) as well as the paraphrased citations (quoting text in the author's own words).

For instance: To cite the interview conducted with Pranab M available on a particular site, the following reference format should be followed:

Goswami, M. (2012, October 8). *Interview with Pranab M- Part 1* [Real Media file]. Retrieved from <http://www.timesnetwork.com/int.htm>

2. **E-mails:** Citing e-mails in research papers or any other documents requires specified standard. For instance: If a researcher quotes an expert comment or reply or opinion received on his/her e-mail, the standard method needs to be followed to cite the expert's words. The APA gives a solution to this.

According to APA Style Manual, "E-mail communications from individuals should be cited as personal communications. Because they do not provide recoverable data, personal communications are not included in the reference list". Therefore "Cite personal communications in text only. Give the initials as well as the surname of the communicator, and provide as exact a date as possible" (APA Style, 2015). The following citation formats for interviews help understand them easily:

According to L. N. Mathew (personal communication, April 15, 2011)...
..has been suggested (L. N. Mathew, personal communication, April 15, 2011).

3. **Blog Posts:** The blog posts are useful while doing literature review or understanding the latest trends in a particular domain. They also give an idea about bloggers'

personal experiences and opinions. Such posts can be cited in the research reports or papers in the following format.

IU Browne (2008, July 21). The art of citing legal documents [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://citationsolutionsblogs.com/tips/2008.html/>

4. **Blog Comments:** The blog comments by the followers/readers of a particular blog/s are important to know the different views and opinions expressed against the blog posts. These are crucial in understanding the different perspectives and perceptions about an issue/blog post through the comments. Now a day commenting on any issue, posted on any blog or any other social networking sites, is common. The following format can be used for citing the comments given on the said sites.

LR Kingsman. (2008, July 25). Re: The art of citing legal documents [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://citationsolutionsblogs.com/tips/2008.html/>

5. **Discussion Forums:** The online discussion forums (or list serves or bulletin boards) are helpful in sharing the ideas and getting comments/clarifications/solutions to research queries. The postings on the forum can also be cited in the research works in the following format.

Hulagabali, S. C. (2014, January 1). Launch of Indian Conference-Abstracting Database [Online forum post]. Retrieved from <http://www.lisforumposts/2014>.

The comments made on the above posting or forum posting can be made in the following format.

Smith, K. B. (2014, January 2). Re: Launch of Indian Conference-Abstracting Database [Online forum comment]. Retrieved from <http://www.lisforumposts/comments/2014>.

6. **Websites:** The websites are being cited by many researchers but citing them in accordance with a style is necessary.

Smithline, I. R. (2012, September 21). Big data is making unprecedented revolution. Retrieved from <http://www.mncsoworld.com/it/4481/lis/>.

When the web pages carry the title of the page, but not the author details, researchers can use the title in the author's position (APA, 2015).

Big data is making unprecedented revolution. (2012, September 21). Retrieved from <http://www.mncsoworld.com/it/4481/lis/>.

7. **Poster/Paper/PPT:** The conference proceeding published in a book form can be given in the same format as for a book or book chapter (VandenBos, 2010, p. 206). The poster or paper or power point presentation (PPPT) made in the conference or

meeting can be cited in APA style. The paper presented in the form of PPT can also be treated as paper.

Hulagabali, S. C. (2012, January). *Gandhi as writer*. Paper or poster session presented at the conference of Nagindas Khandwala College, Mumbai.

8. **Theses and Dissertations:** APA style gives different formats (VandenBos, 2010, pp. 207-208) for citing doctoral dissertations. There are two common platforms or sources from where theses/dissertations are accessible for the researchers. One form that is unpublished, which is accessible physically from a library and another form of accessibility to doctoral dissertations is the online platform. For a doctoral dissertation, if referred from a database like *Shodhganga*, the following reference format can be used.

Guha, M. N. (2005). *Impact of movies on children studying in government schools* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Shodhganga. (Accession No. 012345).

Reference format for thesis/dissertation referred from a library/university:

Vaidya, E. N. (2002). *Social status of slum dwellers of Mumbai: An analytical study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Mumbai, Mumbai.

9. **Book Reviews:** These help the researcher get reviewer's comments on a reviewed book, that may be of help for his/her literature review. APA Style also gives the reference format for the reviews of different type of documents like video, video game, articles etc. These can be accessed from APA style manual (VandenBos, 2010, pp. 208-209). Following format is an example of the book review.

Gopalswamy, M. L. (2002). The book that makes you think like a leader [Review of the book *How easy to become a leader*, by L. J. Mathews].

10. **Government Reports:** Researchers often refer to the government reports for citing the government's decisions, guidelines, rules and even the statistics. But citing them in an appropriate format is a challenge. APA style gives the following solution to it:

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. (2005). *Report on internet use by rural India* (GOI Publication No. 01-2578). Retrieved from <http://www.mibgoi.gov/report/ruralinternet.pdf>

11. **Newspaper Articles:** Researchers can cite any newspaper's news items/clippings in the following format.

Librarian is world's first search engine. (2012, June 15). [Clipping from The Hindu newspaper]. Copy in possession of author.

12. **Court Judgments:** The APA style provides citation solutions for different forms of court judgments. Following format is taken from the Manual (VandenBos, 2010, p. 217).

Lessad v. Schmidt, 349 F. Supp. 1078 (E. D. Wis. 1972.)

The text citations should be prepared in the following form:

Lesseard v. Schmidt (1972)
(Lesseard v. Schmidt, 1972)

“Explanation: This decision was rendered by the federal district court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin in 1972. It appears in volume 349 of the *Federal Supplement* and starts on page 1078 of that volume” (VandenBos, 2010, p. 217).

13. **Statutes/Acts:** The statutes and acts of any country/government can be cited in the following format.

Maharashtra Public Libraries Act, Maharashtra Act No. XXXIV (1967).

The text citations should be in the following format:

Maharashtra Public Libraries Act (1967)
(Maharashtra Public Libraries Act, 1967)

14. **Patents:** The patents of filed/registered in any nation can be cited in the following format.

Mitra, I. G. (2001). *Indian Patent No. 123,422*. New Delhi: Indian Patent and Trademark Office.

The text citation should include the patent number followed by the year of registering the patent than patentee.

Indian Patent No. 123,422 (2001)
(Indian Patent No. 123,422, 2001)

Conclusion:

To sum up, there are many information sources for which proper citation formats are enumerated in the APA style manual.

Apart from forming the citations manually using any citation style, the researchers can also use some online tools/software to generate the citations in a desired citation style.

“There are two ways to generate machine-aided references. Firstly, a researcher can start working on any one of the reference managers (RMs) online. The RM is a software or computer application that helps manage the sources of citations referred for any research work. This helps add citations as per the conventions and generate automatic bibliographies or references. The popular RMs are: Zotero (<https://www.zotero.org/>) and Mendeley (<http://www.mendeley.com/>). These RMs help generates references or bibliography, especially while using online resources” (Hulagabali, 2014).

The RMs helps researchers add, edit, delete and also update the citations as and when they want. “Secondly, working on Microsoft Office’s Word by using its ‘Reference’ module, helps to devise the references automatically and more clearly. But before using any of such automatic tools, one must have a clear idea about any one of the citation standards” (Hulagabali, 2014).

The knowledge and understanding of one particular citation style are helpful while using the automated reference managers as these reference managers do not provide the exact reference solutions as per the citation standards. Therefore, practicing with any one particular citation manual is necessary.

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