

Monash University
School of Information Management & Systems

Style Guide

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The School of Information Management & Systems has adopted a standard for referencing and presenting scholarly material for all assignment papers submitted to the school for assessment. The standard is based on the style of writing specified in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th ed., 1994). This is commonly referred to as the APA style.

The Publication Manual addresses the preparation of “copy” manuscripts which are submitted to scientific journals for refereeing and publication. Essays, reports and other assignments need to be submitted in “final” form, often called camera-ready. This guide has been prepared to provide undergraduate and graduate students with a summary of the rules which are relevant for final manuscripts.

For honours and research students who are preparing scientific papers the Publication Manual is held in the School Library, and is available for purchase at the bookshops on the Clayton and Caulfield campuses. If in doubt about a specific rule, format, or example, consult the manual.

In addition to the APA Publication Manual, much of this guide is taken from <http://www.gasou.edu/psychweb/tipsheet/apacrib.htm>, a web page prepared by Dr Russell Dewey of Georgia Southern University. This is an excellent web resource for “copy” manuscripts, but do not use its reference formats for assignments, class papers or theses.

This guide has two main sections: writing rules and reference formats.

1. Writing rules

Type size

- The size of the main text should be 12 point. Within tables and figures the type should be 10 point.
- The body of the paper should be in a serif typeface (like Courier or Times Roman) with lettering on figures and tables in a sans serif face (such as Helvetica or Arial).
- Major headings should be 14 point and bold. They may be numbered, with a period and two spaces after the period.
- Minor headings should be 12 point and bold.

Layout

- Text should be one and one-half spaced.
- Large indented quotations should be single spaced.
- There should be no blank lines between paragraphs. The first line of each section of a paper should not be indented, thereafter the first line of each paragraph should be indented 5 to 7 spaces.
- Put three blank lines before, and two blank lines after major headings.
- Put two blank lines before, and one blank line after minor headings.
- Small tables and figures should appear on a page with the relevant text.

- Large tables and figures should appear on a separate page immediately after the page where the table or figure is first mentioned.
- The left-hand margin should be at least 4 cm.
- Text should be both left and right justified.
- Papers should be numbered with numbers appearing at the center of the foot of the page in a sans serif typeface.
- Use common sense in layout; when the publication rules cause a part of a document to look silly, deviate from the standard.

Abbreviations

- Avoid abbreviations except for long, familiar terms (e.g., NATO).
- Explain what an abbreviation means, the first time it occurs.
- If an abbreviation is commonly used as a word, it does not require explanation (e.g., WWW, GUI, CPU).
- The following abbreviations should NOT be used outside parenthetical comments:
 - cf. [use compare]
 - e.g. [use for example]
 - etc. [use and so forth]
 - i.e. [use that is]
 - viz. [use namely]
 - vs. [use versus]
- Use periods when making an abbreviation within a reference (e.g., Vol. 3, p. 6, 2nd ed.)
- Do not use periods within degree titles and organization titles (e.g., BInfoSys, PhD, ACM).
- Use s for second, m for meter.
- To form plurals of abbreviations, add s alone, without apostrophe (e.g., PhDs, PCs, vols., Eds).
- In using standard abbreviations for measurements, like m for meter, do not add an s to make it plural (100 seconds is 100 s), and when referring to more than one page in a book excerpt, use the abbreviation pp. (with a period after it and a space after the period).
- Do not use the abbreviation "pp." for magazine or journal citations; just give the numbers themselves. Do use "pp." for citations of encyclopedia entries, multi-page newspaper articles, chapters or articles in edited books.

Capitalization

- Either capitalize major words and all other words of four letters or more, in headings, titles, and subtitles outside reference lists, for example, "A Study of Analyst/Manager Interaction," or only capitalise the first word and proper names, for example, "Italics and underlining." Be consistent throughout the manuscript.
- Capitalize names of conditions, groups, effects, and variables only when definite (e.g., Group A was the control group.)
- Capitalize specific subject and department titles (e.g., Monash University, School of Information Management & Systems, SYS1001 Information Systems 1).
- Capitalize nouns before numbers, but not before variables (e.g., Trial 2, trial x).
- Do not capitalize names of laws, theories, and hypotheses (e.g., relational algebra).
- Do not capitalize when referring to generalities (e.g., information systems).

Commas

- Use commas before "and" in lists, for example, height, width, and depth.
- Use commas between groups of three digits, for example, 1,453.
- Use commas to set off a reference in a parenthetical comment (Patrick, 1993).
- Use commas for seriation within a paragraph or sentence. For example, "three choices are (a) true, (b) false, and (c) don't know."
- Use semicolons for seriation if there are commas within the items. For example, (a) here, in the middle of the item, there are commas; (b) here there are not; (c) so we use semicolons throughout.
- Use commas in exact dates, for example, April 18, 1992 (but not in April 1992).

Hyphenation

- Do not hyphenate common prefixes (e.g., posttest, prewar, multiphase, nonsignificant) unless needed for clarity (e.g., pre-existing).
- Hyphenate adjectival phrases (e.g., high-performance computer, two-way traffic).
- Hyphenate if the base is an abbreviation or compounded (e.g., pre-DSS).
- Hyphenate if the base word is capitalized or a number (e.g., pre-Olympics, post-1960).
- Hyphenate if the words could be misunderstood without a hyphen (e.g., re-pair, co-worker).
- If in doubt, consult a recently published dictionary. Standards change. For example, "data-base" is now "database," and "life-style" is now "lifestyle."

Italics and underlining

- Do not underline or italicise common foreign abbreviations (e.g., vice versa, et al., a priori).
- Do not underline or italicise for emphasis.
- Underline or italicise the titles of books and articles, introduction of new terms and labels (the first time only), words and phrases used as linguistic examples, letters used as statistical symbols, and volume numbers in reference lists.

Miscellaneous: Colons, dashes, parentheses, numbering paragraphs,

- Do not use "and/or." Write things out. For example, "Monday, Tuesday, or both" is preferable to "Monday and/or Tuesday."
- Use a dash when there is a sudden interruption like this one - zoiks! - in the flow of a sentence.
- Use parentheses to introduce an abbreviation, for example, executive information systems (EIS).
- Use "appendixes" or "appendices" as the plural of "appendix." Use datum as singular, data as plural. Use matrix as singular, matrices as plural. Use schema as singular, schemas (not schemata) as plural. Use criterion as singular, criteria as plural.
- When listing separate paragraphs in a series, use a number and a period, not parentheses.
 1. The first paragraph goes here.
 2. The second paragraph goes here.

Numbers

- Spell out common fractions and common expressions (one-half).
- Spell out large numbers beginning sentences (e.g., Thirty days hath September...).
- Use numerals for numbers 10 and above, or lower numbers grouped with numbers 10 and above (for example, from 6 to 12 hours of sleep).
- Spell out numbers which are inexact, or below 10 and not grouped with numbers over 10 (e.g., eight items, nine pages, three-way interaction, five records).
- To make plurals out of numbers, add s only, with no apostrophe (e.g., the 1950s).
- Use combinations of written and Arabic numerals for back-to-back modifiers (e.g., five 4-point scales).
- Use combinations of numerals and written numbers for large sums (e.g., over 3 million terminals).
- Use numerals for exact statistical references, scores, sample sizes, and sums (multiplied by 3, or 5% of the sample). Here is another example: "We used 30 subjects, all third year students, and they spent an average of 1 hr 20 min on the task".
- Use the percent symbol (%) only with figures (5%) not with written numbers (five percent).

Quotation marks

- Use quotation marks for an odd or ironic usage the first time but not thereafter, for example, The "successful" system was a financial disaster.
- Use quotation marks for article and chapter titles cited in the text but not in the reference list. (In Smith's (1992) article, "APA Style and Personal Computers," computers were described as "here to stay" (p. 311).)

Extended quotations

- Add emphasis in a quotation with underlining or italicising, immediately followed by the words [italics added] in brackets.
- Brackets are not necessary when changing the first letter of a quotation to upper case.
- For quotations over 40 words in length, indent and single space the whole block. Indent five more spaces if there are paragraphs within the long quotation. Always provide author, year, and page citation.
- Use brackets if introducing or altering material.
- Reproduce a quote exactly. If there are errors, introduce the word *sic* in italics and bracketed, for example [sic] as shown here, immediately after the error.
- Use three dots (ellipsis points) when omitting material, four if the omitted material includes the end of a sentence.
- Do not use dots at the beginning or end of a quotation unless it is important to indicate the quotation begins or ends in mid sentence.

Tables

- Number all tables with Arabic numerals in the order that the tables appear in the text.
- Within appendices identify tables with a capital letter and an Arabic numeral (e.g., Table B2 is the second table of Appendix B).
- In text refer to tables by their numbers: for example, as shown in Table 2 ... the normal systems analysis methods (see Table 3).

- The lettering on tables should be in a sans serif face (such as Helvetica or Arial).
- The table title should be concise and explanatory, and appear above the table. The table number should be in italics and end with a period (e.g., *Table 2. Systems Development Methodologies.*).
- Column headings may be in bold face to enhance readability.
- The rows, columns and borders of tables should be ruled with one point solid lines.

Figures

- Any type of illustration other than a table is a figure (e.g. chart, graph, diagram, photograph).
- Figures are numbered, lettered and referenced in a similar manner to tables.
- The figure caption should be concise and explanatory, and appear below the figure. The figure number should be in italics and end with a period (e.g., *Figure 5. A Data Warehousing Architecture.*).

2. Reference formats

References are citations of other works such as books, journal articles, or private communications. References in text are treated differently from references in the complete list at the end of a paper. The APA Publication Manual contains 77 examples of different reference types (pp. 195-221). The formats most commonly used in information management & systems papers are presented below. If in doubt about a reference style not covered below, consult the Publication Manual.

In-text references

- Use the author-date format to cite references in text. For example: as Smith (1990) points out, a recent study (Smith, 1990) shows....
- For two-author citations, spell out both authors on all occurrences.
- For multiple-author citations (up to five authors) name all authors the first time, then use et al., so the first time it is Smith, Jones, Pearson and Sherwin (1990), but the second time it is Smith et al., with a period after "al" but no italics.
- The first time an "et al." reference is used in a paragraph, give the year, thereafter (if the citation is repeated in the paragraph) omit the year.
- For six or more authors, use et al. the first time and give the full citation in the reference list.
- Include page reference after the year, outside quotes but inside the comma, for example: The author stated, "The effect disappeared within minutes" (Lopez, 1993, p. 311) , but she did not say which effect. Another example would be: Lopez found that "the effect disappeared within minutes" (p. 311).
- If two or more multiple-author references which shorten to the same "et al." form, making it ambiguous, give as many author names as necessary to make them distinct, before et al. For example: (Smith, Jones, et al., 1991) to distinguish it from (Smith, Burke, et al., 1991).
- Join names in a multiple-author citation with and (in text) or an ampersand (&) in reference lists and parenthetical comments. For example: As Smith and Sarason (1992) point out, the same argument was made by in an earlier study (George & Swen, 1990).
- If a group is readily identified by its initials, spell it out only the first time. For example, "As reported in a government study (Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [DEETYA], 1996), blah blah..." and thereafter, "The previously cited

study (DEETYA, 1996) found that....

- If the author is unknown or unspecified, use the first few words of the reference list entry (usually the title), for example: ("Study Finds," 1992).
- If citing multiple works by the same author at the same time, arrange dates in order. In general, use letters after years to distinguish multiple publications by the same author in the same year. For example: Several studies (Johnson, 1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1995) showed the same thing.
- For old works cite the translation or the original and modern copyright dates if both are known, for example: (Aristotle, trans. 1931) or (Darwin, 1859/1996).
- Always give page numbers for quotations, for example: (Cheek & Buss, 1981, p. 332) or (Shimamura, 1989, chap. 3, p. 5).
- For email and other "unrecoverable data" use personal communication, for example: (V.G. Nguyen, personal communication, September 28, 1993). These do not appear in the reference list.

Abbreviating within a reference

The approved abbreviations for use in a reference list are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Abbreviations in a Reference List.

Abbreviation	Meaning
chap.	chapter
ed.	edition
rev. ed.	revised edition
2nd ed.	second edition
Ed.	Edited by
Eds.	multiple editors
Trans.	Translated by
p.	page number
pp.	page numbers
Vol.	Volume
vols.	volumes
No.	Number
Pt.	Part
Suppl.	Supplement
Tech. Rep.	Technical Report

Reference lists

- References should be indented 2 to 3 spaces after the first line.
- For book and paper titles, capitalise the first word of the title, and subtitle, and any proper name.
- Take careful note of punctuation in references.

- When providing details about the publisher give the city and state for American publications, and the city and country for non-American publications. The following cities are the locations of the major publishing houses and do not have to be identified by state or country: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Amsterdam, Jerusalem, London, Milan, Moscow, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Tokyo, Vienna.

Alphabetizing within reference lists

- Use prefixes in alphabetizing names if commonly part of the surname (De Vries).
- Do not use "von" in alphabetizing (Helmholtz, H. L. F. von).
- Treat Mc and Mac literally; Mac comes before Mc.
- Disregard apostrophes and capitals in alphabetizing; D'Arcy comes after Daagwood.
- Single-author citations precede multiple-author citations (Smith, 1990 then Smith et al., 1990).
- Alphabetize corporate authors by first significant word. Do not use abbreviations in corporate names.

Reference list formats

Book:

Martin, J. (1991). *Rapid application development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Book, new edition:

Avison, D.E., & Fitzgerald, G. (1995). *Information systems development: Methodologies, techniques and tools* (2nd ed.). Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill.

Old work:

Darwin, C. (1996). *The origin of species*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1859)

(note: In text use the parenthetical citation (Darwin, 1859/1996).)

Edited book:

Bennett, J.L. (Ed.). (1983). *Building decision support systems*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Published proceedings:

Shanks, G.G., & Arnott, D.R. (Eds.). (1994). *Proceedings of the Fifth Australasian Conference on Information Systems* (2 vols.). Melbourne, Australia: Monash University/ Australian Computer Society.

Published proceedings, unknown editor:

Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Decision Support Systems. (1995). Hong Kong: International Society for Decision Support Systems.

Journal article, one author:

Niehaus, R.J. (1995). The evolution of strategy and structure of a human resource planning DSS application. *Decision Support Systems*, 14, 187-204.

Journal article, multiple authors:

Suvachittanont, W., Arnott, D.R., & O'Donnell, P.A. (1994). Adaptive design in executive information systems development: A manufacturing case study. *Journal of Decision Systems*, 3 (4), 277-299.

Article or chapter in an edited book:

Keen, P.G.W., & Gambino, T.J. (1983). Building a decision support system: The mythical man-month revisited. In J.L. Bennett (Ed.), *Building decision support systems* (pp. 133 - 172). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Article or chapter in an edited book, multiple editors:

Courbon, J-C. (1996). User-centered DSS design and implementation. In P. Humphreys, L. Bannon, A. McCosh, P. Milgliarese & J-C. Pomerol (Eds.), *Implementing systems for supporting management decisions: Concepts, methods and experiences* (pp. 108-122). London: Chapman and Hall.

Article in published proceedings:

Paranagama, P., Burstein, F.V., & Arnott, D.R. (1995). User characteristics as a basis for decision support systems design. In *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Decision Support Systems* (pp. 322-339). Hong Kong: International Society for Decision Support Systems.

Technical report:

Arnott, D.R., Gilbert, A., & O'Donnell, P.A. (1994). *Preliminary data from a survey of senior executive use of computing in Australia* (Tech. Rep. No. 1/94). Melbourne, Australia: Monash University, School of Information Management & Systems.

Working paper:

Arnott, D.R., & O'Donnell, P.A. (1993). *The product lifecycle: Lessons for business process re-engineering from decision support systems* (Working Paper No. 12/93). Melbourne, Australia: Monash University, School of Information Management & Systems.

Magazine article:

Smyth, H. (1995, December). Is Microsoft off target? *PC World*, 50-52.

Pamphlet:

Australian Computer Society. (1992). Code of ethics. (4th ed.) [Brochure]. Sydney, Australia: Author.

(note: "Author" is used as above in all references when author and publisher are identical.)

Anonymous or unknown author (common in newspapers):

The information superhighway turns left. (1995, July 13). *The Age*, p. 5.

(note: in text, use a short title for citation: (“Information Superhighway,” 1995).)

Commercial computer software:

Mac OS (Version 7.5.1) [Computer Software]. (1996). Cupertino, CA: Apple Computer Inc.

(note: in text, use a short title for citation: (“Mac OS,” 1996).)

(note: common software (e.g., Microsoft Word) does not need a reference entry.)

Non-commercial computer software:

O’Donnell, P.A. (1996). IEdit (Version 1.0) [Computer Software]. Melbourne, Australia: Monash University, School of Information Management & Systems.

FTP:

O’Donnell, P.A. (1996). IEdit: An influence diagram editor. [On-line]. Retrieved January 25, 1996 from the Internet:ftp://ftp.sims.monash.edu.au/pub/users/podonnell/idedit.hqx.

Gopher:

Blacksburg Electronic Village [BEV] (1997). [On-line]. Retrieved January 25, 1997 from the Internet: gopher://crusher.bev.net.

World Wide Web page:

School of Information Management & Systems Home Page. (1998). [On-line]. Accessed on January 25, 1998 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.sims.monash.edu.au>.

(note: you may cite a major, and therefore stable, Web site in text using the URL (e.g., <http://www.sims.monash.edu.au>). In this case no reference entry is needed.)

World Wide Web journal paper:

Klein, H.K., & Hirschheim, R. (1996). The rationality of value choices in information systems development. *Foundations of Information Systems*, September. Retrieved January 25, 1996 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.cba.uh.edu/~parks/fis/kantpap.htm>.