Tedious Work, Trivial Details? A Fresh Look at Bibliographic Citation

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I hate formatting bibliographies.

Why are there so many different bibliographic styles?

Referencing electronic sources is so complicated.

What was wrong with the old footnote systems?

Applying concepts of rhetorical theory to source acknowledgment allows us to develop rational explanations for many of the differences between APA and MLA styles (see inset for examples). In fact, the research I'll present in this workshop suggests that both of these styles reflect the distinctive values and assumptions of their sponsoring communities.

This workshop will show how—and, more importantly, why—MLA and APA styles are different, with discussion centering on 4 questions:

- How are bibliographic references formatted?
- How are sources treated in the text?
- What sources are valued?
- What are the purposes of documentation?

Understanding the rhetorical dimensions of divergent approaches to source management can help librarians, whether as authors writing for publication or professionals seeking to teach information literacy.

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### MLA Style


Tenopir, Carol. Telephone interview. 2 May 2007.


### APA Style


Personal communications are not included in APA reference lists.

Selective Bibliography


Note: Essential readings are marked with an asterisk (*).