

CITATION SYSTEM FOR ONLINE EVIDENCE COLLECTION

The National Forensic League rule for the citation of evidence is based on a modification of the Modern Language Association (MLA) standard. For Internet sources, this means the following:

- Author (the author might be a person's name or the name of a group)
- Author's qualifications
- Title of the web page
- Date the web page was created
- The retrieval statement

So, what do you do if you are unable to find the author's name? Try taking apart the URL. Suppose you find some interesting quotable information at www.perspectives.com/articles/art_optout01.htm. You are having trouble, however, determining the authorship of the web page. Try stripping the text from the end of the URL (always stopping at a forward slash) until you work your way back to the home page of the person or group posting the web page you want to cite. If you go to www.perspectives.com, for example, you will find that the web page is posted by Jon Perr, a member of the Democratic Leadership Council. If, despite your best efforts, the author remains unknown, the evidence should be treated as unusable in the debate context.

The author's qualification refers to the position held by the author (that is, professor of political science at Yale University, senior analyst at the Cato Institute). The title of the web page is the name of an online periodical or other title that appears at the top of the web page. The date the web page was created is usually available somewhere on the page; in the event that no creation date is available, the last revision date is acceptable. What happens if you are unable to find either the creation date of the web page or its last revision date? If no date is available, the web page is unusable in the debate context. There may still be hope, however, in finding the last revision date. Try using Mozilla Firefox as your Internet browser. You can load the web page and then select Page Info from the top Tools menu. Firefox will report to you (in most instances) the date of last modification of the web page. The retrieval statement indicates the online source, the date of retrieval, and the URL. For documents retrieved through Google (or another Internet search engine), the online source is simply "Internet."

Following is an example of an Internet citation:

Eric Larson and Reva Adler (Director, Group Health Cooperative Center for Health Studies and Professor of Medicine at the University of British Columbia), *Seattle Times*, June 19, 2005. Online. Internet. Jan. 25, 2007. seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/opinion/2002339788_sungenocide19.html.