

COLLECTING EVIDENCE

In the age of the information explosion, it is simply not feasible for debaters to print a hard copy of everything they think they might need to read. The two major impediments are expense and time. It is expensive (in laser printer cartridges) for a debate squad to print all the materials active researchers need. It is also time consuming to print big chunks of material; computer labs typically have many computers but only a single printer. The printer becomes the bottleneck. The overuse of printing is also environmentally irresponsible. Debaters waste huge volumes of paper, often printing a 200-page law review article to extract two or three cards. This means hundreds of pages per day of printed or photocopied materials are simply discarded.

Word-processed briefs are easier to read (no illegible handwritten tags, no red or blue ink that refuses to photocopy), and they contain much more evidence per page. This ends up saving a squad large amounts of money in photocopy costs. In fact, members of a large squad can simply distribute new positions via disc and have each squad member print her briefs on her own printer. This dramatically reduces squad photocopy costs. If briefs are to be word-processed, it simply makes sense to collect the evidence on disc. Otherwise, the debater has to retype the evidence that exists in hard copy.

The old way for debaters to construct arguments (a federalism disadvantage, for example) was to create piles of evidence that was sorted into different parts of the argument. Inevitably, as the argument was being constructed, the debater frequently thought, "I know I have that piece of evidence that says ... but WHERE IS IT?" When evidence is collected, sorted, and filed on disc, that doesn't happen. If the evidence isn't found in the right category, the debater simply uses the word processor's find function to search for the word or phrase. The card is located in seconds. When evidence is prepared on disc, the debater can simply use the sorting function of the word processor to put the evidence in order.

STANDARDS FOR THE CUTTING OF EVIDENCE

When you are reading a book, magazine, or newspaper on your research topic, how do you know what to include within a single piece of evidence? Debaters use the term *cutting* to refer to this process of pulling evidence quotations out of an article or a book. I suggest two rules and two suggestions for the cutting of evidence. First, the rules:

Cutting Rule 1: Always directly quote from the beginning of one sentence to the end of the closing sentence. There are several implications of this rule:

- a. Never paraphrase the evidence; take the evidence word-for-word.