30.03.2011, 08:11

randyhoffman

## Working Reference Citation Proposal

Please add any feedback/additions/clarifications you want. I think the wiki's citation style policy should be as follows:

References help users find the source of information used in the wiki. Including the reference citation is more important than using a specific style. If you do not know a citation style, simply add all the information you can. The only citation style guideline is that **every reference within an article should be in the same style**.

As a result of this guideline:

- The first contributor to add a reference to an article sets the style for that article.
- If you want to change the reference style in an article, or if there seems to be no specific style in use, communicate with the previous authors to find who chose the style, and ask for permission to change the reference style.
- If you add a reference that does not match the article's current style, another author can change it, aligning it with the article's style.

30.03.2011, 12:15

jamestanner

## Sounds like a good idea

Sounds like a workable solution to the citations issue. Thanks.

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James Tanner
http://genealogysstar.blogspot.com]

30.03.2011, 12:18

murphynw

I like the idea of keeping the citation styles the same for an individual page.

30.03.2011, 15:10

lembley

I would be one of those that might not recognize which style is being employed in existing

footnotes. Now that's I've discovered BibMe (and that it generates citations for Web sites as well as books), I'll probably use that when citing a source. The fact that it can generate citations in MLA, APA, Chicago and Turabian format won't matter especially since I am not likely to recognize the subtleties of citation styles used in wiki articles.

It would be helpful to point users to one of the citation generator sites like BibMe and explain how to generate and incorporate the citation.

It makes sense to have a policy so you can point to the policy if there is a conflict between contributors who have strong and differening viewpoints on how to cite sources. I suspect the main issue at the moment is with material lacking sources, so making it easy and do-able should be the highest priorities.

_____
Lise
Williamsburg, VA

31.03.2011, 14:22
randyhoffman
## Updated

After some input here in forums and others, I've updated the policy as follows. Is this better or worse than what we had before?

The wiki citations policy is as follows:

- Include the reference, no matter what style you use. If you do not know a citation style, simply add all of the information you can about the source and place punctuation between the different parts of the source.
- Because content on websites can move frequently, do not include only a URL when citing a website.
- Keep the citation style consistent within an article.

As a result of the above guidelines:

- The first contributor to add a reference to an article sets the style for that article.
- If you want to change the reference style in an article, or if there seems to be no style in use, communicate with the previous authors to find who added the sources, and ask for permission to change the reference style.
- If you add a reference that does not match the article's current style, another author can change it, aligning it with the article's style.

Source Citations in the Wiki contains more a list of styles and examples of each style.

BibMe.org has a reference tool that allows you to select the type of source, enter

information about the source, add it to a bibliography, and change the format between Chicago, Turabian, MLA, or APA.

01.04.2011, 17:39

jamestanner

## What happens if the author of the cite doesn't respond?

If you try to contact the original author and have no response, there should be a time limit as to how long you have to wait before making a change.

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James Tanner
http://genealogysstar.blogspot.com

04.04.2011, 11:24

hasletonee

It is interesting to look at the progenealogists.citation guide online to see what they suggest for citations formats. Do we want to adopt some of their suggestions? The bottom line is that we want to encourage documentation because if we do not, then the quality of the content on the Wiki will be less credible.

04.04.2011, 13:24

cottrells

I support Randy's proposal. I think it addresses what I see as the major points

- Encouraging the inclusion of source information, whatever format is used, should be paramount.
- Using a consistent style on a page or within a project (groups of pages) will help readability, but is secondary to having the source details to begin with.
- Communicating with other contributors is good manners (on this an all other topics).
- Documenting/directing people to examples of good citations, explaining why they are important, would be much appreciated.

05.04.2011, 17:17

VasquezJL

At first I really liked the proposal. But on further thinking, I have some concerns. I think we should take a stand and say, use the style in this order of preference, or if you don't know the specific style, add "this" information. Sometimes people don't care what your answer is, they just want a specific answer so they don't have to think.

Here are a couple other questions/concerns:

1. I would add something short and sweet that explains what is in a reference (author, title, publication date and company), or something like that, to the first bullet

2. I think that URLs should be included, with the date the info is pulled. That's what I've seen in all books that mention citing sources from the internet, why not here? If it changes, the link can be changed then.

3. I think we should simplify and as much as possible conform and assume the guidelines already in place in the wiki. This affects mostly the second section.

3a. I don't think I agree with the requirement to check with the original author before changing style formats, for a couple of reasons: We don't require that on any other part of the wiki. Why sources? Note the following from the Editing policy:

Quote:

> 5. Editing policy..... Be bold in correcting spelling, grammar, or other edits. Jump in! .... if you are correcting something and you find that you have **significantly changed the format, layout or content of the page** then consider that it may be better to make the changes gradually after consulting with the previous author. ...

I don't see this as a significant enough change that we need to check with the previous authors?

The 2nd reason I don't like that is that it will keep people from making changes to improve the sources based on needing to get permission - they just won't do it. We will have a very tiny % of people who will actually want to get to that detail to change citation styles, and if they do, they probably have a good reason to. My thought is to let them, and if someone is concerned about what was changed, they can talk about it then, just as they would with any other changes made in the Wiki.

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So, here's a counter proposal *(with comments in italics)*:

The FamilySearch Research Wiki encourages the use of source citations in all of its articles to show where information comes from and help individuals find places to look for further research. To cite your sources:

- Include the reference to where information came from. Any style is acceptable, though the following are encouraged if you are familiar with them, in this order:
- *Elizabeth Shown Mills/Chicago/Turabian *(from what I heard, these are mostly interchangeable?)*
- *MLA
- *APA

- *If you do not know a citation style, simply add all of the information you can about the source (author, title, publication information, date, page#) and place punctuation between the different parts of the source.
- When adding a website as a reference, be sure to include the date the link was captured because content on websites can move frequently.
- Keep the citation style consistent within an article. The first contributor to add a reference to an article sets the style for that article.

*(I removed the lower bullets and incorporated one of them into the last bullet above - mostly for simplification and because of suggestion #3 above - for example, the last bullet about the fact that another author may change it - isn't that a given?)*

Source Citations in the Wiki contains more a list of styles and examples of each style.

BibMe.org has a reference tool that allows you to select the type of source, enter information about the source, add it to a bibliography, and change the format between Chicago, Turabian, MLA, or APA.

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*Note: I agree that communicating among authors is very important. I just don't know if we should be adding an extra layer of it within the source guidelines?*

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*Last edited by janellv; 05.04.2011 at 17:19. Reason: added note*

05.04.2011, 17:26

jamestanner

## Very reasonable and appropriate

I like Janell's suggested changes and compromise. I too was concerned about contacting contributors who may have only casually added the information on a one time basis. It was sort of like have a barking dog telling you that you did it wrong.

I think the suggestion is broad enough to cover almost every contingency.

---

James Tanner
http://genealogysstar.blogspot.com

06.04.2011, 10:00

## randyhoffman

Awesome, Janell, I think this is no longer a working proposal, but a proposal. Let's go with it.

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*Last edited by randyhoffman; 06.04.2011 at 10:01. Reason: While Janell's title could be awesome, I was talking about the proposal*

06.04.2011, 10:02

## randyhoffman

### Other sources

WorldCat and Zotero can also be used to create reference citations, just like BibMe.

06.04.2011, 11:27

## VasquezJL

Ok, I have been thinking about it some I am reconsidering some of the wording - yes, I do this all the time - to simplify, and based on theAI's latest blog post. Let me edit and with what Randy just added here is an updated version:

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The FamilySearch Research Wiki encourages the use of source citations in all of its articles to help individuals find places to look for further research and to show the strength of the source materials. To cite your sources:

1. Include a citation reference showing where information came from. Any style is acceptable, though the Elizabeth Shown Mills/Turabian/Chicago styles are preferred (they are very similar).
2. If you do not know a specific citation style, simply add all of the information you can about the source and place punctuation between the different parts of the source. The important thing is to get the information down. A source citation consists of:
   - Author
   - Title
   - Publication Information
   - Date (if a website, the date the information was accessed)
   - Page Number
3. Keep the citation style consistent within an article. The first contributor to add a reference to an article sets the style for that article.

Additional help for creating citations:

Source Citations in the Wiki contains more a list of styles and examples of each style.

The following sites have tools that assist in the automatic creation of source citations:

- BibMe.org
- Worldcat
- Zotero

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I believe that the next steps to make a proposal an official policy of the wiki, the proposal has to be voted on to show that consensus has been reached. If everyone is good with this final proposal, I'll add a poll to this thread - or should we start a fresh one? I do need the links though for those 4 pages that we are linking to under the additional help section - anyone have those?

06.04.2011, 20:57

jamestanner

**Wording**

The sentence near the bottom starting out "Source Citations in the Wiki..." doesn't seem to make sense.

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James Tanner
http://genealogysstar.blogspot.com

07.04.2011, 14:17

VasquezJL

I believe the intent of that was to link out to one of these pages:
https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Hel..._add_citations
https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Cit...e_Footnotes%29
https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Tra...e_Your_Sources

But I wasn't sure which one - these last parts are from the original proposal so I was curious which link was suggested here. Also, the links to the tools - I wasn't sure what those links should be either?

07.04.2011, 16:21

WarrenBittner

The main style difference I have found between Elizabeth Shown Mills vs. Chicago and Turabian is that Elizabeth stresses footnoting every statement of fact at the sentence level. Chicago and Turabian suggest combining all footnotes at the end of a paragraph. Personally, I find sentence level footnotes are much easier to track back for specific statements when there are many sources for a paragraph.

07.04.2011, 22:54

bj819

## New member comment

I am a new member to the FamilySearch Forums. I signed in today and read this thread. I really enjoyed the comments. I know how important reference citations are. They make follow up easier and save time in not having to do repeat research. I agree that making citations should not be over combersome. This will encourage the average geneologist to use reference citations. I like the proposed suggestions. I am enjoying the open discussion and hope to contribute.

I am a Ward Family History Consultant, and Assistant Family History Center Director. My wife is also a Ward Family History Consultant. This is my first attempt with Forums and with FamilySearch Wiki. I am trying to learn as much as possible. Today I also completed an online course on FamilySearch.org. Great Stuff!!

Bruce Jaeger

07.04.2011, 23:07

jamestanner

## Citing sentences

I think that citations at the end of a paragraph can sometimes be ambiguous. If a statement is made in a sentence that need attribution, I would expect a footnote to that sentence or at least at the end of the series of related sentences.

I do get the point that there is a difference between the three methods of citation. But I think that citations can be added by subsequent readers if they think additional citations are necessary. You can always add another reference.

I still like Janell's policy statement.

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James Tanner
http://genealogysstar.blogspot.com

07.04.2011, 23:59

bj819

## Citation Proposal

I like Janell's proposal. It encourages everyone to use research citations, and it is useable and understandable for the average Family History user.

Bruce Jaeger

12.04.2011, 09:31

cottrells

## Request to close thread

**ADMINS:** Please close this thread as the discussion has moved to a new thread, which includes a poll - Citation Proposal