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Rachel K Schenk Memorial Scholarship

Editor

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Can a Classic Improve Its Style
from page 30

ily not definitive and will doubtless change [emphasis added] as technology, scholarly uses of electronic materials, and electronic publication practices evolve. (208)


Although the more cynical reader might think *MLA* is throwing in the proverbial towel, this reviewer believes *MLA* has developed a philosophy about citing Internet sources, which allows guidelines, but gives the researcher latitude to cite a source as information is given. Considering the nature of the Internet, the admission they cannot pose strict rules is actually gratifying. It may make users uncomfortable, especially those who need a visible framework, but it is appreciated *MLA* is willing to work with technological changes rather than stonewall them. Yet, in the very nature of bibliographic citation, the user works with the information that is given. It just seems Internet sites are much more erratic in providing the necessary information for a complete citation.

Examination of Chapter 5, Section 9, where the examples of electronic citation are compiled,

contains more examples of electronic possibilities than this reviewer could have imagined. The examples are in keeping with *MLA's* decision to adhere closely to citing scholarly sources. Yet, at least for the undergraduate student, most of these examples will be superfluous. That is the beauty of a good thorough citation guide. The user is given examples of as many possibilities conceivable and even though there might not be the exact example, the skilled user can piece together an acceptable citation.

Does this reviewer agree with all the recommendations *MLA* makes for electronic citation? No. Not really. The quibbles are small. They may be more just a matter of preference than anything. The primary one deals with the use of the URL following the citation for a library subscription service. The use of it is felt to be unnecessary by the reviewer. Experience shows that most, if not all students, access these services through links in a library homepage. Using the URL—even from a computer whose ISP is recognized by the service as a subscriber—often gets the searcher to the company's main page and no further. Finally, URLs can be inconsistent. But such an adjustment can be made without any difficulty. As sources on the Internet are refined—we can only

hope—the uniformity and consistency for citing electronic sources will also be refined.

Admitted, this reviewer has had a love-hate relationship with the *MLA Handbook* over the years. It has been necessary to use it as both a librarian and as an instructor, but a level of satisfaction and trust—for lack of a better word—was never quite achieved. With the introduction of the 6th edition, Gibaldi and *MLA* have reached a balance acknowledging research and citation as it exists presently, but leaves the door open for adapting to the inevitable changes technology brings. My ho-hum attitude is gone. This is the standard for all future editions. 

References

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