

The ALWD Citation Manual Grows Up: A Guide to the Second Edition

In 2000, the *ALWD Citation Manual* emerged as a major competitor to the *Bluebook*. Years earlier, frustrated by the *Bluebook's* needless complexity, often pointless formalism, and arbitrary changes from edition to edition, the Association of Legal Writing Directors recruited Professor Darby Dickerson of the Stetson University College of Law to draft a citation manual more responsive to the needs of the legal profession. The result was the first edition of the *ALWD Manual*.

Importantly, the *ALWD Manual* does not substantially depart from traditional legal citation form. Rather, as a “clear, concise, and user-friendly manual,” it “greatly simplifies the learning of legal citation.”¹ To be sure, it contains a few major changes; unlike the *Bluebook*, for example, it makes no distinctions between citation formats for court documents and journal articles. But, these changes respond to longstanding complaints by practitioners and professors about irrational or ambiguous *Bluebook* rules. *Bye Bye Bluebook?*, published here in August 2000, summarized the primary features of the *ALWD Manual*.²

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When originally published, the *ALWD Manual* opened to rave reviews. Wooed by its simplicity and clarity, practitioners, professors, and law librarians—even a few students—waxed rhapsodic about its virtues.³ Perhaps more tellingly, *Bluebook* loyalists have acknowledged the strength of the competition. In his review of the seventeenth edition of the *Bluebook*, C. Edward Good grudgingly conceded the *Manual's* merit:

*Before beginning a review of the new edition [of the Bluebook], I should pause and comment on what I view (at this moment in time) as the bad news: the publication of the ALWD manual. At the outset, I must say that it does an excellent job of teaching and explaining legal citation. . . . [O]verall, [it] is much easier to use than the Bluebook.*⁴

And the proof is in the adoptions: students from more than 90 law schools now use the *ALWD Manual* to learn legal citation.⁵ Even courts, including federal courts of appeals, have begun to adopt it as their authority for citation form.⁶

Still, no product is perfect—especially first editions—and the first edition suffered from minor shortcomings. Critics pointed out the typographical errors (inevitable in any first edition), less than comprehensive index, confusing rules on capitalization and punctuation, and incomplete coverage of international and specialized sources.⁷

The second edition addresses these criticisms, as well as the suggestions of professors and practitioners. Of course, typographical errors have been corrected, and the index has been expanded. The Preface to the second edition identifies other changes. Most notably, the scope of coverage has increased. Although the first edition's coverage of citation form for general sources was comprehensive, specialized sources received relatively short shrift. The second edition remedies this oversight. Specifically, it contains expanded coverage of:

- primary tax materials, including cases, statutes, and administrative materials (located in new Appendix 7)
- uniform laws, model codes, and sentencing guidelines (Rule 27)
- federal specialty reporters (Appendix 1)
- ethics opinions and jury instructions (Rule 17)

The second edition, like the first, intentionally omits coverage of international and foreign materials. The Association of Legal Writing Directors intends to publish a separate manual for those citations.⁸

Some other changes: (1) new abbreviations in Appendix 3; (2) additional rules or clarifications of existing rules for typeface, capitalization, and punctuation; and (3) additional rules for citing online material. Finally, in response to many complaints, the abbreviation for the *Southern Reporter* has

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been changed from S. to So. The Preface explains that “[i]n the future, ALWD will conform reporter abbreviations to those used by West.”⁹

Let’s face it: legal citation is a drag. And for all its virtues, the second edition of the *ALWD Manual* can’t change that eternal truth. But the second edition’s increased clarity and comprehensiveness alleviate at least some of the drudgery of citation—and that alone is a noteworthy achievement. ♦

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FOOTNOTES

1. Pamela Lysaght and Grace Tonner, *Bye Bye Bluebook?* 79 Mich. B.J. 1058, 1059 (Aug. 2000).
2. See id.
3. See, e.g., Carol M. Bast and Susan Harrell, *Has the Bluebook Met Its Match? The ALWD Citation Manual*, 92 Law Libr. J. 337, 351 (2000) (characterizing the *Manual* as “reader-friendly”); M. H. Sam Jacobson, *The ALWD Citation Manual: A Clear Improvement over the Bluebook*, 3 J. App. Prac. & Process 139, 156 (2001) (recommending the *Manual* for its “ease of reference, clarity of explanations, and completeness”); Melissa H. Weresh, *The ALWD Citation Manual: A Coup de Grace*, 23 U. Ark. Little Rock L. Rev. 775, 806 (2001) (praising the *ALWD Manual*’s “practical, common sense approach to legal citation”).
4. C. Edward Good, *Will the Bluebook Sing the Blues?* 37 Trial 78, 79 (Jan. 2001) (emphasis added).
5. See Association of Legal Writing Directors, *ALWD Citation Manual*, <http://www.alwd.org/cm> (last visited Oct. 31, 2003) (listing schools that have adopted the *ALWD Manual*).
6. See id. (listing courts, including the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, that have adopted the *ALWD Manual*).
7. See, e.g., C. Edward Good, *Will the ALWD Manual v. the Bluebook Be the Trial of the Century?*, 37 Trial 76 (Sept. 2001) (discussing deficiencies in the *ALWD Manual*); see also James T. R. Jones, *Book Review*, 73 Temp. L. Rev. 219, 224 (2000) (reviewing *ALWD Citation Manual: A Professional System of Citation*) (criticizing the first edition’s incomplete coverage of specialized sources).
8. *ALWD Citation Manual*, supra note 5, at <http://www.alwd.org/cm>.
9. Association of Legal Writing Directors and Darby Dickerson, *ALWD Citation Manual* xxiv (2d ed., Aspen L. & Bus. 2003).

