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Update: Resources for Supporting the APA Publication Style

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Almost the very same day I received my copy of the April-June 2009 issue of the *Journal of Hospital Librarianship* containing my article “Resources for Supporting the APA Publication Style”, (1) I received an announcement that the 6th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* would be published on July 1st, 2009.(2) Given that my article had reported that the APA had no plans to publish a 6th edition, it was surprising that one would be forthcoming so quickly.

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* 6th edition is a welcome development for academic paper writers, instructors, and publishers. The 6th edition provides an update and revised rules for citations, references, and guidance on writing manuscripts. The 6th edition is concise: at 272 pages, it is 167 pages lighter than the 5th edition at 439 pages, but the cost is slightly higher (\$28.95 for softcover). No longer do authors need to navigate between the 2007 supplement for electronic references, the 2002 update of *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (published on the APA Ethics Office web site), and the *Publication Manual*.

This update will discuss the main features of the 6th edition, which distinguish it significantly from the 5th edition. Differences between the style and formatting guidelines of the 5th and 6th editions can be found on the APA Style web site.

New Features for the 6th Edition

Published in the Specialty of the House Column. This is an Author's Accepted Manuscript of an Article published in the *Journal of Hospital Librarianship*, 14(1), January-March 2014, available online at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/15323269.2014.861308>

A significant development in 2009 is a complete overhaul of the APA Style web site at www.apastyle.org. (3) Among the new and innovative features are free online tutorials, an APA Style Blog, and an online APA Style course.

Two tutorials, “Basics of APA Style”, and “What’s New in the 6th Edition” are offered with audio narration for free. An online course, “Mastering the APA Style”, is offered for those who are already familiar with past editions of APA Style. The cost is \$40 for non-members of the APA. Also new are full-text example papers, MS Word templates for APA, and supplemental materials related to the chapter topics, all available for free.

The innovative APA Style Blog is an entirely new feature, providing interaction with APA Style editors, and establishing an online community of *Publication Manual* users. (4) The APA Blog provides in depth discussion on other topics such as how to cite new media such as Kindle, Facebook, and text messages. In September 2009, the following topics were posted on the APA Style Blog during a one-week focus on URL’s and DOI’s:

- “DOIs and URLs: Special Focus Next Week”, by Ann Woodworth, posted September 17
- “A DOI Primer”, by Chelsea Lee, posted on September 21
- “A DOI and URL Flowchart” by Chelsea Lee, posted on September 22
- “Will URLs Be Lost in the Arcades?”, by Annie Hill, posted on September 23
- “What to Use—The Full Document URL or Home Page URL?”, by Paige Jackson, posted September 24

APA has also initiated an “Ask the Experts” email address (look under “APA Style Help”) in the event users are unable to answer questions by referring through the *Publication Manual*, APA Blog, or web site.

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As in the previous version, The APA Style web site will continue to be an important resource for navigating updates to the style and related publications. APA provides basic examples of how to cite materials used in writing research papers and a list of Frequently Asked Questions, and errata. A catalog of related APA Style resources and instructional aids such as the *Concise Rules of APA Style*, and *Mastering the APA Style* has been updated and revised for the 6th edition. Do not confuse *Mastering the APA Style* or *Concise Rules of APA Style* with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, which is the core resource you want for your collection.

Corrections to the First Printing

As academics and professionals started using the 6th edition, the APA Style editors became inundated with phone calls, and emails with questions about why the example papers in the *Manual* sometimes did not follow the new rules. Numerous typographical errors were also reported, including instances where the *Publication Manual* did not follow its own citation and format rules, resulting in the APA Style editors issuing an 8-page PDF document, “Corrections to the First Printing of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (July 2009)*”. A web page, “Reprint Corrections, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*” was published, as well as corrected sample papers. In late 2009, the APA publishing house offered to replace copies of the First Printing if requests were made by a December 2009 deadline. Purchasers of the 6th edition may wish to check for not only publication date, but also printing date.

Library Support of APA Style

In response to the publication of the 6th edition, academic writing centers and instructors have updated their resources. The Governors State University Regional Online Writing Lab (GROWL) used Published in the Specialty of the House Column. This is an Author's Accepted Manuscript of an Article published in the Journal of Hospital Librarianship, 14(1), January-March 2014, available online at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/15323269.2014.861308>

the opportunity to consolidate writing helps previously provide by both the library and GROWL, and update them. (5) I have used the opportunity to reach out to my College of Health and Human Services programs of Social Work, Nursing, Communications Disorders, Health Administration, and Occupational Therapy, to provide tutorial slides for online course shells, or to present my tutorial in person in class sessions for courses where the first APA paper is required in the program at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. I would be happy to share a copy of my APA tutorial upon request, that you may use or modify according to your needs with permission.

Librarians should not necessarily throw out their 5th editions right away. It will take some time for journals and academic programs to adopt the 6th edition rules, and students may still need to consult with 5th edition rules. When assisting academic paper writers, and scholarly article authors, librarians can always recommend to contact the instructor or editor to ask for clarification of how to handle style and formatting issues. Journal editors will appreciate careful consideration of rules when authors make style and format decisions, but finer points of style and formatting will not prevent a paper from being reviewed.

I wish you success as you serve an important role in assisting writers as they publish and as they complete academic papers.

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