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**ALWD Citation Manual: A Professional System of Citation**

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ALWD Citation Manual: 
A Professional System of Citation

by Terrill Pollman
and Leah Kane

There is a new text on the market that
is causing quite a stir in the legal academy,
and Nevada attorneys are bound to run
into it soon. It's a replacement for the
book you hated most in law school—that's
right—a replacement for The Bluebook:
A System of Uniform Citation. The trouble
with The Bluebook, as you probably
remember, is that it is neither systematic
nor uniform. To most
first year law students, The
Bluebook's patchwork of inconsistent
principles and arbitrary rules has felt like
some sort of crazy hazing tradition. To
legal writing teachers, The Bluebook has
been a nightmare because it combines two
deadly characteristics for teaching—it's not
only difficult material, but it's also boring.
Published by a small consortium of the
most elite law schools in the country, it
also seemed unassailable. But finally, a
group of professional legal educators have
decided to take on the Goliath. The
Association of Legal Writing Directors
(ALWD, pronounced "all-wed") has
written a new citation manual that is easy
to teach from and easy to use.

Although the ALWD Manual provides a very different teaching and learning experience, practitioners should experience few difficulties adjusting to the new manual. The ALWD Citation Committee, and Darby Dickerson, the primary author, adopted a conservative approach. Rather than creating a radically simplified system, they have aimed for a statement of citation rules as most professionals believe them to be. They call the new manual "a statement" of the rules of citation form. Because The

Bluebook is written by student editors of
several prestigious law reviews, the
authors are sometimes eager to put their
own stamp on the book by changing rules
without reason. Signal rules provide an
example. Most attorneys have learned
that when a source directly supports the
proposition the sentence asserts, no signal
is needed. They also have learned that
when the source provides support only by
implication, to use the signal "see." The
sixteenth edition of The Bluebook,
however, changed the signal rules so that
the "see" signal is needed for direct
support. Law students in the last two
years have learned to use the See signal
with nearly every cite. In fact, The
Bluebook has changed signal rules with
some regularity over the years, as new
editorial boards. The ALWD Manual,
however, presents the signal rules as most
attorneys learned them, restoring the
most common understanding of the "see"
signal. Although the ALWD Manual
generally presents citation as attorneys
believe it to be, there are some notable
differences between the two manuals. The
Bluebook uses one system for


citations in court documents, and another
system for citations in law reviews or
scholarly publications. The ALWD
Manual uses one system for both

situations—welcome to simplified typeface
conventions and the end of Practitioners' Pages.
Similarly, The Bluebook distinguishes between citing within the
text of a document and versus a separate
citation sentence, especially with
abbreviations. The ALWD manual uses
the same system for both.

There is one place where the ALWD
Manual makes a citation more
complicated than The Bluebook. When
citing books, the ALWD Manual requires
the inclusion of the publisher in the
parenthetical following the title, along
with the year of publication. The
Bluebook requires only the year. The
ALWD Manual added the publisher in
deference to librarians who advised that
books are much easier to locate when they
know the publisher.

The ALWD Manual is a great
improvement for teachers, students and
practitioners, but it does leave a few
projects undone. It contains no guidance
on international citation. It addresses
the new universal, vendor-neutral
citation forms, such as those propagated
by the American Association of Law
Libraries, but it does little to further the
cause of vendor-neutral citation. Finally,
the citation rules are still complicated,
and the new manual is long.

The length seems justified, however,
by the clear instructions on how to cite.
Sidebars throughout the manual help
users avoid common problems and
explain how to find any additional
information needed to follow the rule.
The introductory section explains how
wordprocessors affect citations. Icons are
used to make spacing rules easy to follow.
And ALWD maintains a website that
updates Manual users on citation news at
www.alwd.org. Browsing and
downloading are free.

The Boyd School of Law has adopted
the ALWD Manual and is teaching it to
the current entering class. Over eighty-
five other law schools' legal writing
programs have adopted the Manual as
well, along with a growing number of law
journals. Additionally, some courts are
beginning to consider using ALWD as
their citation manual. For example, the
Florida courts recently added it to the list
of permissible citation references. This is a


tremendous accomplishment, considering the Manual was just
published this year. So, although you may
find that your law clerks' and associates' use of citation appears the same (or even
better!), it's likely they are referring to the
ALWD Manual rather than The
Bluebook. And, you may hear fewer
groans about citation during the writing
process. N.