Listing Electronic Sources:

A Brief Guide

The information that follows is copied from *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students* by Gordon Harvey (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998, pp. 53-56). Harvey illustrates how to list a variety of electronic sources using the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS), the Modern Language Association style (MLA), and the American Psychological Association style (APA). He also includes a few examples for the style preferred by the Council of Biology Editors (CBE) and for an author-year-page style (ayp). Ask your teacher which style he or she prefers that you use.

**LISTING ELECTRONIC SOURCES:** Conventions for listing electronic references may not be fixed for some time, but common sense dictates these simple adaptations of standard citation styles:

- for any source accessed through the Internet, instead of publication information, provide a URL in angle brackets (starting with the means of accessing the site — e.g., http, telnet, gopher, ftp — or if unavailable, give directions for accessing);
- when citing an e-mail message, or a posting to a newsgroup, listserv, or HyperNews, include the author's e-mail address (in angle brackets) immediately after his or her name, and for the item title use the subject line (in quotation marks) in MLA or Chicago note style;
- after giving author, date of publication or posting, and title (or in MLA or note style, author, title, and date), supply the source's medium if it isn't apparent; in square brackets [e.g., online database, CD-ROM, online serial group discussion];
- for a source that is publicly accessible but subject to alteration, such as a website, use the date of last revision as the publication date, and end your citation with the date you accessed the source to cite it;
- enclose all electronic addresses in <angle brackets>, making sure not to separate elements of the electronic address with spaces or end the address with a period, and retain your source's use of lowercase or uppercase letters and of slashes in the address;
- break a URL immediately before a dot or after a backslash, never mid-word or mid-phrase, and if a URL is very long (more than a full line), try to shorten it by mentioning the last element or two of the address (e.g., file sections) in the text of your paper instead, or in a footnote or parenthetical citation (like a page number).
Electronic Sources

Work, article, information, or graphic on the Web

**CMS**

**MLA**

**APA**

**CBE**

**Telnet or FTP site**

**CMS**

**MLA**

**APA**

**ayp**

**Contribution to a listserv or newsgroup**

**MLA**
Raner, Claude. <raner@wiz.bristol.ac.uk> "Against Guns." 3 May 1997. <alt.weapons.ops>. 3 May 1997 (cited 30 May 1997).

**APA**

Only listservs that are archived (like the one above) should be included in the APA references list.

**E-mail message**

**CMS**

**MLA**
King, Marna. <mlk@fas.harvard.edu> "Responsibilities of Users." Personal e-mail. 16 April 1997.

In APA style, don't include e-mail messages in the references list; give the information parenthetically in your text. In all styles, cite
such messages as sources only if you are acknowledging a debt or if you can provide a copy of the text if a reader requests.

Text or abstract from an information service or database

APA  


In the case of an unpublished paper, give its date of delivery before the reference number. For an abstract, insert the words Abstract from: before the name of the database and item number:

APA  