2. Citations

Citations

Proper legal citation is a crucial aspect of legal writing. Citations help the reader locate and understand the authorities relied on in legal documents. The primary purpose of legal citation is to provide a standardized[9] and transparent method for referencing legal sources, thereby promoting the efficient dissemination of legal information.
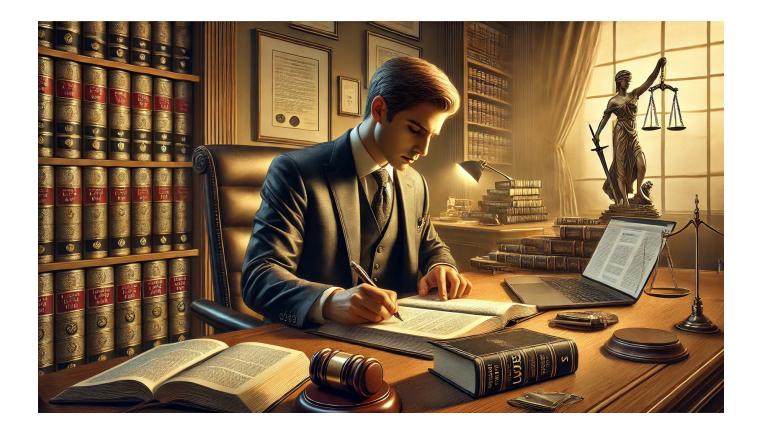
The two most popular legal citation formats are The Bluebook and the Association of Legal Writing Directors (ALWD) Guide to Legal Citation (please see links below). Both are used widely in the United States and serve similar purposes. However, there are some differences:

Audience

- Law reviews, courts, and law schools mainly use The Bluebook. Since many practitioners learned citation using The Bluebook method, many use this as their default citation form.
- The ALWD Guide to Legal Citation was developed as an alternative to The Bluebook and is often used in legal writing programs. It was designed to be more user-friendly and accessible than The Bluebook, especially for new legal writers.[10]

Format and Organization

- The Bluebook is organized into rules for different legal sources (e.g., regulations, cases, statutes). It provides detailed guidance on citation formats, signals, and abbreviations.
- ALWD is formatted and organized to offer more straightforward explanations and rules that are easier to use. It provides citation rules for the same legal sources as The Bluebook.

Online citation tools

Legal citations can be time-consuming – which is exactly why there are so many free online tools to assist in the process. After using these tools, readers are encouraged to review citations for accuracy.

- **The Indigo Book**[11] is a free-to-use citation guide created by a group of New York University law students. The Indigo Book follows the same uniform system of citation and coverage as The Bluebook, but includes additional citation guidance for bills, legislative history, and other resources. The Indigo Book was released under a Creative Commons public domain license, meaning that users may copy, distribute, and otherwise improve it. The complete Indigo Book can be found here.

- **Zotero**[12] is a free, downloadable, open-source citation and reference software. Developed to manage bibliographic data and reference materials, Zotero's legal citation capabilities are currently limited to basic US and UK cases and statutory citations[13]. For in-depth legal citation assistance, Zotero's documentation recommends the community-driven Juris-M, an unofficial version of Zotero designed specifically for compliance with legal citation requirements.[14] In fact, Juris-M uses The Indigo Book citation system.[15]

- **Citeus Legalus**[16] is a free, automated Bluebook citation generator, purporting to be "the legal citation generator for lazy law students." Don't let the tagline fool you though – it's also for lazy attorneys and paralegals.

- **Westlaw Edge** and **LexisNexis** are the two most prominent and widely used legal research services, providing access to many legal resources. Both services typically offer the official citation to a case or law within each document . In Westlaw (see screenshot below), selecting and then right-clicking on the citation will display a "copy with reference" popup, allowing the user to copy the full citation of the document.

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9 But still very complicated.
10 Melissa H. Weresh, The ALWD Citation Manual: A Coup de Grace, 23 U. ARK. LITTLE ROCK L. REV. 775
(2001). Available at: https://lawrepository.ualr.edu/lawreview/vol23/iss3/2
11 Sprigman et al., The Indigo Book: A Manual of Legal Citation, Public Resource (2016)
12 Zotero. "Zotero | Your Personal Research Assistant."
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14 Zotero. "Legal Citations." https://www.zotero.org/support/kb/legal_citations
15 Juris-M. "Legal Citations with Juris-M." Last modified June 30, 2020. https://juris-m.github.io/posts/2020-06-30-0.html
16 Citeus Legalus. "The Legal Citation Generator for Lazy Law Students." http://citeuslegalus.com/

Last updated on July 25, 2024.

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