

## Reference Styles for Engineering Reports

The style and format for citing and listing reference is determined by the professional field. The Modern Language Association (MLA) style and format is often used by liberal arts fields. Citation by footnote is commonly used in the legal and humanities field. There are only two acceptable styles and formats for citing references in modern engineering writing. The two acceptable styles and formats are known as the:

- 1) **number format**
- 2) **author-date format.**

While both styles and formats are acceptable in modern engineering writing, the preferred format will generally be chosen by the publisher of the specific journal, book, etc.

### Number Format

The number format cites a reference in the text of the document by placing a number at the end of an appropriate sentence in the body of the document. The numbers increase sequentially from the first to the last citation in the body of the document. The number is enclosed in square brackets, e.g. [1]. The closing bracket for the reference precedes the period at the end of the sentence. Each citation must have a corresponding reference in the List of References section of the document, and the references are placed in the order that they are cited in the text. If it is necessary to insert a citation and reference during editing of a draft document, all subsequent citations and references must be renumbered. For this reason, many engineering authors find the number format cumbersome.

### Author-Date Format

The author-date format cites a reference in the text of the document by placing the author's last name and year of publication at the end of an appropriate sentence in the body of the document. The author's last name and year of publication are enclosed in parentheses, e.g. (Peck, 2002). Append a lower case letter to the end of the year of publication to distinguish two separate references published by the same author in the same year, e.g. (Peck, 2003a) and (Peck, 2003b). For reference with multiple authors, use the *et al.* format, e.g. (Peck, *et al.*, 2004). Each citation must have a corresponding reference in the List of References section of the document, and the references are placed in alphabetical order. If it is necessary to insert a citation and reference during editing of a draft document, simply insert the appropriate information at the appropriate location. Other citations and references are not changed during the insertion of new citations and references. For this reason, many engineering authors find the author-date format quite convenient.

The four most common types of references are books, journal articles/periodicals, WEB files, and private conversations:

### Reference List Format for Books

***Author-Date format:***

*Author(s), Year, Title, Publisher, relevant page number(s).*

Jeter, Sheldon and Donnell, Jeffery, 2004, Writing Styles and Standards in Undergraduate Reports, College Publishing, Glen Allen, VA, p. 141-142.

Corresponding citation: (Jeter, *et al.*, 2004)

***Number format:***

*Reference number, author(s), title, publisher, year, relevant page number(s)*

1. Jeter, Sheldon and Donnell, Jeffery, Writing Styles and standards in Undergraduate Reports, College Publishing, Glen Allen, VA, 2004, p. 141-142.

Corresponding citation: [1]

### Reference List Format for Journal Articles

***Author-Date format:***

*Author(s), year, article title, journal title, volume (with number if appropriate), relevant page numbers.*

Wepfer, W. J. and Oehmke, R. L. T., 1985, "Computers in the Mechanical Engineering Instrumentation Laboratory at Georgia Tech," Intl. J. Appl. Engng. Ed., Vol.1 No. 6, p. 415-421.

Corresponding citation: (Wepfer, *et al.*, 1985)

***Number format:***

*Reference number, author(s), article title, journal title, volume (with number if appropriate), year, relevant page numbers.*

2. Wepfer, W. J. and Oehmke, R. L. T., "Computers in the Mechanical Engineering Instrumentation Laboratory at Georgia Tech," Intl. J. Appl. Engng. Ed., Vol.1 No. 6, 1985, p. 415-421.

Corresponding citation: [2]

### Reference List Format for Internet Posting

#### *Author-Date format:*

*Author(s), year, title of page, full URL, date viewed, organization.*

Pascal, C. C., 1998, "ME 4054: Thermal Sciences Laboratory," [Http://sk19.me.gatech.edu/laseb/me4054/me4054.thm](http://sk19.me.gatech.edu/laseb/me4054/me4054.thm), Jan. 8, 1998, George Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, Atlanta, GA.

Corresponding citation: (Pascal, 1988)

#### *Number format:*

*Reference number, author(s), title of page, full URL, date viewed, organization.*

3. Pascal, C. C., "ME 4054: Thermal Sciences Laboratory," [Http://sk19.me.gatech.edu/laseb/me4054/me4054.thm](http://sk19.me.gatech.edu/laseb/me4054/me4054.thm), Jan. 8, 1998, George Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, Atlanta, GA.

Corresponding citation: [3]

### Reference List Format for Personal Communication

#### *Author-Date format:*

*Author(s), year, private communication, author location, date of communication.*

Coon, D. N., 2004, private communication, Laramie, WY, August 19, 2004.

Corresponding citation: (Coon, 2004)

#### *Number format:*

*Reference number, author(s), private communication, author location, date of communication.*

4. Coon, D. N., private communication, Laramie, WY,  
August 19, 2004.

Corresponding citation: [4]