
AUDIOVISUAL CITATION

A project update

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- Existing referencing systems frequently prove inadequate for the citation of moving image and sound media such as videocasts, streaming television, sound files, un-catalogued archive footage, amateur content hosted online or non-broadcast radio recordings. A British working group funded by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and co-ordinated by the British Universities Film and Video Council is investigating this problem. This report by steering group leader Sian Barber provides an update on the project so far.
- Bestaande referentiesystemen blijken nogal dikwijls ontoereikend voor bewegende beeldbeschrijving en geluidsmedia zoals videocasts, televisiestreaming, geluidsbestanden, niet gecatalogiseerde archiefreeksen, online ondergebrachte amateuristische inhoud of de niet-uitgezonde radiofonische opnames. Die problematiek wordt namelijk bestudeerd door een Britse werkgroep gesubsidieerd door de Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) en gecoördineerd door de British Universities Film and Video Council. Het rapport, opgemaakt door Sian Barber, verantwoordelijk voor de pilootgroep, voorziet in een intermediair overzicht van dit project.
- Les systèmes de notations existants se révèlent inadéquats pour la citation d'images animées et de média sonores tels que les videocasts, la télévision en streaming, les fichiers sonores, les séquences d'archives non-cataloguées, les contenus amateurs hébergés en ligne ou les enregistrements radiophoniques non-diffusés. Un groupe de travail britannique, subsidié par le Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) et coordonné par le British Universities Film and Video Council, étudie ce problème. Le rapport, établi par la responsable du groupe de pilotage, Sian Barber, fournit un bilan intermédiaire de ce projet.

Why is citation important?

Have you ever wondered how to cite a TV advert? Or extra features on a DVD? What about a scene from a director's cut feature film or amateur film footage held in an archive? How do you ensure that those writing for your journal provide enough information on the moving image resources they have used? How can you give the best advice to students and how do you make sure that your own sound library or audiovisual archive resources are being correctly cited?

The answers could be closer than you think.

In an exciting initiative, the British Universities Film and Video Council (BUFVC) has brought together academics, archive historians, journal editors and researchers to address the complexities of audio visual citation. As part of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)-funded Shared Services project, this working group is currently producing a series of guidelines to enable the citation of a range of audio visual sources for teaching, learning and research.

Rigorous enough to provide all the necessary information for referencing purposes and yet flexible enough to allow for the citation of material as diverse as *YouTube* videos, radio

programmes and lecture podcasts, the guidelines will be made freely available in March 2013.

These guidelines will not contribute yet another full of referencing standards to the many which already exist. Rather they will deal only with moving image and sound. They are intended to be the first set of guidelines developed exclusively for these media forms and will recognise the individuality of a range of media types, many of which are being increasingly used within teaching and learning. The written word is no longer the only acceptable source to be cited within academic work, and as radio adverts, DVD extra features, recorded interviews, podcasts, streamed material, television programmes, web-based material, amateur film footage and un-catalogued moving image or sound are being increasingly recognised as valid sources for analysis and interrogation, then there is a further need for these sources to be adequately cited. In the era of *YouTube* videos, off-air recordings and DVD extra features it is crucial for students, researchers and academics to be able to cite these kinds of sources according to what is useful rather than simply title, author, date and publisher.

Steering the project

The steering group for this project comprises teachers, researchers and editors as well as those with library, cataloguing and archiving experience and the guidelines have emerged as a response to a number of case study examples supplied by steering group members. These case studies pertain to both teaching and research and emerged from the steering group members' own experiences in working with moving image and sound. In addition to these case studies, a full review of existing citation and referencing systems was conducted to help provide a basis for the guidelines being developed.

The work of the citation project began with a review of existing citation systems. These systems are well used but students of all disciplines frequently struggle to make a range of resources fit the parameters of Harvard, footnotes, MLA or Chicago style referencing. While University departments indicate to their students which referencing systems they should use, most academic journals require their authors to utilise other referencing systems, usually a variation of one of the established models.

Often subject-defined referencing systems do not allow for the adequate citation of some resources, for example, Harvard style referencing with its adherence to in-text citation, which is used heavily within film and television departments, does not easily allow for the citation of archive based resources or of online content. However the real problem identified within the survey of existing systems is the lack of detailed guidance supplied for the citation of moving image and sound.

Understanding the problem

Back in 2009, Alex Gill wrote in *Times Higher Education* about the complexities of academic citation and that understanding a bibliography "should not be a game of Cluedo"¹. In the system Gill proposes, he references podcasts, websites and ebooks but does not suggest that moving image merits its own citation system preferring instead to suggest that all resources are similar and advocates a "one-size fits all" approach to referencing. But is this really practical?

In their 2011 report *Film and Sound in Higher and Further Education* which was produced as part of the JISC Film and Sound ThinkTank, Paul Gerhardt and Peter Kaufman observed: "For academics to gain greater confidence in the use of moving image and sound content in research

*and publication, they will require the standardisation of citation and the assurance that collections will hold material and sustain collections on the same basis as print material"*².

As Gerhardt, Kaufman and others have noted, the citation of moving image and sound has been consistently neglected. Where reference guides do indicate how to cite media forms, they are usually based around the models established for the written word, models which privilege the author. Such an approach is not suitable for moving image and sound and even discovering such information can be difficult. These sources may draw upon many different authors; the author may be identified as the writer, director, producer, performer or a combination of all these roles. There are also differences between the different media forms. Within feature films the director is seen as the key authorial figure, within television programmes it is usually the series producer, rather than the director or producer of individual episodes with the author of dramas and specifically commissioned items also referenced as a key influence. With radio, if it is a play or drama, then it is usually the author who needs to be referenced.

Moving image showcased on sites such as *YouTube* also highlight the difficulties of referencing an author of a video. Very often, it is the video title which is the key piece of information, or sometimes even the person featured in the video, rather than the name registered on the *YouTube* site as the owner or creator of the material. And what if the material is a mashup of other material? Should the original source be cited as well as the author of the newly created material?

Another key issue which affects the citation of moving image and sound is the lack of attention frequently given to citing sections from a programme, clip or video. When referencing written material, researchers are expected to cite page number, publication year and the edition of the volume. Yet when it comes to moving image and sound citation is often vague. While this may not be a problem when referring to mainstream moving image texts such as feature films, it becomes increasingly problematic when different versions begin to appear, such as director's cuts, extended editions, and re-mastered versions of classic films with extra footage. A key part of scholarly work is accuracy and both citation and referencing should point towards the actual sources accessed, rather than simply indicating that the analysis draws on "scenes from *Blade Runner*" for example.

The issue of multiple versions and formats becomes ever more acute when dealing with content which has not been industrially produced. Amateur film footage, videos posted on *YouTube*, podcast and vidcasts may all exist in multiple versions. They may be accompanied by little metadata or cataloguing information, so it is essential that a researcher can accurately cite a piece of moving image and sound media and also for other researcher to follow that citation and find exactly the same material. To avoid confusion, citation information should include information on precise timings, access points and duration. Further useful information for audiovisual sources may include detail on date uploaded or created, version, format, date accessed, chapters, URL or point of access, and owner of material and this information is rarely included in text based citation formats.

However, it is important to be pragmatic. The citation should not be a catalogue record or a database entry. As with any source, you can find out a great deal about audiovisual material which does not need to be included in a straightforward citation. Digital records often include extensive metadata such as catalogue numbers, length of the footage in feet, the date of the original footage, when it was digitised, related items in the series and if it has been broadcast since its original transmission. This is important information, yet including all of this in a citation is not appropriate or practical.

A practical approach

A good citation should accomplish two main functions. Firstly, it should allow for an item to be accurately cited so that it is immediately clear what the item actually is. This citation should be specific to the medium being cited and should not contain any extraneous information. Secondly, the citation should be so clear and detailed that anyone interested in looking at the same material can follow the citation record and arrive at the same item without too much detective work.

After a process of continuous revision and amendment, the guidelines are now ready to be tested. In the past few weeks we have launched an online survey and begun recruiting people for

focus group sessions and remote testing of the citation guidelines. The response has been very positive and encouraging and we have gathered useful feedback but we have had difficulty in reaching the student audience, particularly the undergraduate student audience. This poses the question of who the citation guidelines are intended for? Of course, the citation guidelines are intended to help students and to improve the quality of their referencing and research, yet it is becoming increasingly clear that students themselves may not pick up upon citation initiatives. Instead students will hopefully be guided to useful guidelines through the encouragement of lecturers, support staff and audiovisual librarians. These are the most important people to reach through this kind of work.

A brief glance at those who have put themselves forward for focus groups and who have responded to the survey reveal that it is lecturers, information support staff and librarians who see this work as being valuable. It is also important to note that rather than simply being identified as a useful initiative by those who work with film and television material, those who work in a range of other disciplines have also supplied useful feedback. Respondents are drawn from the disciplines of Communications, Sociology, Modern Languages and Science, as well as those who work within film, music and television studies.

Following the testing of the guidelines and further revisions to ensure that they are user-friendly, we shall be publishing the citation guidelines online in March 2013. For more information on the project see our website³, join the discussion on *Twitter*⁴: or email <AVcitation@bufvc.ac.uk>

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Notes

- ¹ Gill, Alec. There are 3000 ways to cite source material – why not make it one? *Times Higher Education* [on line], 25 June 2009 (consulted 10 January 2013). <<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=407112>>
- ² Gerhardt, Paul; Kaufman, Peter B. *Film and Sound in Higher and Further Education: A progress report with ten strategic recommendations*. HEFCE, June 2011.
- ³ British Universities Film & Video Council. *Audiovisual Citation Guidelines* [on line]. <<http://bufvc.ac.uk/projects-research/sharedservices/avcitation>> (consulted on 10 January 2013)
- ⁴ Twitter. @BUFVC [on line]. <<https://twitter.com/bufvc>> (consulted on 10 January 2013).
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