

Introducing Audiovisual Citation

BUFVC guidelines for referencing Moving Image and Sound is a newly published report that aims to help establish new cataloguing standards for AV media.

Richard Hewett brings us up to speed.

Have you ever wondered how to cite a television advert? Or paused to ponder what kind of reference to provide for amateur film footage held in an archive? What advice should lecturers give students when they ask how to quote from a DVD commentary? And how can journal editors best ensure that contributors provide sufficient information on the sound and moving image resources they have used?

These are just some of the questions that *Audiovisual Citation: BUFVC Guidelines for Referencing Moving Image and Sound* is designed to address. Despite an exponential increase in the use of audiovisual material in teaching, learning and research for higher and further education, existing guidelines

Recommendations. In this document, Paul Gerhardt and Peter B. Kaufman highlighted the lack of appropriate referencing standards, stating that:

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 materials and sustain collections on the same basis as print material.

The British Universities Film & Video Council immediately set about meeting this challenge, establishing a steering group as part of its HEFCE-funded Shared Services project. This committee of academics, researchers, journal editors

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for referencing sound and moving image often fall short of providing the requisite information in a clear and comprehensive manner. Based as they are on standards developed for the written word, they too often attempt to shoehorn visual and audio material into a format which traditionally favours the author; a practice that is not always suitable to these types of text. In the era of YouTube and podcasts, it is crucial for students, researchers and academics alike to be able to cite these sources according to what is useful, rather than simply following inappropriate conventions that in effect discourage the citation of sound and moving image, creating barriers to its discovery, use and re-use.

The initial impetus for the *Audiovisual Citation* project was provided in 2011 by the HEFCE/Jisc report, *Film and Sound in Higher and Further Education: A Progress Report with Ten Strategic*

and archivists was tasked with creating a set of guidelines that would establish a consistent referencing model for anyone interested in citing audiovisual material. In order to ensure that *Audiovisual Citation* was both clear and comprehensive, a number of complex issues had to be negotiated, and from the summer of 2011 the committee held a series of meetings to propose, discuss and refine what form the guidelines should ultimately take. An early resolution was that, while it was desirable that the referencing system be compatible where possible with established models, any attempt to emulate those existing audiovisual referencing standards already judged to be inadequate would be self-defeating. To this end a new set of criteria was gradually created. After much discussion, five main categories emerged as being directly relevant to audiovisual citation:

- **Film**
- **Television**
- **Radio**
- **Other Audio** (e.g. archival recordings)
- **New Media**

'New Media' could refer to purely online or digital content, or materials such as video games, which would be difficult to reconcile with other media. Each of these categories had its own conventions, yet could be referenced in a manner that provided a strong sense of overall consistency. Certain information was designated as mandatory – dependent on the nature of the material being cited – while other, additional details could be included as and where appropriate or desirable.

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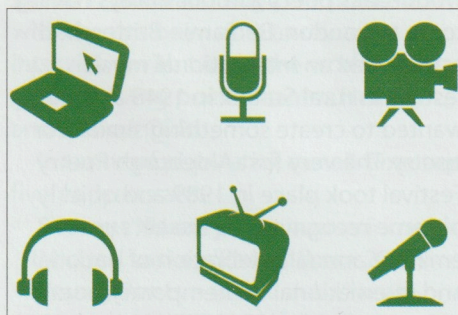
Another early decision was to dispense with the 'author' designation traditionally employed for print referencing; instead, all items would be listed by title. Creative personnel such as directors, writers and performers would still be featured, but the priority assigned to each would be left to the person providing the reference, dependent on the context in which the text was being cited. While it is traditional, for example, to list the director for feature film citation, there might well be occasions on which it was more appropriate to highlight the lead performers. While decisions such as this distinguished *Audiovisual Citation* from existing standards, they also provided greater internal consistency; for the first time, a radio programme or archival recording could be referenced on the same footing and in a manner consistent with film or television texts.

One of the most significant questions to be resolved by the group was the *nature* of material being cited. For example, would a segment from a feature film that had been made available on YouTube belong in the Film category, or that of New Media? Upon consideration it was proposed that, for the purpose of clarity, the item *type* should be clearly distinguished from its *format*, i.e. the form in which it was accessed or experienced. Of these two, the former would provide the key when

deciding into which category an item should be placed. For example, a feature film (type) that was designed to be experienced as such belonged in the Film category, even if it were accessed online (format) via a streaming site. However, a user-generated mash-up created online – which could consist of segments taken from an existing film – should be designated as New Media, as this was its sole intended mode of consumption or access in this form.

Over this period it often seemed that no sooner was one thorny referencing problem resolved than a slew of others raised their heads, but by December 2012 an initial set of guidelines were ready for user testing. This process

continued into February the following year, in an attempt to establish the effectiveness of the approach taken and refine any outstanding problems. Feedback was received from a variety of sources; an online survey generated 315 valid responses from librarians,



Some of the citation icons used in the report, *Audiovisual Citation: BUFVC Guidelines for Referencing Moving Image Sound and Vision Material*

academics, researchers and students, while additional focus group meetings were held and a task-based questionnaire circulated among volunteers, including representatives of the BBC, the British Library and the Wellcome Library. Overall feedback was positive, participants agreeing that the guidelines represented an important step forward in meeting a notable lack in referencing standards. A basic citation order for each media type was identified as a priority by 88% of online testers, while online access to the guidelines and a comprehensive list of illustrative

audiovisual examples were also key requests.

Based on these comments and recommendations, further revisions were conducted by the steering group before a final design was agreed upon. *Audiovisual Citation: BUFVC Guidelines for Referencing Moving Image Sound and Vision Material* was finally launched online on Wednesday 27 March 2013, with the print version following shortly afterwards. Rigorous enough to provide all the information needed for referencing purposes, yet flexible enough to allow for the citation of a diverse range of film, television, radio, audio and new media material, the guidelines serve a dual purpose: providing clear, practical guidance for audiovisual citation, while simultaneously ensuring that any and all material referenced and used in research and higher education can subsequently be found and utilised by others. Modes and points of access are key features of the bibliographical referencing system provided, from commercial DVD and audio releases to archival materials, online sources and off-air recordings, making the accessibility of materials cited a prime consideration – a facet not always adequately addressed in print referencing.

While designed to encourage best practice among users, the guidelines are in no way intended as prescriptive; rather than being a definitive, finished product, they remain open to future updates and feedback, ensuring that they can effectively respond to advances in technology, the development of new media platforms and – above all – the needs of the user. Grateful thanks are due to the various members of the steering group and volunteer testers, all of whose contributions helped make *Audiovisual Citation* such a significant milestone in the referencing of sound and moving image materials.

Dr Richard Hewett

Chair, Audiovisual Citation steering group
Email: AVcitation@bufvc.ac.uk

The *Audiovisual Citation* guidelines are now available, free to view and download, at <http://bufvc.ac.uk/avcitation/guidelines>.