



ASCRIBE 6.0 PROGRAM GUIDE

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AScribe is a personal card catalog and reference editor for research sources. The program uses a familiar card format to organize your database of research sources. A tap on the keyboard <space> bar shows how the information will look neatly formatted as a reference. A couple of more keystrokes will produce a reference list, bibliography, or set of endnotes or footnotes to be read by your word processor. While the program is intuitive to use, this guide explains the finer points.

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Reference Styles & Authorities

There are four versions of the program, each dedicated to style or family of styles. Each version formats references according to the most authoritative style guides available.

- **AMA** The American Medical Association (AMA) *Manual of Style*, 9th ed. (1997) is the reference for the AMA version of AScribe. The program also formats references in ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) or "Vancouver" style according to the "Uniform Requirements" featured on the official National Library of Medicine Web site (2005).
- **APA** The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed. (2001) explains how to format references to 95 different sources. These rules are embedded in AScribe's APA version. The program even formats the neat APA "Electronic Version" references to PDF files.
- **CMS** The *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (2003), is the standard style guide in history and many other fields. The CMS version of AScribe formats references in the three Chicago styles: End/Footnote, Bibliography, or author-date Reference List style.
- **MLA** The Modern Language Association (MLA) has developed a crisp modern reference style as described in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th ed. (2003). The program also formats MLA endnotes as described in Appendix B of the *Handbook*.

Import References. AScribe can import anything you can cut and paste into a Windows Notepad text file.

Word Processor. The program formats and writes references in Microsoft's Rich Text Format (RTF). This file format was developed by Microsoft to facilitate file sharing among various applications. Any word processor--MS Word or Works, or even Windows Wordpad--can read these files.

Notes & Indexing. AScribe also takes notes for annotated bibliographies and has a simple indexing feature for organizing references by subject or topic. Compose annotated bibliographies, indexed reference lists, indexed annotated bibliographies, or selected reference lists with only those references you have tagged. It only takes a second.

Internet? The World Wide Web has been fully integrated by all four styles. For most online sources simply enter the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and access date. AScribe does the rest.

Reference Files. Each version of AScribe comes with a reference file based on the respective style guide and the crib sheets available (free) at www.docstyles.com. Use these to explore program features and as a reference for entering sources.

1. AScribe Reference Managers: Overview

A! AScribe is a small database program with a very capable text editor to format references. As the program was initially developed in the early 1990s it runs below Windows directly accessing the "DOS kernel" at the heart of the Windows operating system. This portion of Windows is accessed through the "Command Line" feature or "MSDOS Prompt" on older versions. The program is compiled with a Microsoft compiler and is fully compatible with all versions of Windows and DOS back to version 3.2.

FEATURES

- *Reference Style.* AScribe gets it right. Serious effort has been invested to meet the requirements of each style, right to every period and comma. Fill in the blanks, AScribe does the rest.
- *Ease of Use.* The program organizes references as a file of note cards. This is a familiar and intuitive format for most users. A second display emulates a page with a formatted reference at the top, just as it will look in a word processor.
- *Word Processor.* Write references to a word processor file in Microsoft Rich Text Format (RTF). Read this file with any word processor, or even Windows Wordpad.
- *Import text and references from PDF documents, word processor files, and other electronic sources.* Cut and paste information from any source and read it into AScribe without retyping.
- *Real-Time Backup.* Each time you add or change information it is immediately saved on your hard drive. If something should interrupt a session, simply resume where you left off.
- *Capacities.* Catalog up to 800 sources in each of 24 registered files (a total of 20,000 references). Add a full page of text notes to each source, up to 350 words for each page.
- *Cost.* AScribe is a small fraction of the cost of any commercial or shareware program, and much easier to use, too!

AScribe is a DOS (Disk Operating System) program. Bill Gates--and the personal computer--both got their start with this operating system. The Windows platform continues to make DOS available as a legacy (the DOS Prompt or Command Line feature in versions of Windows). DOS runs much faster than Windows, a fact that was important until quite recently.

DOS LIMITATIONS

- *Square Display.* AScribe operates in a DOS window. The only display font available to the program is a constant-pitch or non-proportional font. The program writes word processor files to any font available to your word processor.
- *No Mouse.* AScribe works entirely from the keyboard using *hot keys*. This may not be a disadvantage since switching from keyboard to mouse and back again, and again, can get tedious.
- *Windows-DOS Links.* Windows lets you cut and paste directly from one application to another. This does not work with DOS. Instead, AScribe must import and export (write) files, but this is not difficult.
- *File Size.* DOS limits the size of files programs can use. AScribe is limited to files of about 800 reference entries. Still, a file this size will run to 40-50 pages, many more when notes are added.

COMPATIBILITY

AScribe files can be shared by the various versions of the program. However, the different styles format references to some sources differently. For example, medicine is a collective enterprise; authors may be representing a group.

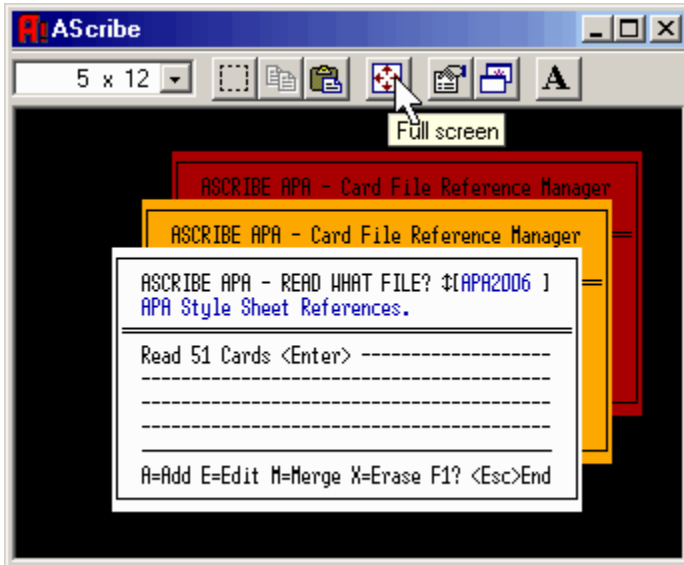
1. Moher D, Schultz KF, Altman D, [for the CONSORT Group](#). The CONSORT statement: revised recommendations for improving the quality of reports of parallel-group randomized trials. *JAMA*. 2001;285:1987-1991.

There is no counterpart to this reference to be found in the *APA Publication Manual*, the *Chicago Manual of Style*, or *MLA Handbook*. References to the more common sources--books and journal articles--transfer quite well. Cardfiles are not fully *interchangeable*, but are *transferable*.

2. Running AScribe: Setup, Backup, & Program Notes

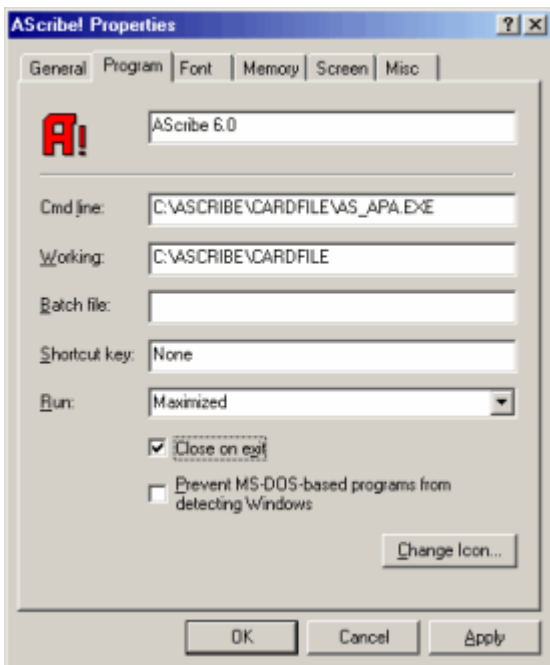
A! AScribe is installed to a new "C:\AScribe" folder by default (or anywhere else you care to put it). The program writes word processor files to this file location and reads a text file of information you wish import from this directory folder.

DOS Window. AScribe runs in a DOS window, but this should not be evident when running the program. It should open to a full screen, and to return to Windows after exiting the program. If that should fail to happen, Windows can be programmed manually to do this.



If the program fails to open to a full screen, it will appear something like this. To program Windows to open to a full screen simply click the "Full screen" button at the top of the window. This will expand it to fill the screen. Windows will remember the setting.

- *Alt + Enter.* When working with AScribe it can be helpful to return the program to a smaller window. This can be done by pressing *Alt+Enter* on the keyboard. Press *Alt+Enter* again to restore full screen.
- *Cut & Paste?* Unfortunately, it is not possible to cut and paste text from a DOS program into Windows. You must cut & paste to a file (see the sections on the Merge Utility, and Writing References).



Closing the Program. AScribe should close the DOS window when exiting the program. If it does not, Windows will generate a message but will not reprogram to close the window automatically. To set Windows to do this reset the program *properties*.

1. *Properties.* In Windows right click on the AScribe icon and select Properties from the popup menu.
2. *Program tab.* Click on the Program tab on the properties box. It should look something like the image.
3. *Close on exit.* At the bottom of the box click on Close on exit. A check mark will appear in the box.
4. *OK.* Click on OK. The next time you exit AScribe Windows should be fully restored.

Note: The program can also be set to open in full screen or a window by clicking on the screen tab and making the appropriate selection. It is best to leave other settings unchanged.

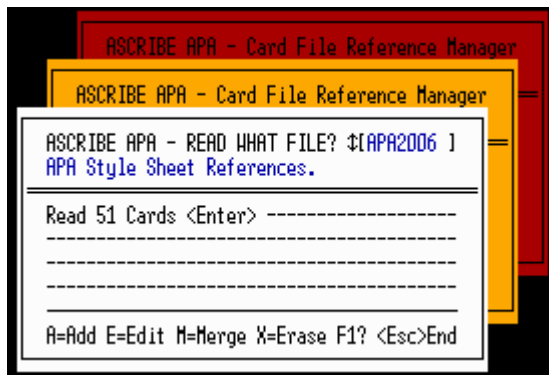
Switching Between Windows & AScribe. The keyboard command to switch between AScribe and Windows is *Alt + Tab*. To switch back press *Alt+Tab* again or click on the button on the task bar at the bottom of the Windows screen..

Backup & Recovery. Each time a card (record) is entered or edited it is immediately saved to the hard drive. However, when the program is interrupted it loses the sort sequence for its database, its index. This is readily restored by reading and resorting the cardfile. AScribe also has the ability to restore some damaged files. Try reading the file several times. Despite the error message it will restore what can be salvaged. It is always prudent to make a separate back copy of your work.

3. Opening Cardfiles & Entering Information

A! AScribe's opening display is the program's *File Manager*. Select which cardfile to read; open a new cardfile (open up to 24); delete a file; edit a description of a file; run the *Merge* utility; or exit.

FILE MANAGER



Read. Use the up or down cursor keys to select which cardfile to read. The display notes how many cards are in the file (there about 12-15 references to a word processor page). Press *Enter* to read the file.

Add files. The file manager can keep track of up to 24 cardfiles at a time. To add a new file press “A” and enter the name of the file (limited to 8 characters). Add a description of the file in the space below (up to 40 characters). Press *Enter*. AScribe opens to a program card. There must be at least one card in a file; this card can be deleted once you add one of your own.

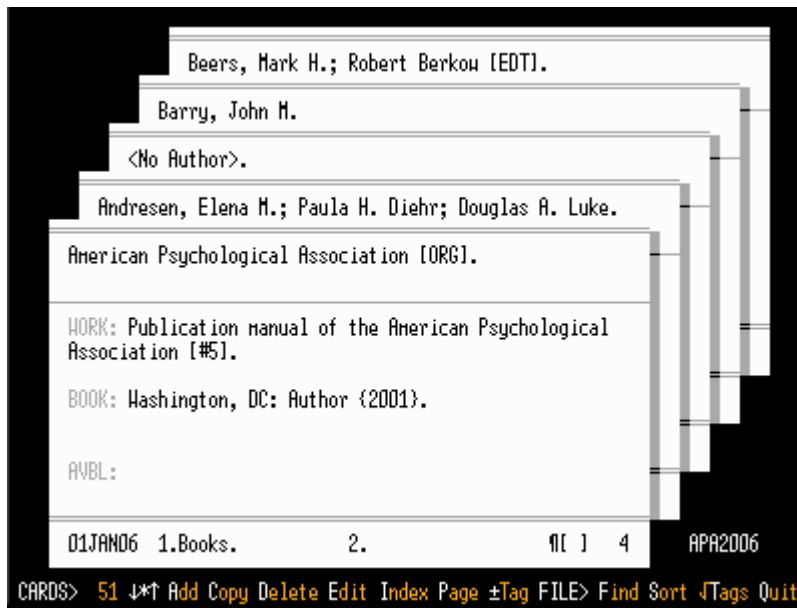
Edit description. The description of the file (in blue text) can be edited at any time, Press “E”.

Merge files. Cardfiles can be merged together. This lets you move references from one project to another without destroying or changing the initial file. This program also lets you import text and references without having to retype material (see the section on Importing Text & References).

Erase file entry. Cardfiles can be erased from the file manager by pressing “X”. *This deletes the entry in the file manager, but does not delete the card file.* To restore a deleted cardfile, imply Add it back into the file manager. The cardfile will be read as you left it. AScribe does not delete entire cardfiles.

Help? The “F1” summon a help screen anywhere in the program.

CARDFILE



Scroll through a cardfile using the cursor (arrow) keys on the keyboard.

The Command Bar at the bottom of the page lists the various commands available in each program mode.

Five Fields are displayed on the card, starting with the author at the top, followed by the title (WORK), the publisher (BOOK), and the URL/access date (AVBL) when required. At the bottom of the card is a housekeeping field that gives the date the card was entered or last edited, the index keyword(s) assigned, a “tag” indicator, and the number in the file.

BOOK/COMP/JRNL/MGPH/REVW. The record type is noted in the middle of the card. COMP stands for “Compilation,” the record format used for anthologies or chapters in edited books, and references to encyclopedias and dictionaries. The JRNL (journal) record format is used for all periodicals: journals, magazines, newspapers, and annual reviews. The MGPH (monograph) format is used for unpublished papers (except in APA style which also uses the type for published reports and Web sites.).

Availability Field. This is used primarily for URLs and access dates. AMA uses the phrase “Available at:” before a URL, as does APA style when no access date is needed, thus the name for the field.

ENTERING INFORMATION

Most references fall into one of five basic groups according to the source: (1) Books, (2) Compilations (parts of edited books), (3) Journals (and other periodicals), (4) Monographs (usually unpublished documents), and (5) Book reviews. Some sources, such as secondary references, are too complex for AScribe and rare in practice. Templates are used to enter information.

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

AUTHOR> Lead Author: Lastname, First M. or Organization.

Lead1: American Psychological Association.
[ORG]

Name2:
Name3:
Name4:
Name5:
Name6:
Last7:

EDIT> >>> ↓↑Field TAB>Next↓ Shift+TAB>Last↑ Shift+→Block F1? Exit<ESC>

Author. Two templates are required to enter information for a reference: the author template (shown), and the source templates (there are five).

- The display shows how the reference is formatted at the top of the page. Colors are used to indicate italics.
- The top line in the template (blue text) explains what information is to be entered and in what syntax. APA style list up to six authors; when there are more “et al.” is added. AMA style lists up to six; if more the first three et al. Chicago and MLA are ambivalent. MLA allows giving just the lead author *et al.* when there are more than three authors. The rules are embedded in the programs.

Once information is entered, the reference is reformatted and shown at the top of the page so you can immediately see the effect.

3. *University of Chicago Press, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

BOOK> Lowercase the title: subtitle (medium/column).

Title: The Chicago manual of style.
[15]

Pubsh: Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Date: 2003 []
VChp: Pages:

Avbl: [Z253.U69 2003]
Date:

EDIT> >>> ↓↑Field TAB>Next↓ Shift+TAB>Last↑ Shift+→Block F1? Exit<ESC>

Source. There are five different source templates, each asking for the information required to cite that source and have the program format the reference.

- The title is entered lowercase. The first word after a colon in a title, a subtitle, will be capitalized in all but AMA style which requires it to be lowercased. AScribe will do this for you if you do not.
- All styles accept the postal abbreviations for states. APA style has some cities that do not require a state; AMA style always requires the state; MLA style dispenses with it in the *Handbook*, most journals require the state when the city is not well known.

Web sources are fully integrated in all styles. The URL (uniform resource locator) is entered in the “Avbl” (Availability) field at the bottom of the page.

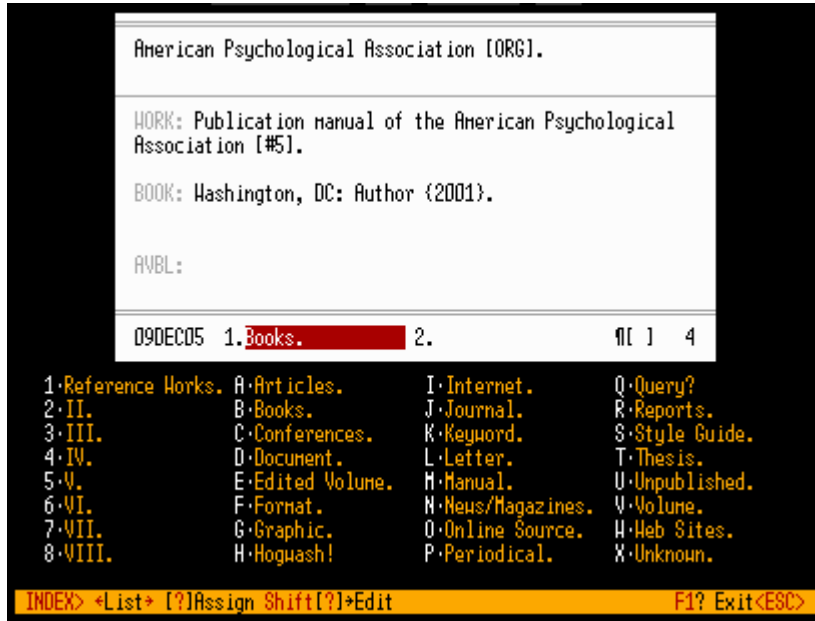
Dates. AScribe uses a short nine-character format for all full dates. This is in form Month Day,Year; the conventional American style of formatting dates but abbreviated. The program shortens a date such as November 25, 2006, to Nov25,2006. AScribe converts this to a number internally to keep the cardfile sorted correctly and to reformat the date in the formats required by the various styles..

Punctuation. The most complicated task the program confronts is punctuation and spacing. It will remove unnecessary spaces and multiple punctuation where it does not belong. It also understands the punctuation required for each of the reference styles.

4. Organizing & Annotating References

A! A Scribe sorts cardfiles in alphabetical order by author. When adding new cards they are inserted at about the right place in the cardfile (usually at the exact right spot). However, in some circumstances (eg, several works by the same author published the same year) the cards may not be in the exact order required. To assure the precise order simply resort the cardfile by author.

KEYWORD INDEX

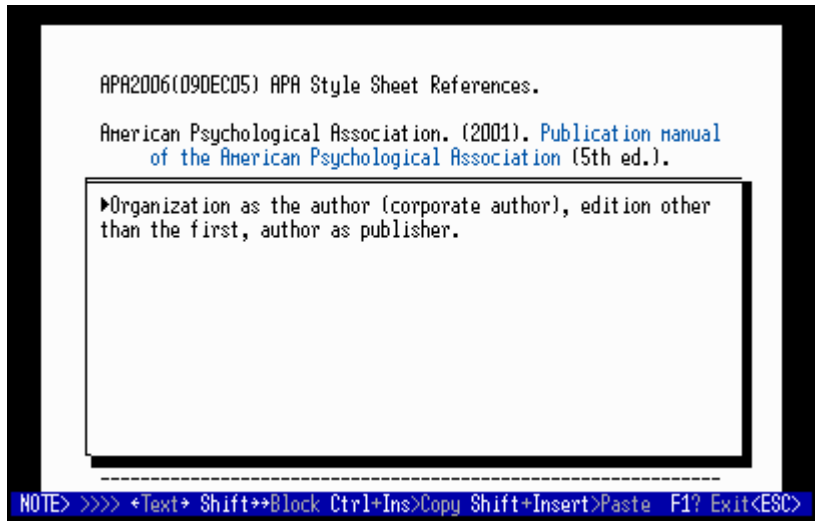


The **keyword index** adds a preset keyword to a card. There are two keyword lists, each holding 32 keywords. The permutations and combinations are well over a thousand; more than the number cards in any cardfile.

- A Scribe can be instructed to write references lists organized by keywords (see the section on Writing Reference Lists).
- A keyword on the lists can be edited or changed. All cards with that keyword assigned are updated at the same time.
- Indexing is especially helpful with large projects (like a dissertation or theses).

ADDING NOTES

Notes can be appended to any card. Enter the program's Page Mode (by pressing the *Space* bar). The press "A" (or "E") to add/edit a note. A note can also be inserted above a note already entered: press "I" or the "Insert" key.



Over a page of text (350 words) can be added to each card in up to 24 paragraphs (whichever comes first). This is a lot of annotation. A test file with 800 cards and full note pages produced a word processor file over 800 pages long!

- Each paragraph can have no more than 560 characters (about 100 words). Larger paragraphs can be imported, but they can't be edited.
- You can elect to write notes to a reference list, or not (see the section on Writing Reference Lists).


TAGGING CARDS

Not every source you log into A Scribe will necessarily be used in a research paper. You can "Tag" those cards you wish to use and have the program generate a reference list with just those references. This is done by pressing the "+" key on the keyboard. A check mark will appear in the little [] box at the lower left of the card. You can browse just these cards by using the program's "Tag" mode (press "T"). To un-tag a card press the "+" key again or the "-" key. When writing a word processor file you can elect to write the entire file or only the tagged cards (see Writing Reference Lists).

5. Writing and Reading Reference Lists

A! AScribe writes word processor files in Microsoft's Rich Text Format (RTF). This is essentially a "mark up" language not unlike HTML, but much more powerful. Microsoft developed the format to allow applications to share files, perfect for a program like AScribe.

Any word processor should be able to read RTF files. When Microsoft Word (or Microsoft Works) is installed it is usually set as the default application for RTF files. This means you should be able to read the file just by double-clicking on the file name in Windows Explorer. If this is not the case, right click on the file and select "Open With . . ." Select your word processor from the list of applications. Check the box "Always use this program to open these files." (Also see Windows Help, Keyword: "File Extensions").

 AScribe always writes RTF file to the "**C:\AScribe**" folder (default folder), to a file of the same name as the cardfile, but with an RTF extension, eg, APA2006.RTF.

Windows comes with a venerable application called Wordpad. This program is a small word processor that can also read RTF files.

WRITING WORD PROCESSOR FILES

Order. The RTF file is written in whatever order the cardfile is in unless the index option is used. The author-date styles (APA and Chicago) add a letter to the date in a reference when there are two or more works by the same author(s) in a year, eg, 1998a, 1998b, etc. But MLA style orders multiple works by the same author(s) alphabetically by title. *AScribe updates this information each time the cardfile is sorted by author.*

RTF Presets. AScribe's word processor file is preset for a 10-point sans-serif font (AMA/MLA) or a 12-point serif font (APA/CMS). Margins are not preset. References are written single spaced within paragraphs with a blank paragraph between references or notes (block paragraph spacing). These features are all readily changed in your word processor.

Options. An array of options are available when writing word processor files. The style selected, title font (italics, bold, underline, plain text), and indent preference are saved.* Others are reset to default settings.

**Font.* Most styles use italics in formatting book titles and journal names, but MLA prefers underlining; ICMJE requires plain text for everything. These options are preset, but can be changed.

**Indent.* Hanging indents or numbered endnotes are the default but can be reset to block paragraph formatting.

**Style.* More information, such as the full names of authors and editors, can be entered than is required for a reference in some styles. For example, full names are converted to initials in AMA/APA/ICMJE styles. While working on a research project it can be helpful to have full names to help track down additional works by an author. The "Bibliography" (AMA) "Working" styles format references with all the information entered to the card, also adding whatever has been entered in square brackets in the availability field (this lets you note the call number for books or add remarks).

AddNotes. Each card can have a page of notes (2048 characters, about 350 words in 24 paragraphs) appended. These can be included in a word processor file (an *Annotated Bibliography*), or not.

Indexing. Each card has two keyword index fields. You can (1) elect not to index (the default); (2) elect to index on just the first keyword field; (3) index on the first and second fields, the second nested within the first; (4) on just the second index field, or (5) on the second and first fields, the first nested inside the second. That is, all possible combinations of indexing are available.

Tags. Cards can be tagged by pressing the "+" key. When writing a word processor file you may opt to have only those cards included in the file.

URL. Web addresses, URLs, are expected to be up to date in a paper when it is submitted. It is a simple matter to verify that Web pages still work before composing the final reference list. The program can be set to substitute the current date as the access date.

 **Warning.** When writing a word processor file an earlier file of the same name will be overwritten with no warning. Move any file that you wish to save or change its name.

6. Protocols, Tips, & Tricks



Most AScribe features are self evident--it is as useful to explore the sample file-- eg. APA2006 --as to study this manual. But there are some things that are not obvious.

Dates. Different date formats are used by the various styles. Chicago style now prefers American style dates, April 1, 2006, but MLA style writes this 1 Apr. 2006. To meet these requirements AScribe uses a compact date format that recognizes 12 months and 4 seasons. A clever algorithm will usually decipher whatever you enter.

 **To enter the current date in the Access Date field (for an online source) press Ctrl+D.**

Merge Utility. Run the merge utility from the program's opening display (press "M"). It does two things:

- *Imports text* page copied from other sources (covered in section 7).
- *Merges* one cardfile into another. Select the file you wish add, then the file you wish to add it to. You will be given the choice of merging the entire file or just the tagged cards.

Scripting Tags. AScribe uses tags for some information. These tags are added to the end of a field in square brackets and are therefore visible in the cardfile rather than being coded and hidden in the database. The tags are entered after the lead author (&AL, EDT, ORG), and after the title (MSG, RPT, WEB in APA monographs), and for editions in all styles.

HELP

Each page or mode in AScribe has an accompanying help screen that can be accessed by pressing <F1>. These are especially useful when entering diacritical characters, or checking the commands for cutting and pasting text (they're conventional).

RECORD TYPES

A reasonably thorough rendering of most references requires a common template to enter authors' names, and five record types for sources: books, compilations, journals, monographs, and reviews.

Authors. Some styles--APA/AMA--present all names in *Lastname, F. M.*, format. However, it is often helpful to have first names when doing research, for example, when searching for additional works by a particular author. AScribe requires that the name of the lead author be entered Lastname, First Middle, but all other names are entered in their normal order. The program will turn first and middle names into initials as required.

- *Organizations [ORG].* When the author is an organization the program needs to know this so it will not try to turn most of the name into initials.
- *And Others [&AL].* Styles differ on how many authors must be listed in a reference. For example, APA style requires listing up to six authors to a work; if there are more "et al" (and others) is added to the list. Assign the "&AL" tag (below the lead author's name), enter the authors' names and the program will do the rest.
- *Editors as Authors [EDT].* Often an entire compilation is cited rather than a specific chapter in it. In these cases the editors' names go in the author position in the reference followed by "Ed./Eds." or some variant in the reference.
- AMA/ICMJE styles also reference the name of a group being represented by the listed authors. This is ignored in APA style, and not available in CMS and MLA styles.

Books. These are published volumes as distinct from compilations, papers, and reports.

- *Title.* APA style lowercases book titles, as does the Chicago Reference List and ICMJE styles. AScribe has the ability to uppercase titles (as required) but not the other way around.
- *Edition [###].* A scripting tag is used for the edition. This may be any number 2-999 or "A" for *abridged*, "R" for *revised*. The program lacks the ability to note "2nd revised ed." and such.
- *Medium.* Some sources require noting the medium when not a print source. These include CD-ROMs, an online database or monograph, or a computer program. Usually enter a note at the end of the title, in [square brackets] or (parentheses). This varies by style.
- *Volume.* If a work is in more than one volume, the number of the volume is noted, eg, vol. 2.
- These records transfer well from style to style, but see *Monographs* below for possible problems..

Compilations (Parts). These include chapters in edited volumes and works in anthologies. Whenever a published source is part of a larger volume--usually with an author of the part and editors of the volume--it fits this format.

- Editors Names. The program asks that editor's/translator's names be entered in their normal order.
- Page Numbers. APA and AMA styles *do not permit dropping digits* in inclusive page numbers, eg, 11234-8. Instead, write 11234-11238.
- These records transfer very well from style to style.

Journals. This is for all periodicals. Note, *Annual Reviews* are actually compilations, but since they are published annually articles/chapters are formatted as articles in a periodical. Magazines and newspapers do not require a volume and issue numbers, the date usually suffices. When the line between a journal and magazine is blurred, treat the source as a journal.

- *Journal Names.* AScribe places journal name in italics, as required by all styles but ICMJE.
- Online. Some journals are only published online. Add the URL and access date; AMA/ICMJE styles require a note [serial online] after the journal's name..
- *Volume (Issue).* Most research journals are page numbered continuously through a volume, each new issue picking up where the last left off. Some journals, however, start each issue at page 1. The issue number in the volume must also be cited. The format is Volume(Issue Number) or V(#).
- *Page Numbers.* APA and AMA styles *do not permit dropping digits* in inclusive page numbers, eg, 11234-8. Instead, write 11234-11238.
- These records transfer very well from style to style.

Papers & Reports (Obsolete). AScribe APA 5x version had a separate record format for these sources. This format is identical to that for books except that a document number may be added to a report. Use the Monograph format for these sources.

Monographs. Most styles have a composite format for unpublished papers and informal documents. The title is formatted like that of a journal article while publication information is formatted like that for a book. Unfortunately, the styles vary as what is-is not to be formatted as a monograph. For example, unpublished dissertations are formatted like a reference for a book in AMA and APA styles, but as a monograph in CMS and MLA styles. Thus, while these records are transferable among versions of AScribe, they may not transfer accurately.

APA style incorporates a few special options when referencing Web pages. When reading APA files in another version of AScribe these options are ignored. The options are initiated by entering the appropriate tag beneath the title.

- **MSG** (Posted Messages). APA style makes provision for citing messages posted to news groups. The following example is from the APA *Publication Manual* (2001, p. 277, exmpl. 85).

Chalmers, D. (2000, November 17). Seeing with sound [Msg 1]. Message posted to news://sci.psychology.consciousness

- **RPT** (Report). This tag causes the reference to be formatted like that for a book with the title in italics, often uppercased. The default is to format the reference as an unpublished document (in APA style like a reference to a computer program). When a document number is entered, it is formatted after the title (APA) or at the end of the reference depending on the style.
- **WEBS.** Some Web sites have an identifiable sponsor. When this is the case the sponsor is noted in the "Venue:" field, and a URL is entered, but no access date. The following example is from the APA *Publication Manual* (2001, p. 281, exmpl. 95).

Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics. (1991b). *National Health Provider Inventory: Home health agencies and hospices, 1991* [Data file]. Available from National Technical Information Service Web site: <http://www.ntis.org>

The sponsor, the "National Technical Information Service", is entered to the card as the "Venue." AScribe edits this to the format above, adding "Available from" and "Web site:".

Reviews. Book reviews are rare in citation but commonly published by many journals. So, a record format is provided. These transfer well from style to style when complete information is entered.

AMA: Camhi L, reviewer. *Village Voice*. June 15, 1999:154. Review of: Scott WB, Rutkoff PM. *New York Modern: The Arts and the City*.

APA: Camhi, L. (1999, June 15). Art in the city [Review of the book *New York modern: The arts and the city*]. *Village Voice*, p. 154.

CMS: Leslie Camhi, "Art in the City," review of *New York Modern: The Arts and the City*, by William B. Scott and Peter M. Rutkoff, *Village Voice*, June 15, 1999, 154.

MLA: Camhi, Leslie. "Art in the City." Rev. of *New York Modern: The Arts and the City*, by William B. Scott and Peter M. Rutkoff. *Village Voice* 15 June 1999: 154.

The AMA style dispenses with the title of the review article, the APA style with the names of the authors. When information is not required by a style it is ignored.

AVAILABILITY FIELD

Any source may be available online. APA, AMA, and CMS styles add text to the access statement, MLA style puts URLs in angle brackets <URL>. When the URL and access date are entered to the card AScribe will format this statement for you. Without an access date the rules vary. Note, the "http://" part of the URL (file protocol) is required by all styles, although British journals have begun to drop it.

- URL (No Access Date). When just a URL is entered, the reference is formatted: "Available from URL" in APA style. In other styles it is added to a reference as entered to the card, as plain text.
- Plain Text. When text is entered it is exactly reproduced at the end of a reference unless in brackets.
- [Note]. Most sources are not online, and do not require a URL. The availability field can also be used for brief notes, such as the call number of a book. Enter notes in [square brackets]. These are not added to references in the formal style(s), but are when the "WRK" (Working) style option is selected.

Access Date. Although the Chicago Manual of Style suggests this is not meaningful, journal editors expect to see it.

- *Access Date.* Enter the current date in the access date field by pressing **Ctrl+D** or type it in.
- *Update Access Date.* It is expected that URLs will work when the reader/journal editor tries them. Therefore, they should be updated as the last task in preparing a research paper. Any access date can be entered into AScribe, but access dates that conform to the program's short format can be updated automatically when writing a word processor file.

PROGRAM NOTES & SHORTCUTS

Add Cards. The database is always opened with 40 blank cards. If you attempt to add more than 40 new cards in a session the program will issue an error message and ask you to start over. When you do so there will be 40 new blank cards available. The program recycles records, so records that are deleted are reused and available in addition to the 40 blank cards per session.

Background Color. The starting background color can be changed by pressing the LEFT-RIGHT arrow keys in the opening File Manager display.

Backup. AScribe saves records in near real time. Only if you are in the process of editing a card will that information be lost should the power should fail or the computer lock up (the original will be intact in the database). However, the database's index will be lost. The next time the cardfile is read it will be in random order. To re-establish the index sort the cardfile.

Block Edit. AScribe follows basic conventions to cut, copy, and paste text. To highlight a block of text hold a shift key down and use the cursor arrows to work right and down. Press *Ctrl+Insert* to copy the text. move the cursor to where you wish to insert the copied text and press *Shift+Insert*. To cut and copy a block of text press *Shift+Delete*, to just delete the highlighted block press *Delete*.

Cardfile Direction. The cursor command for the cardfile can be reversed, the down arrow can be set to bring up the card before the top card in the display (the down arrow normally brings up the card after the top card). Press Shift + 8 (the asterisk key). Do it again the go the other way.

Compound Names. Some surnames have two words or more. These need to be joined using the underline character “_”, eg, Van_der_Hoch. Without the underline the name risks being edited “Hoch VD” in APA and AMA styles.

Erase Cardfile. In the opening display the option to erase a cardfile is available. This command erases the file name from the *file manager*, but **does not delete the cardfile** from the disk. To restore the file simply add it back to the file manager, press “A” and fill in the file name and description.

Errors. AScribe is fault tolerant. *If an error should occur simply start over.* At this writing there is no known way a user can crash the program other than by trying to run two copies at the same time, or to write to a file that is already open in your word processor.

Find (Search). The search routine will search the author field (only) for the first one or two characters. If you search for “B” the program will find the first lead author whose name begins with a *b*, “Barry” but ignore “Abelson”, which has a *b* as the second letter in the name. The search is not case sensitive.

Italics-Genus/Species. Sometimes a genus/species is included in the title of an article or book. International standards require these term to be set in italics when in plain text, and set in plain text when in a title set in italics. Use single quotes to mark these passages.

Import Limits. AScribe imports text a page at a time. This is limited to 2048 characters (about 350 words). The text must be formatted in paragraphs of no more than 560 characters (100-120 words). To import more information, repeat the process.

Jr/Sr II, III, IV. The program recognizes just these 5 suffixes. It does not recognize honorifics or degrees: it will edit these as if they were first names.

Salvage. The program has a limited ability to salvage damaged files--simply read the cardfile. The repair process will generate error messages. *It is important to keep trying* since each error represents a record that is damaged and corrected or deleted.

Sort. References are listed alphabetically by author according to a complex set of rules (see the *APA Publication Manual* or *MLA Handbook* for specifics). These are built into AScribe. In author-date reference styles (APA/Chicago) when there are multiple works by one author in the same year a lower case letter is added to the date, eg., 2006a, 2006b, etc. In MLA style multiple works by an author are sorted by title. AScribe does this for you. When working with cards the file is maintained roughly in alphabetical order. However, the full sort routine is used only when cards are sorted by author using the *Sort* command (the complex routine can slow down even fast computers when sorting large files).

Special Characters. There are about 40 special characters available in AScribe. Those are mostly characters with diacritical marks not found on US keyboards. To enter them you must hold down the “Alt” key and enter a code number on the keypad to the right of the keyboard. If you are using a laptop/notebook you are out of luck. Press F1 when editing for a list.

State Abbreviations. APA, CMS, and ICMJE styles use standard postal abbreviations for US states. AMA style has a unique set of abbreviations. A conversion table is built into AScribe. MLA style dispenses with states almost entirely, but the program does not edit them out. Some cities stand alone; APA style has a list (available in the *Writer’s Guide to APA Style* at www.docstyles.com). AMA style requires the state for all cities, even major cities like New York.

(Trailing Text). Most fields accept trailing text, text entered in parentheses or brackets at the end of a field (whatever the field). The parentheses are removed, but if they are added to a title they are not set in italics and they usually come after everything else in the title.

[Trailing Text]. Trailing text added to the end of a field in square brackets retains the brackets in references but does not format text added to a book title or journal name in italics. For example, it is common to translate a title of a non-English article in brackets after the giving the title in the original language.

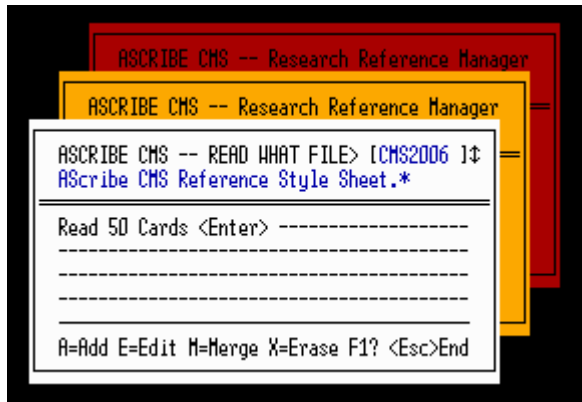
 **Warning.** When writing a word processor file an earlier file of the same name will be overwritten with no warning. Move any file that you wish to save or change its name.

7. Merge Utility: Merging Files & Importing Text

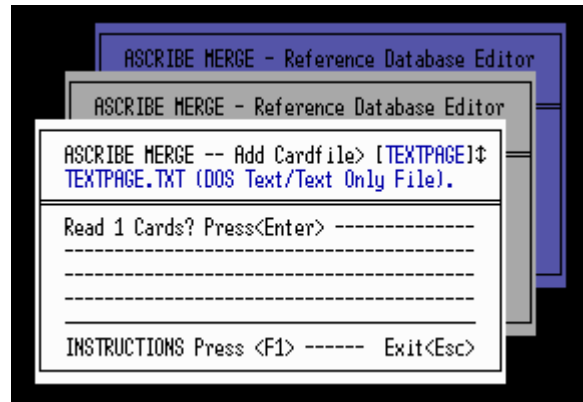
A! AScribe is project oriented, as are most research projects. The program's file manager makes it easy to switch from project to project, cardfile to cardfile. As projects evolve it can be helpful to move information from one file to another. AScribe accomplishes this with the Merge utility program.

MERGING RECORDS & FILES

The Merge utility is launched from the opening *File Manager* display in AScribe. Press "M" to run the program. Merge starts by asking what file you wish to merge into another. The default starting point is the Text Page that can import information to a cardfile (more on this feature in the following section).

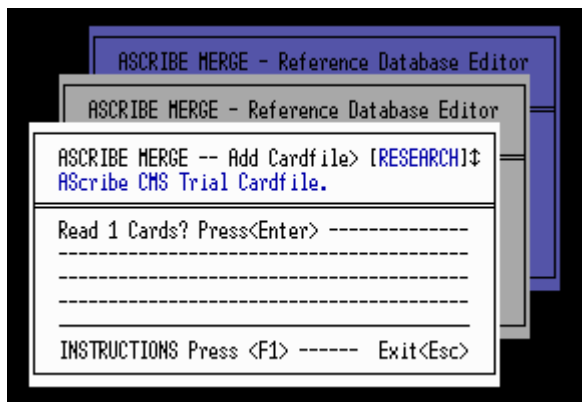


AScribe Opening Display

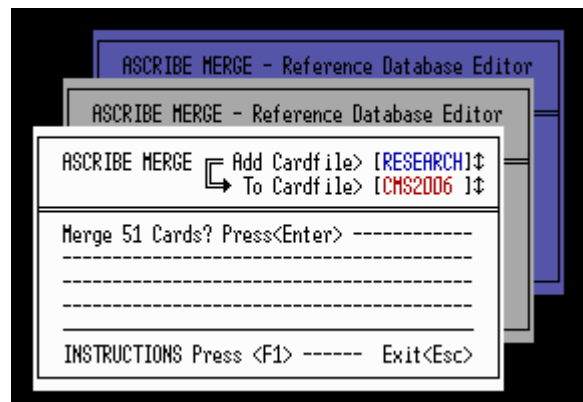


Merge Opening Display

The first step is to select the file you wish to merge with a second file. Then select the destination file.

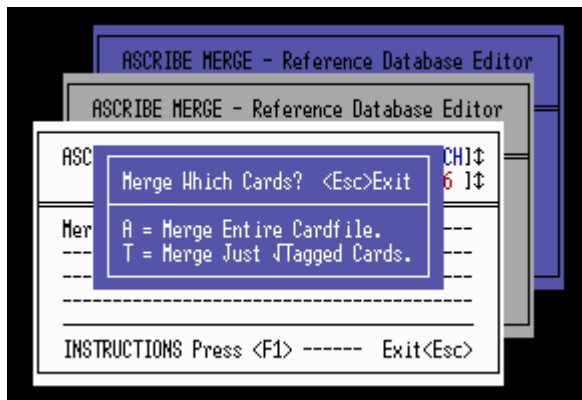


Cardfile RESEARCH is selected for merging.

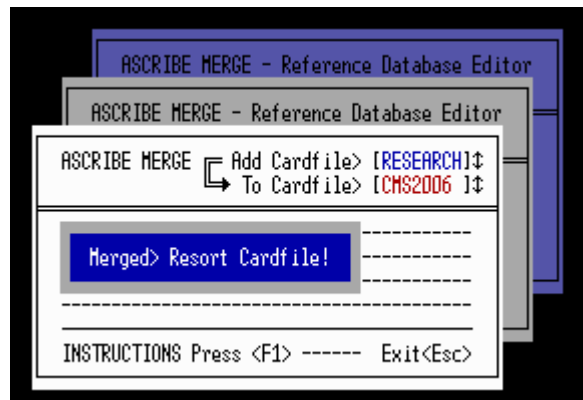


Cardfile CMS2006 is the destination.

The program checks the source file for tagged cards. If it finds one it asks if you wish to merge the entire file or just the tagged card or cards.



Select cards to be merged.



Resort the cardfile.

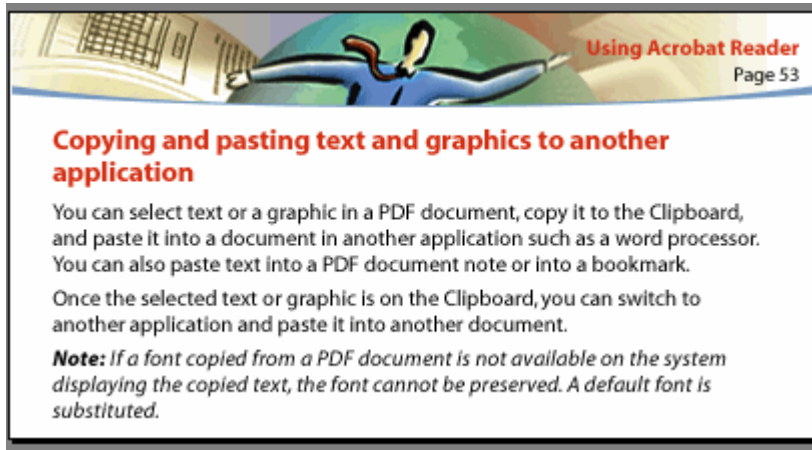
Once the merge is completed the program reminds you to resort the cardfile, then returns you to AScribe. AScribe generates a database index each time you exit the program. This keeps track of the order the cards are in at that time. In the database itself cards are in random order. With new cards added to a file it is necessary to sort it back into alphabetical order. Until the file is resorted, the merged cards are found at the end of the cardfile.

IMPORTING TEXT

Windows programs let you cut and paste text from application to application. This does not work with AScribe. Instead, it is necessary to create a text file that AScribe can read. Once in AScribe you can cut and paste the information into a reference template. This is not difficult to do.

The first step is to copy something you wish to enter into AScribe. As an example, the references in an article by John Barry, the author of a best selling book on the 1918 flu pandemic, are imported into AScribe. The article is available online, in PDF format. The process starts with the Acrobat Reader.

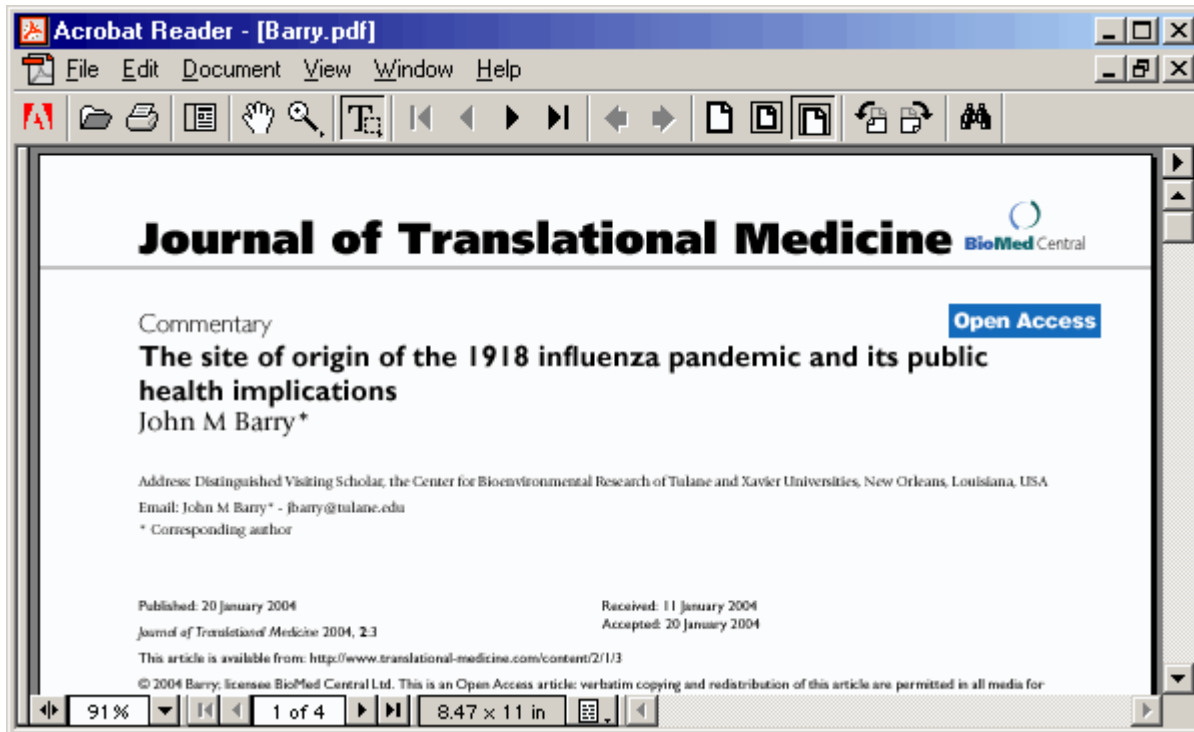
Adobe Acrobat Manual



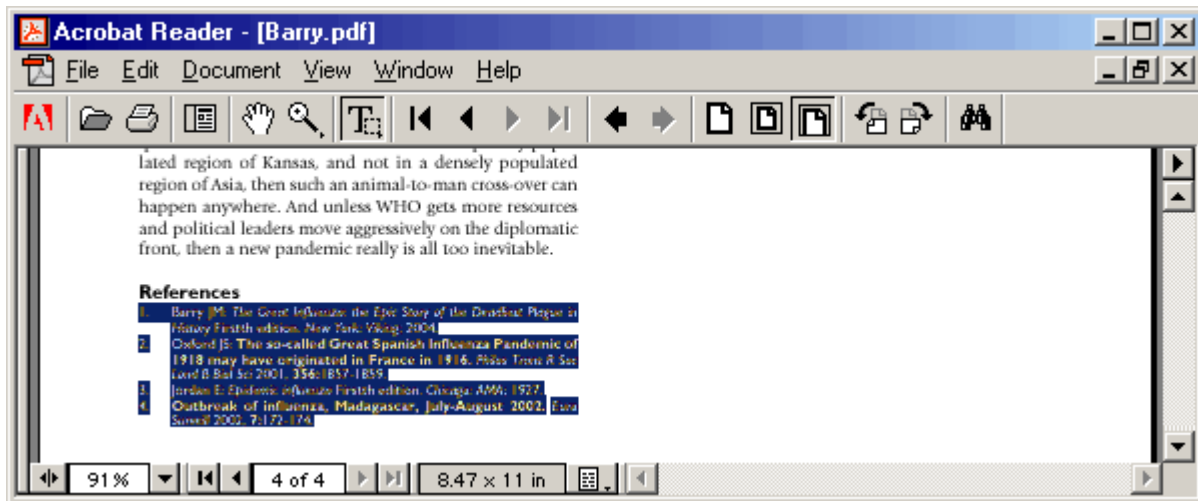
The **Acrobat Reader** has a “T” button on the tool bar at the top of the page. Click on this, then use the mouse to highlight text to copy.

1. Next, select “Edit” on the menu bar and click on “Copy”. This places the highlighted text on the Windows Clipboard.
2. Not all PDF files let you copy from them. JAMA files do not, except in a few cases, but most other journals have this feature enabled.

The article is read by the Acrobat Reader. The “T” button has been selected.

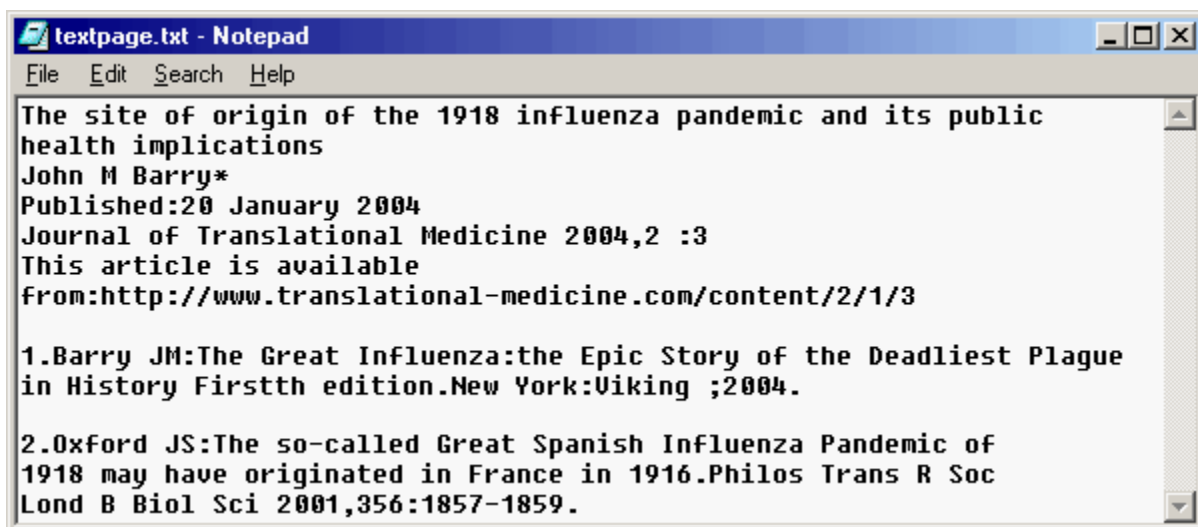


Using the text mode of the Acrobat Reader the title information (above) and reference list (below) are highlighted and copied (click on “Copy” in the Edit Menu of the Reader).

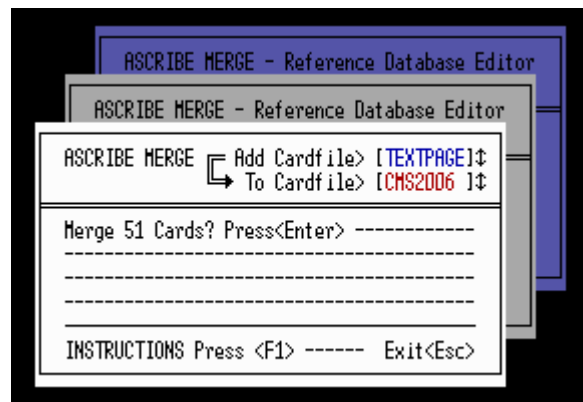
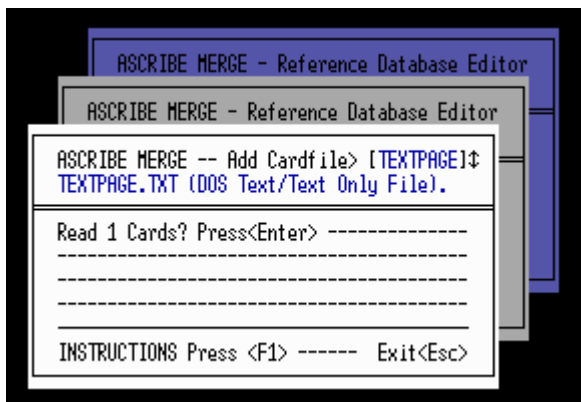


Paste the information into Windows Notepad and roughly edit it (it saves work later). Save the file. Move the file to the “C:\AScribe” folder (the default folder or whatever you selected).

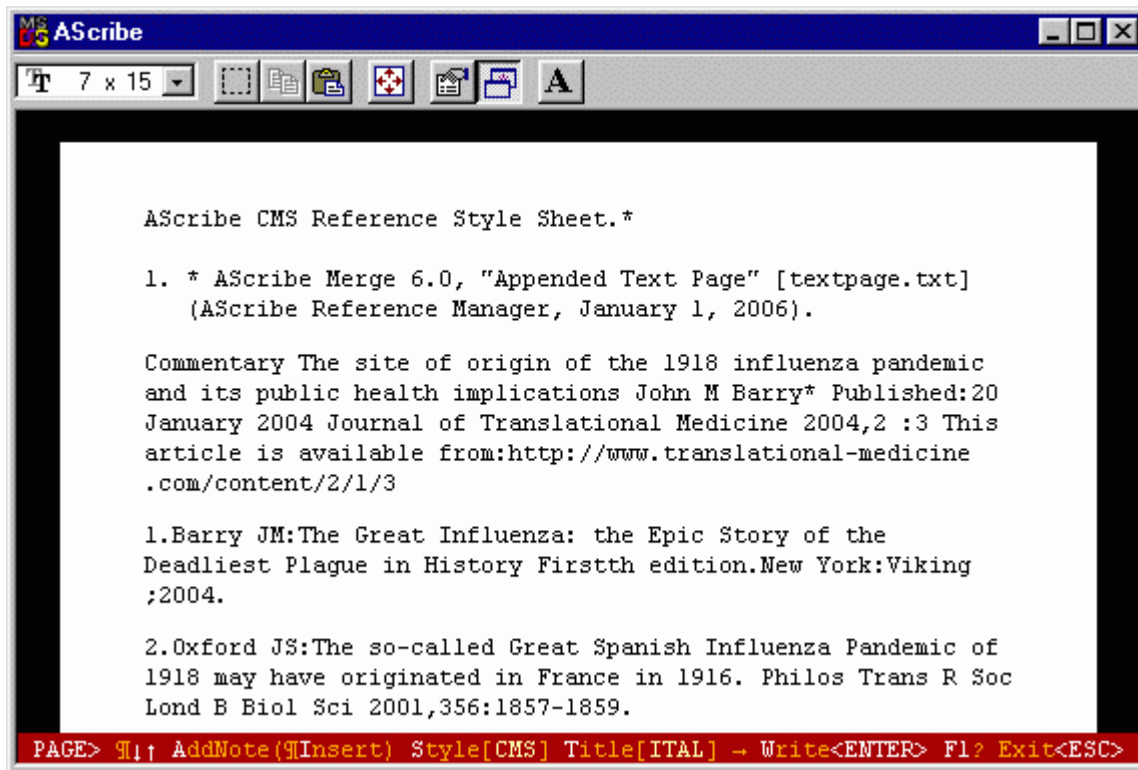
Any text file mode should work: *Text Only, Text with Line Breaks, MS-DOS Text, MS-DOS Text with Line Breaks* (even *Unicode.txt* but it's not recommended). You can also use a word processor as long as the file is *Saved As* a text file.



Using the Merge utility the file is imported into AScribe.



The text page is imported into the selected cardfile. It will be the first card in the file when you read it with AScribe, with the imported text presented as a page (below). Cut and paste from the page to reference cards. Note, the merge program always returns you to the opening display in AScribe.



8. Style Notes: Using the Various Styles with AScribe

A! Each style manages to incorporate unique features not shared by other styles, sometimes in defiance of common sense. And AScribe has its own nuances that merit your acquaintance.

AScribe Formats: Nuances & Notes

Many of these features have already been covered in the section on *Protocols, Tips, & Tricks*. These protocols facilitate sharing the same cardfiles with different versions of AScribe.

- *Dates*. AScribe only recognizes specific dates (no ranges) with 12 months and 4 seasons. Date formats vary widely. For example, MLA dates follow the form 21 June 2005, but also 21 Dec. 2005. Months with four or fewer letters are spelled out, others abbreviated. AScribe turns dates into numbers and reconstitutes them as required by each style.
- *Editions*. AScribe recognizes numbered editions from 2 through 999, abridged, and revised editions only. Styles vary on how this information is formatted, and more elaborate forms, such as “2nd revised edition” are too rare to merit the complexity they would entail.
- *Names*. All names but that of the lead author go in their normal order. The program edits names to initials, reverses names, and removes punctuation as the style requires. Compound names like “van der Berg” need to be joined with an underline character, “van_der_Berg,” or the reference editor will turn the name into “Berg, V. D.” or some such.
- *Quotation Marks*. Some styles place article titles in quotes. AScribe does this for you. Double quotes are edited to single quotes when the style calls for it; single quotes are usually removed with the intervening text set in italics.
- *Titles*. Book and article titles are best entered lowercased, except for proper nouns, with no capital letter after a colon (for subtitles). Some styles are all lowercased (APA, ICMJE, and the Chicago RL style), some are mixed, with lowercased article titles and uppercased book titles (AMA), and some are all uppercased (Chicago and MLA bibliography and note styles). AScribe uppercases as needed.

👉 File Repair. AScribe can repair records that become damaged on your hard drive. Each time it makes a repair, it generates an error message and ends the program. This is the safest thing to do. Give a damaged file several tries.

APA Style: Nuances & Notes

The APA has developed a fairly complex format for references. There are a number of rules that seem to serve no reasonable purpose, and simply must be remembered. Other features are more straightforward.

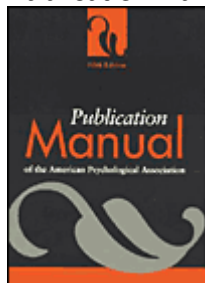
- *Call Numbers (Availability Field)*. It can be helpful to note the call number of books when working on a research project. These can be entered to the Availability field in [square brackets]. The program ignores these notes except in the working bibliography style setting (WRK). The availability field is usually used for URLs.
- *Dates*. APA style uses conventional American-style dates, eg, *November 25, 2006*. Other styles, other formats. The program uses a compact American style date --*Nov25,2006*-- and reformats dates as needed.
- *Names*. Authors names are formatted *Lastname, F. M.* But the names of editors of compilations are formatted *F. M. Lastname*. It can be helpful in the course of a research project to have authors' first names available, entered to the card. AScribe reformats names as required.
- *Page Numbers*. APA style requires the abbreviation "p." or "pp." before page numbers cited for edited volumes and newspapers, but not for other sources. AScribe does/does not do this too. APA style *requires* full pages numbers in inclusive ranges: write 1123-1124, not 1123-4.
- *Reprints*. The original publication date of a reprint is always noted along with the current publication date, but not for new editions or revised editions. There is *no period* after the note (Original work ...)
- *Facsimiles*. Most journal articles are available as exact facsimiles of the print version in PDF format, and as Web pages. Web pages are cited as Web pages. But APA style simply inserts a note "[Electronic version]" for facsimiles (as does AScribe). The program uses a scripting tag to add the note "[CPY]" after the title. This requires a single keystroke.
- *Web sites & Messages*. There are special formats for these and AScribe uses tags to identify them (WEB and MSG tags added to monographs).
- *Availability*. When just a URL is entered it is formatted: (1) "Available from URL" in references; when the access date is added the format becomes (2) "Retrieved Date from URL"; but when plain text is entered (3) it is tacked as is to the end of the reference, unless, (4) it is entered in square brackets, and then it is added to a reference only in the working (WRK) reference style.
- *Access Dates*. Access dates are *required* in APA style. The *Publication Manual* is quite explicit in *requiring* URLs to be active when a paper is published (sec. 4.16, p. 271 spiral ed.), and in our experience editors do check this. Therefore, the last thing to do before submitting a paper is to verify the URL and update the access dates in references (AScribe can be set to do this for you). The current date can be directly entered to the card access date field by pressing *Ctrl+D*.

AScribe APA Notes

- *Monographs*. APA style formats almost all monographs with titles in italics. Most other styles do not. The default for monographs is no italics. Add the tag "RPT" for report, or "WEB" for Web site to format titles in italics. *Changed since AScribe APA 5.0.*
- *Same Author, Same Year*. APA style adds letters to the date when there are several works by the same author in the same year, eg, 2006a, 2006b, etc. AScribe updates this before writing a word processor file, but to keep it up to date while working resort a cardfile by author from time to time.

Working Style writes all the information entered to the card to references, such as full names in their normal order. This can be helpful when developing a research bibliography or checking the *Citation Index* for other works by the same author.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.) 2001.



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Dr. Abel Scribe PhD

Writer's Guide to APA Style

APA Crib Sheet HTML

APA Style (Crib) Sheet PDF

APA Document Set

<http://www.docstyles.com/apaguide.htm>

<http://www.docstyles.com/apacrib.htm>

<http://www.docstyles.com/archive/apacrib.pdf>

<http://www.docstyles.com/apadocs.htm>

AMA/ICMJE Styles: Nuances & Notes

AScribe's AMA (American Medical Association) style is based on the AMA style manual; ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) style is based on the official style sheet maintained online by the National Library of Medicine, ca. 2005. This is sometimes referred to as "Vancouver style." AScribe can be set to format references in either style, as well as a bibliography format.

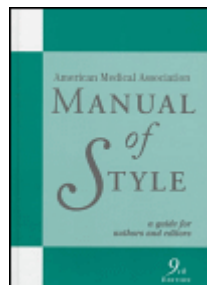
- **Dates.** AMA style uses conventional American-style dates, eg, *November 25, 2006*. ICMJE style follows international preferences, writing: Day Mon Year, eg, *25 Nov 2006*. AScribe uses a compact American style date --*Nov25,2006*-- and reformats dates as required by the two styles.
- **Journal Abbreviations.** AMA/ICMJE style requires the names of journals to be abbreviated according to the current *List of Journals Indexed for Medline* (formerly the *Index Medicus*) published by the National Library of Medicine. This is available online (PDF).
- **Case-Titles.** Titles of books are uppercased (heading caps) in AMA style; lowercased in ICMJE style (sentence caps). When entered lowercased the program will uppercase titles as required (*do not capitalize the first word after a colon!*). AMA style also places titles and names of journals in italics; ICMJE style does not. AScribe does/does not do this too.
- **Names.** AMA/ICMJE styles present names with just first initials, and formatted *Last FM* without punctuation. AScribe records names other than the lead author in their normal order, and concatenates first and middle names to initials when entered as full names.
- **Postal/State Abbreviations.** AMA style uses antiquated abbreviations for states (see current issues of *JAMA* for examples). AScribe has a *built-in table* that converts two-character postal abbreviations to their AMA counterparts. ICMJE is content with postal abbreviations, but places them in parentheses. AScribe does this, too. *You must enter postal abbreviations to the card for all this to work.*
- **Access Dates.** Access dates are required in AMA/ICMJE styles. Readers expect URLs to be verified at the time a paper is submitted. AScribe can be set to insert the current date in references.

AScribe AMA Notes

- **Style.** ICMJE style is entirely in plain text with titles lowercased. AScribe resets the *Title* font to "Text" when ICMJE style is selected, resets to "Italics" when AMA style is selected. Either of these can be reset manually by toggling the *Title* command.
- **Note Numbers.** References are displayed internally as numbered endnotes, much as they will appear in a paper. However, AScribe is set to dispense with the numbers when writing reference lists, assuming you will cut and paste references into your word processor's endnotes. Numbers can be added back with the *#Refs* option in the Write mode.
- **Reprint Dates.** Many styles note the original date of publication for reprinted works. But there are no examples of this in AMA or ICMJE styles. The program formats the original publication date as an edition, eg, "1954 edition." This is only done if an edition number or tag is not entered to the card.
- **Reviews.** AMA/ICMJE styles do not note the title of a review article if there is one. Other styles do. Whatever information entered to the card that is not required is ignored.

Bibliography Style. This style includes full names (not just first and middle initials) when these are entered to the card, and notes in brackets entered to the Availability field. This can be helpful when developing a research bibliography or checking the *Citation Index* for other works by the same author.

American Medical Association Manual of Style. 9th ed. 1997.



At Amazon.com (\$40)

<http://www.amazon.com/---/ISBN/0683402064/>

Dr. Abel Scribe PhD

Writer's Guide to AMA Style

<http://www.docstyles.com/amaguide.htm>

AMA MedStyle Stat! PDF

<http://www.docstyles.com/archive/amastat.pdf>

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE/Vancouver Style)

Uniform Requirements PDF

<http://www.docstyles.com/archive/icmje.pdf>

Uniform Requirements Page

<http://www.icmje.org>

NLM References PDF

<http://www.docstyles.com/archive/nlmrefs.pdf>

NLM References Page

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html

Chicago Styles: Nuances and Notes

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15 ed. (2003) requires 359 sections in the chapter on references (17) to explain how to use the style (115 pages). This is more than we have patience to wade through and verify. Instead, we work around about 50 common sources to program the reference editor. AScribe formats a compact Chicago style. See the note below on *Reprints* for an example. A new Turabian manual should be available this year (2006). When it is the reference editor will be updated to match.

- **Authors (Multiple).** The *Chicago Manual* is ambivalent about how many authors' names should be given in a reference Sec. 17.30). They suggest following AMA style (if more than 6, give the first 3 plus et al.), or that of the *American Naturalist* (list 10, if more list the first 7 plus et al.). AScribe has space for 8 names and will add *et al.* to any number listed when the &AL tag is entered.
- **CMS Style.** Chicago style is essentially a footnote style. The same format is used for both footnotes and endnotes. This is the CMS style in AScribe. There are two additional formats supported by the style: a bibliography format (BIB) and an author-date (A/D) format. Chicago refers to the latter as the Reference List style. AScribe does all three and a working bibliography (WRK) style as well.
- **Case-Titles.** The Note and Bibliography styles uppercase titles of books and articles, the Reference List format does not. When titles are entered lowercase in AScribe the program will uppercase them as required, including the first word in the title; the first word after a colon (subtitle).
- **Dates.** Surprise, surprise. Chicago style now uses the American style for dates, eg., December 25, 2006, *not* 25 December 2006. AScribe is set to match the current preference.
- **Jr./III.** CMS style dispenses with the comma before these suffixes, writing: *Joe Smith Jr.*, not *Joe Smith, Jr.* AScribe does this too, it is not a programming oversight!
- **Medium.** Some documents may be published on CD-ROMs or other media. The *Chicago Manual* specifies this information is to be placed at the end of a reference (sec. 17.17), in AScribe's availability field. However they give examples with the medium placed after the title (enter in parentheses).
- **Page Numbers.** Page numbers may be added to books and are included in footnotes, but not in bibliographies or author-date reference lists.
- **Inclusive Page Numbers.** The University of Chicago Press elides inclusive page numbers (sec. 9.64). This is the process of dropping digits from the second number in a range, for example writing pages 11239-43. But they also note that "a foolproof system is to give the full form of number everywhere" (sec 9.65). AMA and APA styles *require* all digits, MLA style the short form.
- **Reprints.** AScribe notes reprints when a second date is entered in the bracket field. Chicago style suggests adding the facts of publication (city, publisher, and date) for both the reprint and original editions. However, it requires "at least the date" (sec. 17.123). AScribe follows this compact format (see sec 17.127 on the author-date style).
- **URLs.** These are long strings of text. AScribe wraps lines after dashes and before periods, which is the generally accepted custom (see sec. 17.11 in the *CMS*). This can look awkward, but your word processor may do no better.
- **Access dates.** The *Chicago Manual* states that "access dates are of limited value" (sec. 17.12). However every journal of our acquaintance requires them as does AMA, ICMJE, APA, and MLA styles. Editors (again in our experience) check URLs. Those that don't work they don't like to publish. Therefore, enter the access date to the card. When you press *Ctrl+D* in the access date field at the bottom of the card the current date is inserted. When you finish your paper AScribe can be set to update the access date to the then current date in notes, bibliographies, and reference lists.

CMS (*Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed.) 2003.



Amazon.com (\$55)

Chicago Manual
Turabian Manual

<http://www.amazon.com/---/ISBN/0226104036/>
<http://www.amazon.com/---/ISBN/0226816273/>

Dr. Abel Scribe PhD

Writer's Guide to Chicago
CMS Style Sheet PDF

<http://www.docstyles.com/cmsguide.htm>
<http://www.docstyles.com/archive/cmscrib.pdf>

☞ Chicago and Turabian style are one and the same. The *Chicago Manual of Style* is heavily focused on book publishing while the title of Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* speaks for itself.

MLA Styles: Nuances and Notes

The style of the Modern Language Association (MLA) is essentially a compact Chicago bibliography style. There is also an endnote format found in an appendix in the *MLA Handbook*. AScribe formats references in both styles as well as in a working bibliography format. Note, while the endnote format can also be used for footnotes, the *MLA Handbook* is adamant about making all notes endnotes (sec B.1.4).

- *Authors (Multiple)*. List all authors (AScribe stops at eight), or if more than three, just the first plus *et al.* (*Handbook* sec. 5.6.4). AScribe lists whatever is entered, adds *et al.* when the &AL tag is set.
- *Call Numbers (Availability Field)*. It can be helpful to note the call number of books when working on a research project. These can be entered to the availability field in [square brackets]. The program ignores these notes except in the working bibliography style setting (WRK).
- *Case-Titles*. MLA titles are uppercased. Other styles require lowercased titles or a mix of uppercased book titles and lowercased article titles. AScribe can uppercase titles when entered lowercased, but not the other way around since it is very difficult to identify proper nouns. If you expect to use the CMS version of AScribe with the same files, the Reference List version of Chicago style uses lowercased titles (so too does APA style).
- *Dates*. MLA style uses the international format for date, eg., 25 Dec. 2006. AScribe requires dates be entered in its own short format, eg., Dec25,2006, then reformats the date to meet the requirements of the style. Chicago style has switched to the conventional American format, December 25, 2006, in the latest edition of the *Manual of Style* (2003). AScribe gets this right too.
- *EM Dash*. When there are several works by a single author in MLA style the author's name is given in only the first reference, subsequent references replace the author's name with three hyphens (*Handbook* sec. 5.6.3). Given the cut & paste use of AScribe files it seems best not to do this.
- *Inclusive Page Numbers*. MLA style *elides* inclusive page numbers (*Handbook* sec. 3.5.6). This is the process of dropping digits from the second number in a range, for example writing pages 11239-43. Chicago does this too, but notes that "a foolproof system is to give the full form of number everywhere" (*CMS* sec 9.65). AMA and APA styles *require* all the digits, MLA style the short form.
- *Underline vs. Italics*. The *MLA Handbook* recommends formatting references with titles underlined rather than set in italics. AScribe is preset to do this, but can easily be changed. In the program Page mode simply toggle the *Title* (press "T") until is the box reads [ITAL].
- *Volume.Issue*. The citation for journal articles includes the volume number of the journal, and when journal starts each issue over at page 1, the issue number in the volume (most journals are paged continuously through a volume, each new issue beginning where the last left off). MLA style has a unique way of presenting this information. For issue 3 in volume 16 it writes 16.3. The more common format, and the protocol used in AScribe, is to write this 16(3). You can enter either in AScribe, but only the 16(3) format will work correctly in other versions of the program.

Occam's Razor? MLA style is prone to ignoring the precepts of Occam's Razor: to not multiply categories or increase complexities needlessly. A previous edition the *MLA Handbook* presented an elaborate system for direct quotes, then reversed itself in the following edition. The current *Handbook* presents an impossibly complex format for citing online sources. This will likely change in the next edition as well. In the interim, AScribe edits the basic format. This adds the URL in angle brackets, e.g., <http://www.docstyles.com> preceded by the access date. This transfers well to the other styles. APA, AMA, and Chicago styles generally find this is all that is needed to meet the requirements of scholarship.

MLA (Modern Language Association) *Handbook for Writer's of Research Papers* (6th ed.), 2003.



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| Amazon.com (\$20) | |
| <i>Handbook</i> (Paper) | http://www.amazon.com/---/ISBN/0873529863/ |
| <i>Style Manual</i> (Hardcover) | http://www.amazon.com/---/ISBN/0873526996/ |
| Dr. Abel Scribe PhD | |
| <i>Writer's Guide to MLA Style</i> | http://www.docstyles.com/mlaguide.htm |
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| MLA Web Sheet PDF | http://www.docstyles.com/archive/mlaweb.pdf |

9. What's New and FAQ?

A! AScribe versions date back to the early 1990s, pre-Windows 95. The compiler and programming language are unchanged (mostly because it is easy to work with), but the program has evolved to a sophisticated application, though technically obsolete. There are few programs this easy to use.

What's New!

- *Import Text Files.* AScribe can now import data from other electronic sources. This makes it possible to cut and paste references from other documents. While this is not as slick as the ability of commercial products like Endnote to import references directly, it gets the job done (a whole lot cheaper!).
- *Simplified Fields/Conformed Commands.* Compared to AScribe 5.X input templates and fields have been simplified and reorganized, and the command conformed to established Windows commands. For example, the *Tab* key moves the cursor to the next field when entering data, *Shift+Tab* moves to the previous field. In the Access Date field *Ctrl+D* inserts the current date.
- *New Styles.* There are now four compatible versions of AScribe (8 styles). The are differences in the various styles that make it difficult to write one program for all given the program's very simple database architecture. New to the program is a sophisticated editor for names. This helps assure that what is entered in AMA style will work in the MLA version, and so on.
- *Expanded RTF/Unicode Character Translator (Unseen).* This will go largely unnoticed. It simply means the program can read and write larger alphabets.

What's the Best General Purpose Reference Style?

MLA is a great general purpose style. It has both bibliography and note formats that are essentially a simplified Chicago style. The unique "(Author-Page)" text citation is friendly to people who don't read a lot of research papers. The style guide, the *MLA Handbook*, is clear, concise, and cheap. Unlike the AMA and APA styles, MLA gives full names for authors. Compared to Chicago styles, MLA is uncluttered and easy to read.

Are Versions Fully Compatible?

Not quite. Differences have more to do with the style than the program. APA style places titles of unpublished papers in italics, but the other major styles do not. When changing from APA to other styles a tag needs to be changed with these sources. AMA style makes no provision for noting an original publication date of a reprinted source. The program solves this problem by turning the reprint date into an edition, e.g. "*Title of the Book*. 1954 ed." Yes, this is all pretty trivial stuff.

What's a Text File?

Wired into your operating system is a basic alphabet. Word processors start with this alphabet, but add formatting codes that you don't see, for example instructions to place a block of text in italics. These instructions are extremely complex in programs like Microsoft Word, but you don't even see them. They are all filtered out when you save a document as a text file. Word processors let you do this and Windows has a program, Notepad, that is designed to only do this. This is the most compact way to transfer information, and it's easy for other applications to read. AScribe can import all the various text formats: Text Only, Text with Line Breaks, MS-DOS Text, MS-DOS Text with Line Breaks, and (with some luck) Unicode Text.

I Get an Error When I Run the Program!

Two problems have been identified with earlier versions of AScribe. Both have to do with failing to replace key files--the program configuration file and a cardfile database index--during the installation. These have been fixed. If the trial version works the full version should too. As always, if it doesn't work uninstall and delete everything and try again.

Why Can't My Word Processor Read the File?

Windows has a system of *file associations* based on *file extensions*. All files have a three character extension. AScribe word processor files have an "RTF" extension: MyFile.RTF. This stands for "Rich Text Format." Double clicking on this file should start your word processor and tell it to read this file. (Windows Explorer is preset to hide file extensions. Use the Control Panel, Folder Options to change this). RTF files are a well known word processor format. If you have a problem, right click on the file, chose "Open With" from the context menu and select "Choose Program." Find your word processor on the list and select it, clicking the box "Always use this program." RTF is a Microsoft word processor format that has been in use for 20 years or more.

What is the Most Serious Program Limitation?

The "Availability" field is limited to 110 characters. Some URLs may require more space, but not many. The trade off is to present a display that is relatively uncluttered and easy to use for 99% of sources, versus a template that can accommodate vast amounts of text for the few references that require it. In actual practice we've never had a problem with field space.

What Languages Does AScribe Support?

AScribe works from the "US ASCII Code Page." This is a 256 character alphabet. There are code pages for virtually every language, and these are generally linked to your keyboard and passed through to programs. Most characters transfer quite well. Some, though, are not available since they can cause conflicts with the internal working of the program. These characters have been locked out. Use the trial version to see if it works for you.

Changes from APA Version 5.X.

- *Monographs.* The 5.X templates for "Paper/Report" and "Web sites" have been replaced by the single "Monograph" template or record type. Scripting tags that used to go with the URL now are attached to the title. However, the old "Paper" type automatically set titles in italics, the default. This has changed. Titles are now set in plain text by default (unpublished papers are formatted in plain text in the other styles). A "Report" tag has to be assigned to those documents that require titles in italics (just about everything in APA style). All versions of AScribe reassign the old record types to the "Monograph" type when reading the file. All the capabilities of the 5.X version have been retained, just reorganized.
- *Volume:Pages Bug.* The 5.X version could interpret page numbers for some documents as volume numbers when editing these cards. The 6.0 version has an algorithm to untangle this (it works when the card is edited). This only affected references where no volume number was cited.
- *Book Reviews.* The 5.X version assigned the title of the work being reviewed to a place in the database now used for the authors of the work. This is for compatibility. Some styles note the name of the author in references (but not APA). If you have book reviews in your cardfile, the title will have to be moved for the reference to work.
- *And Others.* The 5.X versions had you add "et al." manually when more than six authors were being referenced. This has been replaced with the scripting tag "&AL", an option below the lead author along with "EDT" (editor as author) and "ORG" (corporate author).
- *Abridged Edition.* This is now a recognized tag along with editions from 2 to 999 and "Revised."

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