

Librería
Bonilla y Asociados
desde 1950



Título:

Autor:

Precio: \$770.00

Editorial:

Año: 2003

Tema:

Edición: 15^a

Sinopsis

ISBN: 9780226104034

The Chicago Manual of Style maintains its vitality by adapting to its ever-changing environment. None of the changes from one edition to the next are capricious; that which remains vital carries over, and that which must change, changes.

From the 1906 first edition's limited focus as "a compilation of typographical rules" for books, it has evolved to provide guidance to authors and editors working in other forms and media such as journals, newsletters, Web sites, and even, with the fifteenth edition, American Sign Language. The editors now "assume throughout that most writers and editors, whether preparing print or nonprint works, use computer software." That assumption is most visible in the chapter dealing with presentation in type of mathematical expressions and formulas. Software has collapsed the division of labor between author and typesetter, giving the author the power to fulfill both roles simultaneously. Mathematicians have faced that special challenge; all scholars have been vexed by uncertainty about citing electronic resources.

Various specialized manuals from other publishers have attempted to codify practices for citing electronic publications, but none has enjoyed the authority Chicago has earned over nearly a century. The fifteenth offers deeper guidance for citing electronic books, articles in e-journals, electronic editions of older works, and online newspapers and magazines. The clear, practical, and easily applied rules for citing these sources recognize the problem an author must solve when a URL is subject to change; they also offer advice on matters such as when to provide the date a cited e-work was accessed. U.S. copyright law, driven by the same technologies the fifteenth edition addresses, has also experienced significant changes. An expanded section on copyright offers clear albeit not exhaustive coverage of the current complexities of copyright. All authors would do well to study this primer.

Chicago's mantra throughout is consistency in support of clarity. Helping authors and editors achieve consistency in practice when creating or editing a manuscript and presenting it to readers is Chicago's *raison d'être*. The prescriptive tone of some entries serves consistency, but usage is determined by users of the language. Chicago acknowledges variants in practice, often noting

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that an author may use a variant even though its entry first describes preferred practice. Bowing to popular influence, the editors concede that they "no longer urge deletion of the d in 2nd or the r in 3rd" and they "now recommend the month-day-year form of dates" prevalent in the U.S. The editors also have the wisdom and the experience to uphold rules that, if ignored, can create confusion in readers' minds. All of the rules and recommendations are easily accessible through the thorough index, a hallmark of every recent edition.

New to the fifteenth is a lively chapter on grammar and usage contributed by Bryan A. Garner, author of *Garner's Modern American Usage* (2d ed., Oxford, 2003; formerly *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage*). Its first part reviews basic rules of English grammar, and the second offers succinct explanations of words easily misused (decimate, precondition) or confused (e.g., healthy and healthful; purposely and purposefully). Added features discuss bias-free language and prepositional idioms.

Evolution is never a lockstep uniform process. Although the heart of Chicago embraces changes wrought by digital publishing, its concluding bibliography lags. Only the print editions of general-purpose encyclopedias and several English-language dictionaries are noted. Even though the entry for the *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates its availability on CD-ROM, it neglects to mention its online incarnation. But one must not miss the forest for these few trees. As it has done again and again, Chicago offers sensible, clearly articulated, and defensible advice to authors and editors who want to do their best to present an author's text to readers. Every library that serves authors, especially those producing scholarly works, simply must have the current edition of Chicago.