Writing an Annotated Bibliography

What is the difference between a *Bibliography* and an *Annotated Bibliography*?

A *bibliography* is an alphabetical list of resources (books, websites, articles from magazines, newspapers or journals, etc.) that you have used in your research. A bibliography may also be referred to as a 'References' list (APA citation style) or a 'Works Cited' list (MLA citation style). You would include information such as title, author and publication or journal details for each item.

An *annotated bibliography* also includes a brief summary and/or an evaluation of each resource. In an annotated bibliography you assess the available resources on a particular topic. You would want to use items that are credible, reliable, relevant and time-appropriate.

Generally, each resource's annotation would be a paragraph or two long, although your professor may have other specifications. Depending on your assignment, an annotated bibliography may be one part of a larger research project, or it may be its own stand-alone entity.

What would an Annotated Bibliography include?

An annotated bibliography would generally include the following components (check with your professor for his/her preferred requirements):

- A citation for each resource following a citation style such as APA or MLA as required by your assignment. Citations are listed alphabetically by the author's last name. See the MLA or APA style manuals or the Library's help sheets for more information.

- An annotation for each resource, in which you summarise the main arguments, topics and conclusions. You may also (based on your professor's guidelines) include an assessment or evaluation of the item. Ask yourself if it is a useful resource. How does it compare to other resources you are using? What are the resource's goals, biases or objectives? What are its strengths and limitations? How does it relate to your topic or argument?

Note: UOIT students may also access the Academic Success Centre's learning tool website called NOOL, found at http://nool.uoit.ca. Search for 'annotated bibliography' to find relevant pages.

Sample Annotated Bibliography Entries

There are a number of options for formatting the annotation portion of an entry (indent the first line of the annotation, block indent the entire annotation and so on). The examples in this help sheet are one option – check with your instructor to see if he/she has any preference.

Additional examples may be found by doing a quick Google search for 'annotated bibliography'. Be sure to use a reputable site (e.g. from a recognised college or university site).

APA style (following the 6th edition, 2010):

Please note that *The Publication Manual for the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition (2010) does not provide any specific direction for preparing an annotated bibliography. The following is one possible format – check with your instructor to see if he/she has any particular preference.

Miller, A., Shoptaugh, C., & Wooldridge, J. (2011). Reasons not to cheat, academic-integrity

responsibility and frequency of cheating. *Journal of Experimental Education, 79*, 169-184. doi:

10.1080/00220970903567830

This article discusses the results of a survey that looked at the reasoning university students used when choosing whether or not to cheat. The study found that students who focussed on the potential punishment if they were caught cheating tended to be more likely to have cheated in the past. Students who felt that cheating was wrong for moral reasons reported cheating less often. A major drawback of this type of study is that it relies on the honesty of the respondents in reporting a negative behaviour. It is likely that people would under-report frequency of cheating or simply not respond.

MLA style (following the 7th edition, 2009):

The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* suggests that the annotation be placed immediately after your citation as in the example below. However, your professor may prefer that you format it as in the APA example above (the annotation is separated from the citation and is written as one block).

Miller, Arden, Carol Shoptaugh, and Jessica Wooldridge. "Reasons Not to Cheat, Academic-Integrity

Responsibility and Frequency of Cheating." *Journal of Experimental Education* 79 (2011): 169-184.

Academic Search Premier. Web. July 10, 2012. This article discusses the results of a survey that

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