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## Style-free references rather than standardized citation styles

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### Citation

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In his article, Daniel Rozell<sup>1</sup> calls for standardizing citation styles and reducing the plethora of existing styles to a dozen basic ones. It is true that there are many unnecessary modifications of a few dominant styles. On the other hand, Rozell's call is not the first call: for example, in 1944, Yonkman<sup>2</sup> called for standardizing citation styles, in 1986, Freimer and Perry,<sup>3</sup> etc. For this reason, I do not even believe in the success of the efforts to standardize multiple citation styles. It should be said that there is already an international standard for citation, ISO 690, but it is also fair to say that this international standard is quite loose in its definition of citation rules, and so it allows for a large number of modifications.

ISO 690 says that the information included in a reference should be sufficient to clearly identify the material being cited. Therefore, in today's digital world, a reference could be kept to the minimum necessary if it contains a persistent identifier such as a digital object identifier (DOI). However, Laakso et al.<sup>4</sup> pointed out a risk of the digital age, which is the loss of digital content due to journal closure. This risk should also be considered when publishing scientific articles and when

defining the citation style, and therefore, the reference to digital documents cannot be limited to a persistent identifier only.

Instead of standardizing the citation style, I consider efforts to introduce style-free references under the initiative "Your Paper, Your Way"<sup>5</sup> to be more beneficial to authors. As an editor of a small local scholarly journal named *Entecho* ([www.entecho.cz](http://www.entecho.cz)), I leave it entirely up to the authors to decide on what citation style they want to use in their manuscript, as long as the style used allows me to identify the source being cited. From my own experience as an editor, I can state that authors quite often use incorrect bibliographic information. That is why I use Zotero citation manager not only for the final formatting of references but also for obtaining correct bibliographic data from publishers' web page.

Although I disagree with Daniel Rozell on the need to standardize citation styles, I agree with him on the goal, which is to reduce the waste of time that authors must devote to the often unnecessary formatting of their publications.

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