Comic Book Citation Format

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APPENDIX

Comic Book Legal Citation Format

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2 Creative Contributors, *Story Title*, COMIC BOOK TITLE (VOLUME IF APPROPRIATE) [Issue Number], at [Page Number] (Publisher Cover Date Month and Year).

At present, the Blue Book does not have a specific citation format for Comic Books. As the prime source of the multi-billion dollar superhero industry, it is appropriate that they should. This appendix details the form used by the Fordham Intellectual Property, Media & Entertainment Law Journal

1. Creative Contributors

Judge Posner defines the scope of who creates comic books in *Gaiman v. McFarlane*, 360 F.3d 644 (7th Cir. 2004). This format follows his lead. “The contents of a comic book are typically the joint work of four artists—the writer, the penciler who creates the art work, the inker who makes a black and white plate of the art work, and the colorist who colorist.” *Id.* at 659. Include all four in Posner’s order—writer, penciler, inker, & colorist—separated by an ampersand, as per Rule 15.1(b), which allows you to “include all authors’ names when doing so is particularly relevant.” Many creators use nicknames or shortenings of their names. As per Rule 15.1, “always give the author’s full name as it appears on the publication.”

2. Story Title

This follows the form for a magazine in Rule 16.4, as comics are basically magazines. Many story titles (as well as other footnoting
information) can be found in the Grand Comics Database at comics.org.

3. Comic Book Title

This also basically follows the form for a magazine in Rule 16.4. Because of design considerations, the cover may not clearly indicate the Comic Book Title. The proper title can generally be found in the indicia inside the comic book, generally at the bottom of the first page. Use the title from the indicia, even if it is not the common name of the comic book; if necessary set up a parenthetical hereinafter.

4. Volume Number

Many comic book series have run for decades, and they periodically relaunch under the same name, so it may be important to know which volume of the series the note references. The Volume Number is part of the Comic Book Title, and should be included parenthetically. If there is only one volume, do not include the Volume Number in the citation.

5. Issue Number

The Comic Book Title will be followed immediately by the Issue Number. Comic books are generally organized by issue in stores and in commerce. If someone wanted to follow up on a footnote, they would seek the comic book by issue, not by date, and the form here incorporates that reality.

6. Page Number

Comic book stories are generally paginated, but unlike magazines, the advertisement pages are generally not part of that pagination. To differentiate the Issue Number from the Page Number, separate them with a comma and “at”. Page numbers are not always available, as some source materials are extremely rare.
7. Publisher

As with a book, the publisher should be included parenthetically. In comic book back issue stores, comic books are segregated by publisher, and sometimes even by imprint of a particular publisher.

8. Cover Date

Comic books are generally cover dated, but that date is different from the publication date. The major companies publish their comics approximately three months prior to the cover date. This is a tradition left over from an older distribution system, where comic books would be removed from the shelves when the cover date expired, so that they would seem current longer on newsstands and comic racks in general stores. The Cover Date should include month and year, to provide chronological context. As in the citation of books, there is no comma between the Publisher and the Cover Date.

9. Parenthetical Information

Parenthetical Information might include the “first appearance of” or “introducing” a new character.

10. Reprint Information

Many comic books are rare and expensive, and have been reprinted. Reprint Information should follow the original comic book citation with the signal “reprinted in” following a comma. Comic book reprinted volumes are typically books collecting several comic book issues, and should follow the Rule 15 book citation format. These compilations may collect many works, and have many more creators than a single comic book. It is acceptable to follow the Rule 15.1(b) “et al.” form, particularly because the relevant creators are fully acknowledged in the Creative Contributors part of the main cite.

11. Examples

Here are some excerpts of comic book citations from Britton Payne, Super-Grokster: Untangling Secondary Liability, Comic


4 See Rick Dakan, Brandon Mckinney & Moose Bauman, Undead in the Big City Part 1, CITY OF HEROES 1, at 1 (NCSoft Corporation and Cryptic Studios, Inc. Apr. 2004).


6 See Will Eisner, The Origin of Wonder Man, WONDER COMICS 1, at 1 (Fox Publ’ns May 1939).


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MASTERWORKS: CAPTAIN MARVEL (VOL. 1) (Marvel Comics 2005), to protect its trademark.

10 Compare, e.g., Jerome Siegel & Joe Shuster, Superman, ACTION COMICS 1, at 1 (Detective Comics, Inc. June 1938) (first appearance of Superman), reprinted in SUPERMAN IN ACTION COMICS ARCHIVES, VOLUME ONE 9 (Bob Kahan ed., DC Comics 1997) with, e.g., Parker, supra note 9.


The early Justice League of America charter acknowledges the frequency of power replication by forbidding duplication of powers among its membership, although the initial reason for denying membership to Hawkgirl was based on a “one new member at a time” clause. See Gardner Fox, Mike Sekowsky & Bernard Sachs, Riddle of the Runaway Room!, JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA 31 (DC Comics, Nov. 1964), reprinted in GARDNER FOX ET AL., JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA ARCHIVES: VOLUME FIVE (DC Comics 1999). For readers concerned with comic book minutiae, the power duplication clause was subsequently changed under duress to allow membership to Hawkman’s identically-powered wife Hawkgirl. See Steve Englehart, Dick Dillin, Frank McLaughlin & Anthony Tollin, Inner Mission!, JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA 146 (DC Comics Sept. 1977).

14 See id. at 649; see also Todd McFarlane & Steve Oliff, Questions, SPAWN 1 (Image Comics May 1992) (first appearance of Spawn), reprinted in TODD MCFARLANE ET AL., SPAWN COLLECTION VOLUME ONE (Image Comics 2005).

15 See id. at 650; see also Neil Gaiman, Todd McFarlane, Steve Oliff & Reuben Rude, Angela, SPAWN 9 (Image Comics Mar. 1993) (first appearance of Angela, Medieval Spawn, and Cagliostro).


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Batman). A visual illustration of this tradition, including a side-by-side comparison of the above, can be found at this note’s accompanying website at http://brittonpayne.com/Marvel.html.


20 Fabian Nicieza, Kurt Busiek, Tom Grummett, Gary Erskine & Chris Sotomayor, Zeroes to Heroes Part 6: City of Heroes?, New Thunderbolts 6 (Marvel Comics May 2005). Subsequent republishings of these issues and Marvel’s official online presence have removed any mention of “City of Heroes” in the title, changing the name of the entire story arc from “Zeroes to Heroes” to the name of the original first chapter “One Step Forward,” although the closing dialogue proclaiming New York as “A CITY OF HEROES” remains. See Fabian Nicieza et al., New Thunderbolts Vol. 1: One Step Forward (Tom Brevoort ed., Marvel Comics 2005).