Citing sources on the Internet

Regardless of their chosen format, authors using and citing Internet sources should observe the following two guidelines:

1. Direct readers as closely as possible to the information being cited; whenever possible, reference specific documents rather than home or menu pages.
2. Provide addresses that work.

Documents available via the Internet include articles from periodicals (e.g., newspaper, newsletter, or journal); they may stand on their own (e.g., research paper, government report, online book or brochure); or they may have a quintessentially Web-based format (e.g., Web page, newsgroup).

At a minimum, a reference of an Internet source should provide a document title or description, a date (either the date of publication or update or the date of retrieval), and an address (in Internet terms, a uniform resource locator, or URL). Whenever possible, identify the authors of a document as well.

The URL is the most critical element: If it doesn't work, readers won't be able to find the cited material, and the credibility of your paper or argument will suffer. The most common reason URLs fail is that they are transcribed or typed incorrectly; the second most common reason is that the document they point to has been moved or deleted.

The components of a URL are as follows:

![URL components diagram](http://www.apa.org/monitor/ocd00/workplace.html)

The protocol indicates what method a Web browser (or other type of Internet software) should use to exchange data with the file server on which the desired document resides. The protocols recognized by most browsers are hypertext transfer protocol (http), hypertext transfer protocol secure (https), and file transfer protocol (ftp); other Internet protocols include telnet and gopher. In a URL, all of the protocols listed in this paragraph should be followed by a colon and two forward slashes (e.g., http://).

The host name identifies the server on which the files reside. On the Web, it is often the address for an organization's home page (e.g., http://www.apa.org is the address for APA's home page). Although most host names start with "www," not all do (for example, http://journals.apa.org is the home page for APA's electronic journals, and http://members.apa.org is the entry page to the members-only portion of the APA site). The host name is not case sensitive; for consistency and ease of reading, always type it in lowercase letters.

The rest of the address indicates the directory path leading to the desired document. This part of the URL is case sensitive; faithfully reproduce uppercase and lowercase letters and all
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It is important to provide the directory path, and not just the host name, because home pages and menu pages typically consist mainly of links, only one of which may be to the document or information you want the readers to find. If there are hundreds of links (or even just 10 to 20), readers may give up in frustration before they have located the material you are citing.

If you are using a word-processing program, the easiest way to transcribe a URL correctly is to copy it directly from the address window in your browser and paste it into your paper (make sure the automatic hyphenation feature of your word processor is turned off). Do not insert a hyphen if you need to break a URL across lines; instead, break the URL after a slash or before a period.

Test the URLs in your references regularly when you first draft a paper and when you're preparing the final version for publication. If the document you are citing has moved, update the URL so that it points to the correct location. If the document is no longer available, you may want to substitute another source (e.g., if you originally cited a draft and a formally published version now exists) or drop it from the paper altogether.

Source: http://www.apastyle.org/elecmedia.html

In-text citation of electronic material

To cite a specific part of a source, indicate the page, chapter, figure, table, or equation at the appropriate point in text. Always give page numbers for quotations (see section 3.34). Note that the words page and chapter are abbreviated in such text citations:

(Cheek & Buss, 1981, p. 332)
(Shimamura, 1989, chap. 3)

For electronic sources that do not provide page numbers, use the paragraph number, if available, preceded by the paragraph symbol or the abbreviation “para.” If neither paragraph nor page numbers are visible, cite the heading and the number of the paragraph following it to direct the reader to the location of the material (see section 3.39).

(Myers, 2000, ¶ 5)
(Beutler, 2000, Conclusion section, para. 1)

Source: http://www.apastyle.org/electext.html

General Form for Electronic References

Electronic sources include aggregated databases, online journals, Web sites or Web pages, newsgroups, Web- or e-mail-based discussion groups, and Web- or e-mail-based newsletters.

Online periodical:

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Online document:


Source: http://www.apastyle.org/elecgeneral.html

Some specific bibliographic citations of electronic materials based on APA Style

The 5th edition of APA (2001, p.238) recommends that to cite sources from aggregated online databases, cite the work, add a retrieval statement with date and proper name of the database. For other web sources, include a URL that points to the entry page of the database.

Citation Examples

**A Journal Article retrieved from a database**


or if you have three to five authors:


(Note: APA (p.227) indicates that in electronic sources, page numbers are often not relevant.)

**A Magazine Article**


**An Abstract**


**An Internet Journal Article with No Print Equivalent**

A Newspaper Article


A Web Document


A Web Site

No reference entry is needed; give the URL of the site in text. For example,

2Learn is a very useful Web site for teachers http://www.2Learn.ca/mapset/mapset.html

E-Mail

Cite e-mail communication in text only. No reference entry is needed. For example, 

J. Tong (personal communication, February 9, 2000)

Illustrations

To provide full citation of illustrations, include a note at the bottom of the reprinted work (or in the caption) giving credit to the original author and to the copyright holder. Although APA does not include specific guidelines regarding images from website, drawing an analogy from printed work, here is a suggestion.

For example, to provide full bibliographic citation to a copyrighted photograph obtained from the Washington State University website, include a note at the bottom of the photograph.


References


†Source: Adapted from Tong, Josie, (2004), Citation Style Guides for Internet and Electronic Sources. Retrieved September, 2004, from http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/citation/index.cfm