



## Citing Online Resources: A Quick Reference Sheet



Students are increasingly using content from online sources (e.g., Web sites, e-mail, listservs, electronic databases, etc.) in their papers and are often not sure how to properly cite these sources. This quick reference sheet provides some examples of how to cite online sources. Most of these examples are based on recommendations in the latest edition of the *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association (5<sup>th</sup> edition)*. Some of these recommendations differ from previous editions of the *Publications Manual*.

### For Information from Web Sites:

**The APA manual provides these two general guidelines about citing material from the Web:**

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

**What APA recommends providing, at a minimum, is:**

- 1) a document title or description;
- 2) a date (of publication or of retrieval of that information);
- 3) an address (Uniform Resource Locator or URL); and
- 4) authors of the document, whenever possible.

Be sure to type the URL in correctly so that it works and others trying to retrieve this same document will be able to find it. (However, the publication manual acknowledges that sometimes even correctly typed URLs may not work because the Web site or Web page in question has been changed, moved or deleted.)

**Here's how an item in your References list would look for a newspaper article retrieved online and available by searching the site:**

Virgin, B. (2005, October 6). Fund-raising may test public giving. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Retrieved October 7, 2005, from <http://www.seattlepi.com>

**Here's a university report available on an organization's Web site:**

University of California, San Francisco, Institute for Health and Aging. (1996, November). Chronic care in America: A 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge. Retrieved September 9, 2000, from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Web site: <http://www.rwjf.org/library/chrcare/>

**Here's an article from an Internet-only journal:**

Dunn, B. J. (2005, January 15). Staying sane in Seattle. *Seattle Psychological Journal*, 15, Article 5. Retrieved October 1, 2005, from <http://seapsyj.org/15/5html>

**[MORE EXAMPLES on page 2.]**

NOTE: Some of the examples used in this reference guide are fictitious and used for illustrative purposes only. Others are actual citations. More examples are available from the *Publication Manual of the APA (5<sup>th</sup> edition)*.

Let's say you have accessed an article online from a scholarly journal and this article is an **EXACT DUPLICATE** (e.g., page numbers, content, etc.) of an article that is available in print. The publication manual states: "... **the same basic primary journal reference can be used, but if you have viewed the article only in its electronic form, you should add in brackets after the article title [Electronic version].**" Here is how a source might appear on a References page:

Taylor, D. M. & Bosley, K. (2005). Properly citing electronic resources in scholarly papers [Electronic version]. *Journal of Scholarly Citation*, 10, 225-250.

(Note that this looks just like a conventional reference list item except for the inclusion of [Electronic version] after the article's title. However, if you have reason to believe the electronic version differs from the print version in format or content (e.g., the electronic version has no page numbers or includes additional data or commentary, etc.), you must include the retrieval date and the URL instead of simply including [Electronic version] after the article's title. For example:

Taylor, D. M. & Bosley, K. (2005). Properly citing electronic resources in scholarly papers. *Journal of Scholarly Citation*, 10, 225-250. Retrieved October 6, 2005, from <http://www.jsc.org/articles10/taylor-bosley.html>

### Examples from the Publication Manual of the APA:

**E-mail.** An e-mail sent from one individual to another should be cited in the text of your paper as a personal communication and **does not have to be included in the References list because it is not "recoverable data."** Here's how it would look when cited in the text of your paper:

J. Clark found no evidence of corruption (personal communication, January 15, 2005).

or

Apparently there was no evidence of corruption (J. Clark, personal communication, January 15, 2005).

### Example of a U.S. government report available on a government agency Web site:

United States Sentencing Commission. (n.d.). *1997 sourcebook of federal sentencing statistics*. Retrieved December 8, 1999, from <http://www.ussc.gov/annrpt/1997/sbtoc97.htm>  
(Note: n.d. means "no date")

### A message posted to a newsgroup:

Chalmers, D. (2000, November 17). Seeing with sound [Msg 1]. Message posted to [news:sci.psychology.consciousness](mailto:news:sci.psychology.consciousness)

Note: List last name first followed by initial(s). Use screen name if that is all that is available. Provide exact date of posting. Follow the date with the subject line of the message but do not italicize it. Provide any identifier for the message in brackets. (In this case it was message 1.) Finish the reference with Message posted to followed by the address of the newsgroup.

### Electronic copy of a journal article, three to five authors, retrieved from a database:

Borman, W. C., Hanson, M. A., Oppler, S. H., Pulakos, E. D., & White, L. A. (1993). Role of early supervisor performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 443-449. Retrieved October 23, 2000, from PsycARTICLES database.

NOTE: Some of the examples used in this reference guide are fictitious and used for illustrative purposes only. Others are actual citations. More examples are available from the *Publication Manual of the APA (5<sup>th</sup> edition)*.