How Do I Cite Electronic Sources? ~APA Edition~

It is not enough simply to find information about a topic. You must also determine whether the source is reliable. The ultimate responsibility is yours—your name is on the paper—and so you must do research adequate to the task of determining if your electronic source is one you would be better off quoting or forgetting. Also, remember that there is no better opinion to solicit than that of your professor. When in doubt, ask.

With any citation you add to your paper, you are communicating at least two things:

- You are telling the reader that this idea (and, if you are quoting, the expression of the idea) is the intellectual property of some other person or group.

- The citation provides the reader with precise directions about how to find the source of your information.

Make sure to be very careful to give detailed, accurate information about how to locate your source. Electronic sources are typically more complicated and require greater care. See the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for the final word. In the meantime, this handout will serve to get you started citing successfully.

CITING FROM A WEB PAGE

Perhaps the most popular (and most potentially dangerous) of the new electronic sources is the Internet Web page. Use information from these sources with care.

- Decide what information from the Internet source is appropriate. A Web page is almost always produced with some ulterior motive and thus carries with it some inherent self-interest in the information it offers.

- Be as specific as you can about explaining how someone else can locate that same information.

- Always save a hard copy (printout) of electronic sources you cite; Web pages often disappear.

In-text citation for Web page

- Include writer’s last name

- Include date the page was last updated

For instance, if you are writing a paper on the relationship between exercise and obesity, a typical sentence in your paper might look something like this:

Example:

This following study confirms the beneficial effects of exercise and weight reduction on hyperinsulinemia in obese individuals (Weinstock, Dai, & Wadden, 1998).
Reference page citation for Web page

The citation should be double spaced, and subsequent lines should be indented five spaces. Also include:

- Author’s name: last name, then first initial
- Date the item was last updated or n.d. if no date listed
- Title of the specific article or item from which you are extracting the idea and/or words
- Title of the Web page
- Date you accessed the materials (if you think the material could change, such as in journals).
- The specific Web address or path at which this item is available

Example:


CITING FROM AN ONLINE DATABASE

Some frequently used databases at WJU are Academic Search Elite, PsychInfo, Medline, Project Muse, and CINAHL. A complete list can be found in the library or on the library database. When you access information via the database, you will need to cite your source both parenthetically and in your reference page. The point is to get your reader to the same source you used.

In-text citation for an online database

- Include writer’s last name
- Include date the page was last updated

Reference page citation for an online database

- Author’s name: last name first, then first initial
- Date article was published
- Title of article
- Publication information
✓ Page numbers, where available
✓ Date you retrieved the article
✓ Name of database

Example:

Disclaimer: Please recognize that this guide is merely a starting point to Web browsing and citing. Please consult the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for more detailed examples and procedures, and expect that whatever you are reading and learning today about electronic sources and how to use them in your research will have changed before very long. See an ARC writing tutor or your professor for more detailed assistance.