

The cover features a red top section with white text and a white crosshair. Below this is a grey section with a large, stylized black graphic. At the bottom is a red section with white text.

APA Style for  
**Electronic Resources**

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

August 1, 2001



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*NOTE: All numbered reference examples and numerical cross-references refer to the 5th Edition of the APA Publication Manual. Unlike the print version of APA's Publication Manual, this electronic document will be updated as there are changes to APA style. In areas where the print version of the Publication Manual and this document differ, the guidelines in this electronic document should be followed.*

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## **Electronic Media and URLs**

**Sources on the Internet.** The Internet is a worldwide network of interconnected computers. Although there are a number of methods for navigating and sharing information across the Internet, by far the most popular and familiar is the graphical interface of the World Wide Web. The vast majority of Internet sources cited in APA journals are those that are accessed via the Web.

The variety of material available on the Web, and the variety of ways in which it is structured and presented, can present challenges for creating usable and useful references. Regardless of format, however, 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:

Protocol	Host name	Path to document
http://	www.apa.org/monitor/oct00/	workplace.html
		File name of specific document

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 punctuation. 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, when you submit it for peer review, when you're preparing the final version for publication, and when you're reviewing the proofs. 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.

#### **4.07 General Forms 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:*

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (2000). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, xx, xxxxxx. Retrieved month day, year, from source.



*Online document:*

Author, A. A. (2000). *Title of work*. Retrieved month day, year, from source.

#### **4.15 Retrieval Information: Electronic Sources**

The retrieval statement provides the date the information was retrieved, along with the name and/or address of the source.

*Electronic reference formats recommended by the American Psychological Association.* (2000, October 12). **Retrieved October 23, 2000, from <http://www.apa.org/journals/webref.html>**

Eid, M., & Langeheine, R. (1999). The measurement of consistency and occasion specificity with latent class models: A new model and its application to the measurement of affect. *Psychological Methods, 4*, 100–116. **Retrieved November 19, 2000, from the PsycARTICLES database.**

- If information is obtained from a document on the Internet, provide the Internet address for the document at the end of the retrieval statement.
- If information is retrieved from an aggregated database, providing the name of the database is sufficient; no address is needed.
- Use `available from` to indicate that the URL leads to information on how to obtain the cited material, rather than to the material itself (see Example 95).
- Finish the retrieval element with a period, *unless* it ends with an Internet address.

### **Periodicals**

#### **71. Internet articles based on a print source**

At present, the majority of the articles retrieved from online publications in psychology and the behavioral sciences are exact duplicates of those in their print versions and are unlikely to have additional analyses and data attached. This is likely to change in the future. In the meantime, the same basic primary journal reference (see Examples 1–5) 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` as in the following fictitious example:



VandenBos, G., Knapp, S., & Doe, J. (2001). Role of reference elements in the selection of resources by psychology undergraduates [Electronic version]. *Journal of Bibliographic Research*, 5, 117–123.

If you are referencing an online article that you have reason to believe has been changed (e.g., the format differs from the print version or page numbers are not indicated) or that includes additional data or commentaries, you will need to add the date you retrieved the document and the URL.

VandenBos, G., Knapp, S., & Doe, J. (2001). Role of reference elements in the selection of resources by psychology undergraduates. *Journal of Bibliographic Research*, 5, 117–123. Retrieved October 13, 2001, from <http://jbr.org/articles.html>

## **72. Article in an Internet-only journal**

Fredrickson, B. L. (2000, March 7). Cultivating positive emotions to optimize health and well-being. *Prevention & Treatment*, 3, Article 0001a. Retrieved November 20, 2000, from <http://journals.apa.org/prevention/volume3/pre0030001a.html>

## **73. Article in an Internet-only journal, retrieved via file transfer protocol (ftp)**

Crow, T. J. (2000). Did *Homo sapiens* speciate on the Y chromosome? *Psychology*, 11. Retrieved March 25, 2001, from <ftp://ftp.princeton.edu/harnad/Psychology/2000.volume.11/psyc.00.11.001.language-sex-chromosomes.1.crow>

## **74. Article in an Internet-only newsletter**

Glueckauf, R. L., Whitton, J., Baxter, J., Kain, J., Vogelgesang, S., Hudson, M., et al. (1998, July). Videocounseling for families of rural teens with epilepsy—Project update. *Telehealth News*, 2(2). Retrieved June 6, 2000, from [http://www.telehealth.net/subscribe/newsletr\\_4a.html#1](http://www.telehealth.net/subscribe/newsletr_4a.html#1)

- Use the complete publication date given on the article.
- Note that there are no page numbers.
- In an Internet periodical, volume and issue numbers often are not relevant. If they are not used, the name of the periodical is all that can be provided in the reference.
- Whenever possible, the URL should link directly to the article.





- Break a URL that goes to another line after a slash or before a period. Do not insert (or allow your word-processing program to insert) a hyphen at the break.

### ***Nonperiodical documents on the Internet***

#### **75. Multipage document created by private organization, no date**

Greater New Milford (Ct) Area Healthy Community 2000, Task Force on Teen and Adolescent Issues. (n.d.). *Who has time for a family meal? You do!* Retrieved October 5, 2000, from <http://www.familymealtime.org>

- When an Internet document comprises multiple pages (i.e., different sections have different URLs), provide a URL that links to the home (or entry) page for the document.
- Use n . d . (no date) when a publication date is not available.

#### **76. Chapter or section in an Internet document**

Benton Foundation. (1998, July 7). Barriers to closing the gap. In *Losing ground bit by bit: Low-income communities in the information age* (chap. 2). Retrieved August 18, 2001, from <http://www.benton.org/Library/Low-Income/two.html>

- Use a chapter or section identifier (if available) in place of page numbers.
- Provide a URL that links directly to the chapter or section.

#### **77. Stand-alone document, no author identified, no date**

*GVU's 8th WWW user survey*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 8, 2000, from [http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/user\\_surveys/survey-1997-10/](http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/user_surveys/survey-1997-10/)

If the author of a document is not identified, begin the reference with the title of the document.



### **78. Document available on university program or department Web site**

Chou, L., McClintock, R., Moretti, F., & Nix, D. H. (1993). *Technology and education: New wine in new bottles: Choosing pasts and imagining educational futures*. Retrieved August 24, 2000, from Columbia University, Institute for Learning Technologies Web site: <http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/papers/newwine1.html>

- If a document is contained within a large and complex Web site (such as that for a university or a government agency), identify the host organization and the relevant program or department before giving the URL for the document itself. Precede the URL with a colon.

### ***Technical and research reports***

### **79. Report from a university, available on private organization Web site**

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

- When the author of a document is markedly different from the provider (e.g., the host organization), explicitly identify the latter in the retrieval statement.
- *Note.* This document is no longer available on this site. In most papers, such a reference should be updated or deleted.

### **80. U.S. government report available on government agency Web site, no publication date indicated**

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>

### **81. Report from a private organization, available on organization Web site**

Canarie, Inc. (1997, September 27). *Towards a Canadian health IWAY: Vision, opportunities and future steps*. Retrieved November 8, 2000, from <http://www.canarie.ca/press/publications/pdf/health/healthvision.doc>



## **82. Abstract of a technical report retrieved from university Web site**

Kruschke, J. K., & Bradley, A. L. (1995). *Extensions to the delta rule of associative learning* (Indiana University Cognitive Science Research Report No. 14). Abstract retrieved October 21, 2000, from [http://www.indiana.edu/~kruschke/deltarule\\_abstract.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~kruschke/deltarule_abstract.html)

- If the document retrieved is an abstract rather than a full paper, begin the retrieval statement with `Abstract retrieved`.

## ***Proceedings of meetings and symposia***

### **83. Paper presented at a symposium, abstract retrieved from university Web site**

Cutler, L. D., Frölich, B., & Hanrahan, P. (1997, January 16). *Two-handed direct manipulation on the responsive workbench*. Paper presented at the 1997 Symposium on Interactive 3D Graphics. Abstract retrieved June 12, 2000, from <http://www.graphics.stanford.edu/papers/twohanded/>

### **84. Paper presented at a virtual conference**

Tan, G., & Lewandowsky, S. (1996). *A comparison of operator trust in humans versus machines*. Paper presented at the CybErg 96 virtual conference. Retrieved May 16, 2000, from <http://www.curtin.edu.au/conference/cyberg/centre/outline.cgi/frame?dir-tan>

- Note that there is no geographic location for a virtual conference (i.e., a conference that takes place entirely online).

***E-mail.*** E-mail sent from one individual to another should be cited as a personal communication (see section 3.102).

## ***Newsgroups, online forums and discussion groups, and electronic mailing lists.***

The Internet offers several options for people around the world to sponsor and join discussions devoted to particular subjects. These options include newsgroups, online forums and discussion groups, and electronic mailing lists. (The last are often referred to as “listservs.” However, LISTSERV is a trademarked name for a particular software program; “electronic mailing list” is the appropriate generic term.)

Newsgroups can be accessed via Usenet (usually through an e-mail program or news reader); archives of many Usenet newsgroups are also maintained on the Web at



<http://groups.google.com>. Online forums or discussion groups are primarily Web based. Many, but not all, also operate as electronic mailing lists in that messages posted to the forum or discussion are e-mailed to participants.

Care should be taken when citing electronic discussion sources—as a rule, these are not referenced in formal publications because they are generally not peer reviewed, are not regarded as having scholarly content, and are not archived for a significant length of time. Any message or communication you cite should have scholarly value and should be retrievable. Although some newsgroups, online forums and discussion groups, and electronic mailing lists do maintain archives for a limited time, not all do. If no archives are maintained, then the message will not be retrievable and should not be included in the reference list. At best, it can be cited as a personal communication (see section 3.102).

### **85. Message posted to a newsgroup**

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

- If the author's full name is available, list the last name first followed by initials. If only a screen name is available, use the screen name.
- Provide the exact date of the posting.
- Follow the date with the subject line of the message (also referred to as the “thread”); do not italicize it. Provide any identifier for the message in brackets after the title.
- Finish the reference with *Message posted to* followed by the address of the newsgroup. Note that the protocol is *news*.

### **86. Message posted to online forum or discussion group**

Simons, D. J. (2000, July 14). New resources for visual cognition [Msg 31.] Message posted to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/visualcognition/message/31>

### **87. Message posted to an electronic mailing list**

Hammond, T. (2000, November 20). YAHC: Handle Parameters, DOI Genres, etc. Message posted to Ref-Links electronic mailing list, archived at <http://www.doi.org/mail-archive/ref-link/msg00088.html>



- Provide the name of the mailing list and the address for the archived version of the message.

## Other Electronic Sources

**Aggregated databases.** Researchers and students are increasingly making use of aggregated, searchable databases to find and retrieve abstracts, articles, and other types of information. The format specified in the previous edition of this manual required information about the source and format of the database in addition to information about the material retrieved. These days, however, most databases are available from a variety of sources or suppliers and in a variety of formats (e.g., on CD-ROM, mounted on a university server, available through a supplier Web site). Moreover, the distinctions between these various sources and formats are usually not apparent to the end user.

Therefore, when referencing material obtained by searching an aggregated database, follow the format appropriate to the work retrieved and add a retrieval statement that gives the date of retrieval and the proper name of the database. An item or accession number also may be provided but is not required. If you wish to include this number, put it in parentheses at the end of the retrieval statement.

### **88. Electronic copy of a journal article, three to five authors, retrieved from database**

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

### **89. Daily newspaper article, electronic version available by search**

Hilts, P. J. (1999, February 16). In forecasting their emotions, most people flunk out. *New York Times*. Retrieved November 21, 2000, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

### **90. Electronic copy of an abstract obtained from a secondary database**

Fournier, M., de Ridder, D., & Bensing, J. (1999). Optimism and adaptation to multiple sclerosis: What does optimism mean? *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 22*, 303–326. Abstract retrieved October 23, 2000, from PsycINFO database.



### **91. Electronic version of U.S. government report available by search from GPO Access database (on the Web)**

U.S. General Accounting Office. (1997, February). *Telemedicine: Federal strategy is needed to guide investments* (Publication No. GAO/NSAID/HEHS-97-67). Retrieved September 15, 2000, from General Accounting Office Reports Online via GPO Access: [http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/aces/aces160.shtml?/gao/index.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces160.shtml?/gao/index.html)

- The retrieval statement should provide a URL that links directly to the search screen for the database.

***Computer programs, software, and programming languages.*** Reference entries are not necessary for standard off-the-shelf software and programming languages, such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Java, Adobe Photoshop, and even SAS and SPSS. In text, give the proper name of the software, along with the version number.

Do provide reference entries for specialized software or computer programs with limited distribution.

### **92. Computer software**

Miller, M. E. (1993). *The Interactive Tester* (Version 4.0) [Computer software]. Westminster, CA: Psytek Services.

### **93. Computer software and manual available on university Web site**

Schwarzer, R. (1989). *Statistics software for meta-analysis* Computer software and manual. Retrieved from [http://www.yorku.ca/faculty/academic/schwarze/meta\\_e.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/faculty/academic/schwarze/meta_e.htm)

- Do not italicize names of software, programs, or languages.
- If an individual has proprietary rights to the software, name him or her as the author; otherwise, treat such references as unauthored works.
- In brackets immediately after the title, identify the source as a computer program, language, or software. Do not use a period between the title and the bracketed material.



- Give the location and the name of the organization that produced the work, if applicable, in the publisher position.
- To reference a manual, give the same information. However, in the brackets after the title, identify the source as a computer program or software manual.

### ***Raw data***

#### **94. Data file, available from government agency**

*National Health Interview Survey—Current health topics: 1991—Longitudinal study of aging* (Version 4) [Data file]. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

- In brackets at the end of the title (before the period), give a description of the material (e.g., *Data file*).

#### **95. Data file, available from NTIS Web site**

Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics. (1991). *National Health Provider Inventory: Home health agencies and hospices, 1991* [Data file]. Available from National Technical Information Service Web site, <http://www.ntis.gov>

- Use *available from* to indicate that the URL leads to information on how to obtain the cited material, rather than to the material itself.

### **Citations in Text 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 ¶ 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)

### ***3.102 Personal Communications***

Personal communications may be letters, memos, some electronic communications (e.g., e-mail or messages from nonarchived discussion groups or electronic bulletin boards), personal interviews, telephone conversations, and the like. Because they do not provide recoverable data, personal communications are not included in the reference list. Cite personal communications as text only. Give the initials as well as the surname of the communicator, and provide as exact a date as possible:

T.K. Lukes (personal communication, April 18, 2001)

(V.-G. Nguyen, personal communication, September 28, 1998)

For information on electronic media that may be listed in the References, see section I of chapter 4. Use your judgment in citing other electronic forms as personal communications; computer networks (including the Internet) currently provide a casual forum for communicating, and what you cite should have scholarly relevance.



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