

Web Extension to American Psychological Association Style (WEAPAS)

Proposed standard for referencing online documents in scientific publications (Revision 1.5.2)

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This document proposes an extension of *Appendix 3-A* ([APA, 1994](#), pp. 189-222), integrating the Internet standard of [Uniform Resource Locators](#) (URL) ([Graham, 1995](#)), as used on the [World Wide Web](#) (WWW, or Web) ([W3C, 1995](#)). The extension proposed here is an alternative to the "path statements" suggested for online sources ([APA, 1994](#), p. 218-220, [1998](#); see also [Dewey, 1996](#)).

As an alternative to the approach taken here, readers may wish to consult Li & Crane's ([1996a](#), [b](#); [Scribe SA, 1998](#)) "American Psychological Association Embellished Style." Li & Crane also discuss "Modern Language Association (MLA) Embellished Style." Those wishing to use citations tailored to the MLA school may also wish to consult Walker ([1995](#)) and Wainwright ([1995](#)).

The more generic guide provided by Quinion ([1996](#)) offers still another approach, while Ivey ([1996](#)) can be read as a review of the points each of these approaches speak to, and Dueterhoeft ([1998](#)) provides general guidelines and numerous example references based on Li & Crane, among others. There is also a summary of ideas for citing electronic texts (e-texts) by Tent ([1995](#)), and a short page discussing URLs in biomedical texts by Beckleheimer ([1994](#)), available for those who are interested. Also, a very extensive German language text on the same question is available from Bleuel ([1995](#)).

This is an evolving standard. This document should be considered *under construction*. Comments and suggestions are encouraged, and should be sent by electronic mail (e-mail) to the author via beads@beadsland.com.

The Proposal

- * Elements of References in WEAPAS Style
- * [Author Variations](#)
- * [Date Variations](#)
- * [Title Variations](#)
- * [Types of Documents](#)
- * [Publication Information](#)
- * [Examples](#) (yet to be written)
- * [References for this Document](#)

Elements of References in WEAPAS Style

Author Variations

World Wide Web documents described as "maintained" should refer to the author with the parenthetical modifier, **Maintainer** (*abbr* Maint.), although the more generic **Ed.** (*i.e.* Editor) may also be used.

Two special cases of author identifiers are considered under the Web Extension: e-mail addresses and nicknames/handles.

Electronic Mail Address as Author

- * First, all links which might name an author for a document (*e.g.* an anchor on the e-mail address itself, a "Return to Home" or "About the Author" link) should be exhausted before resorting to using an e-mail address.
- * If the Web page only lists or links to an author's e-mail address, and no other information is available to suggest the author of the page, the e-mail address should fill the author position of the reference.
- * Generic aliases (*e.g.* webmaster, maintainer) are an exception. In these cases, treat the organization which the documents represent (*usu.*, but not always, the organization running the server on which they are found) as a group or corporate author. This organization will likely be found also in the ADDRESS field in proximity to the eMail address.
- * Newsgroup postings and other documents which are only identifiable by an e-mail addresses should also use the e-mail address as author.
- * No capitalization or other changes in case should be made to e-mail addresses in the author position.
- * When citing references with e-mail addresses for authors, write out the full e-mail address as if it were a surname.

Nickname or Handle as Author

- * As with e-mail addresses, all potential links to pages in which a real name might be found should be exhausted before using a nickname as author.
- * If an author is commonly known by a handle, while their real name is also known, the handle may be included in brackets immediately following the real name in the author position. In such cases, the abbreviation "**a.k.a.**" (for 'Also Known As') should be used to identify the nickname as such.
- * The first letter of a handle should be capitalized. Unless the handle tends to be recognized by the use of non-standard case schemes (*e.g.* **eNiGmA**, **mrEd**), which should be preserved to aid in identification (*i.e.* the first letter should maintain its original case).
- * If a nickname is given as author, because the real name can not be determined, but an e-mail address for the individual is also known, the e-mail address should be included in brackets immediately following the nickname.

Date Variations

Because some types of online documents may be updated or modified by their authors' at any time, references to these documents should date the document version used with as much specificity as possible, with the following guidelines:

- * References to articles in monthly serials, which will not be modified once distributed, need only list the year and month of publication. If the periodical is a recognized journal, with volume and issue numbers, only the year should be listed.
- * Articles in newsgroups should be referenced not only by date, but by time, to distinguish them from other articles in the same thread by the same author. The format for such time references should be of the form "(*Year, Month Date, GMT Hour:Minute:Second*)" where GMT stands for Greenwich Mean Time, and *Hour* is on a 24 hour clock.
- * Online documents which provide no information as to the date they were created or last modified, should be treated as republished versions of works with no date of initial publication ([APA, 1994](#), p. 173), such that the reference would be of the form "(*n.d./Year*)" where *Year* is the year the document was retrieved.
- * When referencing documents which are likely to change unpredictably over time (*e.g.* many Web pages) the year may be followed by the month and day (if available).

In earlier revisions of this update, it was recommended that the word "version" should be appended to the dates of Web pages. This has been deemed redundant however, and so has been dropped from the current proposal.

Visiting Date

Optionally, one may choose to list the date a document was downloaded or viewed online, should there be a concern that the document might expire in the foreseeable future. Such dates come at the end of the reference, parenthesized in the form "(visited *Year, Month Date*)"

Title Variations

Generally the title of an online document should be immediately recognizable. There are some variations to watch out for however.

- * The **Subject:** line of a newsgroup article should be treated as its title. Although the prefix "Re:" or its cognate, a series of one or more closing angle brackets (">"), should be dropped. Messages lacking a subject or marked explicitly as "No subject" or similarly tagged, should be treated as untitled works.
- * Gopher menus (as opposed to discrete files retrieved by a gopher server) do not have titles, only description(s) of content, which may be provided by external pointers to the menu. It is recommended that such a description be included in brackets in the title position, otherwise the gopher menu should be treated as an untitled work.
- * The title of a HTML Web document should be taken from the <TITLE> element of that page. If the client used to view this page does not automatically display the contents of the <TITLE> element, it must be found by looking at the source file. Should the title given in header (*e.g.* <H1>) elements vary substantially from the that in the <TITLE> element, it may be listed also, following the <TITLE> part, and separated by a semicolon.

Types of Documents

There are many different types of documents and services available on the Internet. The nature of a given document should be given in brackets immediately following the title.

Database

An online database other than WAIS.

Digitized image

Graphics file in .gif, .jpg, or some other format.

Digitized sound file

Recorded or synthesized audio file.

Digitized video file

Film, movie, or animation as an electronic data file.

Electronic data file

Something for which these other descriptors is not entirely appropriate.

FTP archive

Subdirectory within an FTP accessed file system.

Gopher menu

Location in gopher space other than a terminal document node.

On-line news posting

Article in a Usenet or local newsgroup

On-line search query

A database query or similar service accessed by gopher, or via the Web using the GET method.

On-line serial

Periodical distributed by eMail or in another form.

On-line service

Service other than a database, accessible via telnet or other protocols.

PostScript file

File containing instructions for rendering a document on a PostScript printer or other device.

Text file

File containing text which may be read without a special program.

WAIS database

Publicly accessible WAIS.

WAIS query

Results of a search of a WAIS database.

WWW document

An HTML document which must be viewed using a World Wide Web client.

Note that postings to mailing lists (e.g. Listserv, MajorDomo) are not included here. As these documents are not publicly retrievable at a later date, and are seen only by those individuals who are subscribed to the list at the time the message was sent, they should be treated as personal communications.

Publication Information

The Web Extension employs URLs in the publication element of references, under the following conditions:

- * Each unique Uniform Resource Locator should be prefaced with the keyword "URL" followed by a space.
- * A URL should not end with a period or other punctuation.
- * If a URL should run longer than the space available on a line, it may be broken at a slash ("/") character, keeping the slash as the last character on the line, in the same way as a dash ("–") is used to divide hyphenated words.
- * When the retrieval of a document involves the sending of e-mail, the **mailto:** URL should be followed by any information required in the mail for retrieval. This information shall be prefixed by either the keyword **Message:** (if it is to be included in the body of the mail) or the keyword **Subject:** (if it is meant to appear on the subject header line). A space should delimit both sides of the keyword, but no other punctuation (other than the colon in the keyword) should be used.
- * For documents which have alternative methods of online retrieval, the URL for each retrieval method should be listed, with URLs delimited by a single space and no other punctuation.

Examples

Unfortunately, I have not yet had the free hours to sit down and write up the extensive examples I had planned. Please be patient. In the meantime, the format of the [References](#), below, should be a good jumping off point.

References

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Please send comments and suggestions to webmaster@beadslan.com.

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