How to Cite a Website in APA

You may have noticed that the *American Psychological Association (APA) Manual* does not model how to cite a website. The temptation for many writers is to use the URL for the citation and the reference, but you are actually not citing a website. APA differentiates between types of sources in real space. Cyber space is no different. So the first step to successfully mastering citing online resources, is to stop thinking you are citing a website. You are citing documents that are available online. You do research at the library and then cite that library. You go to the library and then cite books, journal articles, and newspapers that you found at the library. The web is no different. So here are some tips to correctly citing online resources. You will first need to identify the type of document you have and make a reference entry.

If it is a book, newspaper story, dissertation, magazine article, or other common source then just follow the APA template in the *Manual*. There is only a slight modification between the online and print references. Let us say you want to cite a book you read online. The APA template for a book is (APA, 2010, p. 202)

Author, A. A. (YEAR). *Title of work*. Location: Publisher.

Since the book is online, all you need to do is include the URL where the book is located. So the template for an online book is (APA, 2010, p. 202)


If what you are referencing does not have an APA template (corporate report, press release, video...), creating your own template is simple (APA, 2010, p. 215). Focus on the four elements of an APA reference: Author, Date, Title, and Publisher (Lee, 2010).

**Author:** Finding the author can be tricky for some online sources. If you can’t find the author you have two choices. You can use the organization as author. For example, if I am citing a press release from the Minnesota Department of Health, then it might make sense for me to use the Minnesota Department of Health as the author. Your second strategy is to use the title in place of the author.

**Date:** This is the date that the online source was written and not the date you accessed it. If there is no date available, (n.d.) is used in the parentheses.

**Title:** This is the title of the document not the title of the website. In some cases after the title you would also include a [format description].

**Publisher:** Begin with “Retrieved from” and then use the URL.
Using these four elements, the basic template for a website reference is then


www.xxxxxxxxx

Once you have these references, citing is easy. In text you just use the author, date, and page or paragraph numbers.

If you have this reference,


Then your in-text cite would appear as,

Kennedy (2010) stated the opinion that “…” (para. 2)

or

One blogger's opinion is “…” (Kennedy, 2010, para. 2)

The only time that a website will appear in the text, is if you want to discuss the website as a whole entity and need to direct the reader there. In this case you just place the URL in the text and it does not appear on the reference page.

For example,

Blogs, such as http://www.seansblog.com, are an interesting....

Follow these rules and you should be able to cite most of what you find online. Always remember that APA is a set of guidelines. Because there are an infinite number of types of sources, there is no magic template that will cover them all.

GOOD LUCK!

References
