

MLA: Documenting an Article or Page from a Web Site

A wealth of information is published on Web sites available to anyone with Internet access. However, electronic publication information is inconsistent, and the pages are unstable. This handout describes how the following three types of Web sites are documented and includes some tips for locating some electronic publication information.

- **Commercial, Professional, and Educational Sites:** The pages posted on these dot-coms, dot-orgs, and dot-edus usually have not appeared in print publications in the same form, if at all. See page 2.

abcnews.go.com	ABC News
www.cnn.com	CNBC
www.cnn.com	Cable News Network
www.pbs.org	Public Broadcasting System
www.npr.org	National Public Radio
www.constitution.org	Constitution Society
www.mla.org	Modern Language Association
www.stlcc.edu	St. Louis Community College
www.stlcc.edu/fv/writing	SLCC-FV Writing Center
- **Online Newspapers and Magazines:** The articles on these dot-coms often are postings of articles that appear in print publications in essentially the same form. See page 3.

www.washingtonpost.com	<i>The Washington Post</i>
www.nytimes.com	<i>The New York Times</i>
www.stltoday.com	<i>The St. Louis-Post Dispatch</i>
www.chicagotribune.com	<i>Chicago Tribune</i>
www.theatlantic.com	<i>The Atlantic</i> (formerly <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>)
www.thenation.com	<i>The Nation</i>
www.time.com/time/	<i>TIME Magazine</i>
- **Government Sites:** Documents posted on dot-govs are a combination of pages like those on commercial and professional sites or articles like those on online newspapers and magazines. See page 4.

www.cdc.gov	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.nsf.gov	National Science Foundation
www.state.gov	U.S. Department of State
www.house.gov	U.S. House of Representatives
www.senate.gov	U.S. Senate
www.census.gov	U.S. Census Bureau
www.usdoj.gov	U.S. Department of Justice
www.missouri.gov	State of Missouri
www.illinois.gov	State of Illinois
stlouis.missouri.org	City of St. Louis, Missouri
www.co.st-louis.mo.us/	St. Louis County, Missouri

Databases: See the handout “Documenting an Article from a Library Subscription Service” if you are documenting an article from subscription database providers, such as EBSCOhost, LexisNexis, Thomson Gale (formerly InfoTrac), or CQ Researcher.

Documenting Pages on Commercial, Professional, and Educational Web Sites

The dot-coms, dot-orgs, and dot-edus of the Web, these sites post information on “pages” that don’t exist in print publications, at least not in the form they appear on the sites. Usually, author and title, along with electronic publication and access information, are sufficient for the works-cited list.

In-text or parenthetical citation: Cite author or quoted title, whichever comes first in the works-cited entry. However, Web pages are usually not numbered, so include a page number only if one is displayed on the screen (do not use the page number in the upper right corner of a printout unless your teacher has instructed you to do so).

General format for a works-cited entry: Note the punctuation after each component.

Author. “Title of Page.” Name of Site. Date of electronic publication. Sponsor.

Date of access <URL>.

1. **Author.** Reverse first or only author’s name for alphabetizing. Look for the author’s name after the title, at the end of the article, in a sidebar, or even on the home page. If an author is not listed, and often one is not, especially on commercial sites, begin with the title of the page.
2. **“Title of Page.”** Enclose the title in quotation marks, and use MLA-style capitalization regardless of how the title is capitalized on the site. The title is usually above the body of the text. Also, check the blue title bar across the top of the window. If a title is not apparent, include a description without quotation marks, such as Home page.
3. **Name of Site**. Underline the name. It’s typically at the top of the page and the same on all the site’s pages. Also, check the domain of the URL or the site’s home page.
4. **Date of electronic publication.** Use MLA date format (day month year). The date could be listed as a posting date, an update date, or a revision date at the beginning or end. If no date is listed, use the year of copyright, often located in the footer.
5. **Sponsor.** For most commercial and many professional sites, the “sponsor” is often the full name of the commercial or professional entity (see example below). However, some professional sites are sponsored by separate entities. Look for the sponsor in the footer by copyright information or on the home page of the domain.
6. **Date of access** is the date you viewed the site. Use MLA date format (day month year), but don’t put a period after the date. On printouts, the date of access usually prints in the lower right corner.
7. **<URL>**. Enclose the uniform resource locator, or Web address, in angle brackets. On printouts, the URL usually prints across the bottom.

Example: The author for the following source is unknown, so the source begins with the title.

“How Do I Document Sources from the Web in My Works-Cited List?” MLA. 4

Dec. 2003. Modern Language Association. 29 Jan. 2007 <http://

www.mla.org/style/style_faq/style_faq4>.

Documenting Articles in Online Newspapers and Magazines

Most national newspapers and magazines, as well as many local ones, post on their Web sites articles that appear in their printed periodicals. However, information related to the printed articles, such as page numbers, is not available. Usually, author and title, along with electronic publication and access information, are sufficient for the works-cited list.

Scholarly Journals: See section 5.9.4a (p. 222) of Joseph Gibaldi's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th edition (New York: Modern Language Association, 2003) if you are documenting an article from a scholarly journal available online.

Databases: See the handout "Documenting an Article from a Library Subscription Service" if you are documenting an article from a subscription database provider, such as EBSCOhost, LexisNexis, Thomson Gale (formerly InfoTrac), or CQ Researcher.

In-text or parenthetical citation: Cite author or quoted title, whichever comes first in the works-cited entry. However, articles posted on the Web are usually not numbered, so include a page number only if one is displayed on the screen (do not use the page number in the upper right corner of a printout unless your teacher has instructed you to do so).

General format for a works-cited entry: Note the punctuation after each component.

Author. "Title of Article." Name of Online Periodical date of publication. Date of access <URL>.

1. **Author.** Reverse first or only author's name for alphabetizing. If an author is not listed, typically for articles from newswires such as The Associated Press, begin with the title of the article.
2. **"Title of Article."** Enclose the title in quotation marks, and use MLA-style capitalization regardless of how the title is capitalized on the site.
3. **Name of Online Periodical** that you should underline the name, but don't put a period after it. Omit any initial article (*a, an, the*). Check the domain of the URL or the site's home page.
4. **Date of publication.** Use MLA date format (day month year, or month year, or season year).
5. **Date of access** is the date you viewed the site. Use MLA date format (day month year), but don't put a period after the date. On printouts, the date of access usually prints in the lower right corner.
6. **<URL>.** Enclose the uniform resource locator, or Web address, in angle brackets. On printouts, the URL usually prints across the bottom.

Example: The example below was taken from *The New York Times'* Web site.

Landler, Mark. "German Court Seeks Arrest of 13 C.I.A. Agents." New York Times 31 Jan. 2007. 31 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/31/world/europe/31cnd-germany.html>>.

Documenting Documents on Government Web Sites

Government sites provide access to many types of documents. Some information is posted on pages and documented like those on commercial and professional sites (see 1st example). Other postings include electronic versions of printed publications, including articles from periodicals, and are documented like those of online magazines (see 2nd example). Still other postings include large documents cited like books (see 3rd example).

For many government postings, however, the author is unknown. Instead, the government agency is cited as the author. The citation can be lengthy when an agency is part of a department within a government.

In-text or parenthetical citation: Cite author if known, either in a signal phrase or parenthetically. If the author is unknown, cite the agency as author. However, agency names are often too long to cite parenthetically, so the full name is best cited in a signal phrase. The signal phrase citing the first example below might begin as follows:

According to the Web site of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), influenza is . . .

Example: The author for the following source is unknown, so the citation begins with the government agency. Although this document is cited like a page on a commercial or professional Web site (see page 2), the sponsor (United States) is omitted because it is already listed. An agency's commonly used initials or acronym is given in parentheses.

United States. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "Key Facts about Influenza and the Influenza Vaccine." CDC. 30 Aug. 2006. 2 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>>.

Example: The following example is an article in an online magazine (see page 3). The authors are known. Because this document has page numbers, following the date of publication are a colon, the range of pages, and then the period.

Wallace, Ginny, and Bob Pierce. "Humanity for Habitat." Missouri Conservationist Feb. 2007: 4-9. 2 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.mdc.mo.gov/documents/conmag/2007/20070201.pdf>>.

Example: The following example is an electronic posting of a printed booklet. The author is unknown, so the source begins with the government agency. The title is followed by the print publication information (city of publication is unknown) and the electronic publication information.

Missouri State. Missouri Dept. of Conservation (MDC). Tree Care after Storms. MDC, 2006. MDC Online. 2007. 2 Feb. 2007 <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/documents/forest/health/tree_storm.pdf>.