AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION | APA Style

November 18, 2010

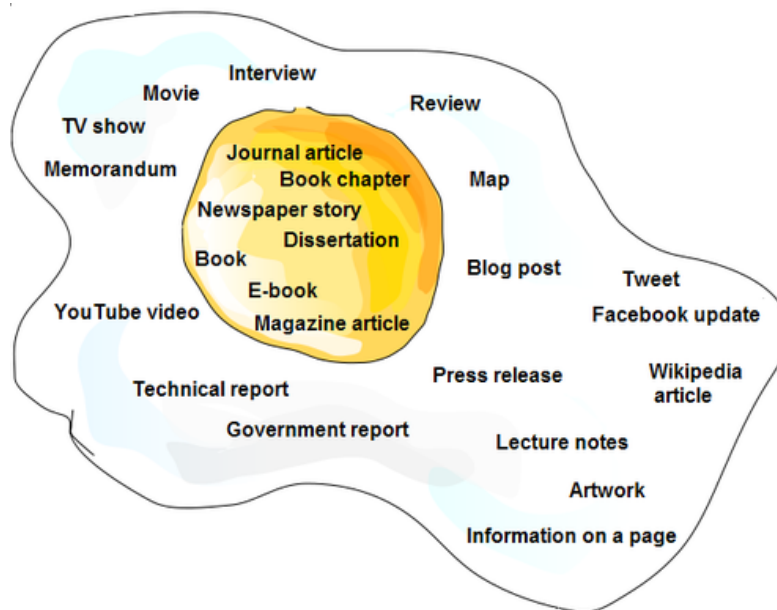# How to Cite Something You Found on a Website in APA Style

by Chelsea Lee

Perhaps the most common question we get about APA Style is "How do I cite a website?" or "How do I cite something I found on a website?"

First, to cite a website in general, but not a specific document on that website, see this FAQ.

Once you're at the level of citing a particular page or document, the key to writing the reference list entry is to determine what kind of content the page has. The *Publication Manual* reference examples in Chapter 7 are sorted by the type of content (e.g., journal article, e-book, newspaper story, blog post), not by the location of that content in a library or on the Internet. The *Manual* shows both print- and web-based references for the different types of content.

What seems to flummox our readers is what to do when the content doesn't fall into an easily defined area. Sometimes the most you can say is that you're looking at information on a page—some kind of article, but not a journal article. To explore this idea, imagine the Internet as a fried egg. The yolk contains easier to categorize content like journal articles and e-books. In that runny, nebulous white you'll find the harder to define content, like blog posts, lecture notes, or maps. To wit, the egg:

Content in that egg white area may seem confusing to cite, but the template for references from this area is actually very simple, with only four pieces (author, date, title, and source):

Author, A. (date). Title of document [Format description]. Retrieved from http://URL

That format description in brackets is used only when the format is something out of the ordinary, such as a blog post or lecture notes; otherwise, it's not necessary. Some other example format descriptions are listed on page 186 of the *Publication Manual*.

Examples of Online References

Here's an example (a blog post) in which we have all four necessary pieces of information (also see *Manual* example #76):

Freakonomics. (2010, October 29). E-ZPass is a life-saver (literally) [Blog post].
     Retrieved from http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/29/e-zpass-is-a-
     life-saver-literally/

Sometimes, however, one or more of these four pieces is missing, such as when there is no identifiable author or no date. You can download a pdf version of the chart here that lists all the permutations of information that might occur with an online reference and shows how to adapt the reference.

Here's an example where **no author** is identified in this online news article: