

Guidelines for citing library-hosted, unique digital assets

Authored by the Digital Library Federation Assessment Interest Group Citations working group

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Guidelines for citing library-hosted, unique digital assets

Introduction

These draft guidelines were developed in response to a call for steps forward made by the Digital Library Federation (DLF) Assessment subgroup on Benefits.¹ One of the areas identified for development included the establishment of best practices and guidelines for citing digital libraries.

Most major citation styles do not provide direction for citing digital objects, and it is difficult for the administrators of digital repositories to use traditional citation metrics to track the use of their digital objects in scholarly output. Scholarly literature has recently begun to focus on challenges and best practices for citing data sets. In addition, some citation styles, as well as individual institutions, provide guidelines for citing special collections materials. Much of this work can be drawn upon in order to format citations for digitized special collection and cultural heritage materials (e.g. rare books, manuscript materials, images, moving images, etc.) and institutional repository content.

The following methodology was employed to begin development of citation guidelines for library-hosted, unique digital assets. An initial draft was circulated to the DLF Assessment group using Google Docs from March 6 through April 3, 2015.² At that point comments and edits that were grammar and/or punctuation-related as well as suggestions to clarify text were resolved, and a new document was moved to for further editing.³ Additional comments were invited through April 24, 2015, at which point this version of the document was compiled.

Questions asked by the Assessment: Citations DLF subgroup include:⁴

1. What should a citation consist of?
2. How can we best support appropriate citations?
3. To what extent do common citation formats support this?
4. What are the limitations of current digital library software systems for displaying citation information?
5. What are best practices for displaying citation information for reference manager software capture?

¹ <http://www.wiki.diglib.org/Assessment:Benefits>

² https://docs.google.com/document/d/1o_ROgzDKdBJKtWdl80Dh_bQKVg-y33EdXgc5cK64Y70/

³ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1b9G72sjkL35uYQGEcGiL_WcUjm0qdlE2zoVYdgKjldA/

⁴ <http://www.wiki.diglib.org/Assessment:Citations>

These guidelines attempt to address the first three questions. A separate subgroup is working on the fourth and fifth questions, but these questions do have implications for manually created citations as well. Reference managers such as Zotero,⁵ Mendeley,⁶ and EndNote⁷ may be used to export and/or download citations, and other systems, such as DSpace⁸ or local library catalogs and discovery systems, may also allow for exporting and/or downloading of citations. These tools can be used to parse data from browsers to create these citations automatically, but citations should be checked to ensure that all of the recommended facets are included. In digital repositories that do not use schema which allow individual elements to be easily parsed (for example, CONTENTdm, which uses Dublin Core), citations may need to be created manually in order to confirm that the most valuable facets are included.⁹

This document outlines suggested citation guidelines in an attempt to fill in gaps when the citation style does not give guidelines for a type of source—in this case, institutional repository and digitized cultural heritage objects.

The following are recommended citation formats for manually citing unique digital assets according to American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) Notes and Bibliography, and Modern Language Association (MLA) styles. In general, these facets are recommended for inclusion:

- collection name
- repository information (physical and/or digital)
- unique identifier (Digital Object Identifiers (DOI),¹⁰ Handle,¹¹ Persistent Uniform Resource Locators (PURL),¹² citable URL, etc.)

A note about unique identifiers: when available, it is strongly recommended that a persistent identifier (either a DOI or other Handle) be used in citations. Item record URLs are subject to change over time and cannot be looked at as reliable or consistent pointers to digital objects. Furthermore, DOIs should be expressed as HTTP Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs) in order to make the DOI useable, friendlier to linked data applications, and to align with web standards.

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⁵ <https://www.zotero.org/>

⁶ <https://www.mendeley.com/>

⁷ <http://endnote.com/>

⁸ <https://wiki.duraspace.org/display/DSPACE/Citation+Generation>

⁹ Google Scholar advises that webmasters “Use Dublin Core tags (e.g., DC.title) as a last resort - they work poorly for journal papers because Dublin Core doesn't have unambiguous fields for journal title, volume, issue, and page numbers.” More info is available at <https://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/inclusion.html#indexing>

¹⁰ <http://www.doi.org/>

¹¹ <http://www.handle.net/>

¹² <https://purl.oclc.org>

¹³ See http://www.crossref.org/02publishers/doi_display_guidelines.html for guidelines and examples.

When no persistent identifier is available, a citable URL (PURL or otherwise) may be used in the citation.

After the recommended formats for APA, CMS, and MLA is a list of consulted sources.

Recommended Citation Formats

American Psychological Association (APA):

APA 6th edition does provide guidelines for citing archival materials. The following is recommended:

Author, A.A. (Year, Month Day). Title of material [Description of material]. Name of collection (Call number, Box number, File name or number, etc.). Name and location of repository.¹⁴

APA also provides for the inclusion of Digital Object Identifiers in electronic source citations with a preference for newer alpha-numeric strings that act as links. As mentioned previously, it is strongly recommended that persistent identifiers be used and that citable URLs only be included if persistent identifiers are not available.

In addition, APA does not ever recommend the inclusion of access dates for DOIs. Access dates for URLs are only recommended in cases where the source material may change over time (for example, wikis). Therefore, access dates are not required for the following citations.

Finally, APA does not provide guidelines for citing images, but a 2010 APA Style Blog entry did give guidelines for citing both an artwork in its original form and reproduced online.¹⁵ The suggestion for online reproductions of artworks does not include geographical location information, so that is excluded from the citations below. Institutional affiliation is still recommended.

The following format is recommended for APA:

Author, A.A. (Year, Month Day). Title of material [Description of material]. Name and location of collection (Call number, Box number, File name or number, etc.). *Name of digital repository*. Retrieved from (Persistent identifier or citable URL).

¹⁴ "Archival Documents and Collections," in *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2010), 212.

¹⁵ <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2010/04/theres-an-art-to-it.html>

Examples of APA citations of digitized special collections materials:

Item without collection information:

Millard's Printing House [Online Image]. (1910). Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette. *Louisiana Digital Library*. Retrieved from <http://cdm16313.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/LSA/id/1023/rec/6>

Item with collection information:

Parker-Blake baseball team photograph [Online Image]. (1908). Elizabeth Adolph Collection of Early 20th Century New Orleans Sports Memorabilia, Loyola University New Orleans Special Collections and Archives. *Louisiana Digital Library*. Retrieved from <http://cdm16313.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16313coll5/id/130/rec/13>

Example of APA citation of institutional repository content:

The same general format should be followed for institutional repository content, with the following things to be kept in mind:

Note whether item has been published externally or not. If work has not been published, use the name of the institution as the publisher. If the work has been published externally, include the publisher's information but also the institutional repository's persistent ID (see note above about unique identifiers) or citable URL and date accessed.

Baez, R. (2014). *Art Engagement in an After-School Setting* [PowerPoint slides]. *Trinity College Digital Repository*. Retrieved from <http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/392>.

Chicago Manual of Style (CMS):

CMS style does provide guidance for citing archival materials, and notes that citations for archival materials consulted online should follow the guidelines for archival materials and include the addition of a URL or DOI. The Note form of the citation should include the individual item being cited, while the Bibliography form should only include the collection, author of the items in the collection, or the repository.¹⁶ Location (city and state) of “such well-known depositories as major university libraries is rarely necessary.”¹⁷

Notes:

Item name or description, date. Collection name, unique identifier, Archives name, Institutional affiliation, Location (if unclear). Unique identifier.

Bibliography:

Collection name. Institutional affiliation, Location.

OR

Creator name last, first. Collection name. Institutional affiliation, Location.

CMS style does not require access dates except when “no date of publication or revision can be determined from the source.”¹⁸

For citing digitized special collections materials, the format for archival materials should be followed with the DOI, Handle, or citable URL used as the unique identifier as well as the name of the digital repository.

The citation suggestions below follow the Notes and Bibliography style and assume that a bibliography exists in addition to notes. Author-Date citations should be modified accordingly.

Examples of CMS citations of digitized special collections materials:

Item without collection information:

¹⁶ “Manuscript Collections,” in *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th ed.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 749.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 750.

¹⁸ “Access Dates,” in *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th ed.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 657.

Notes: "Millard's Printing House," 1910. Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette. <http://cdm16313.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/LSA/id/1023/rec/6>, Louisiana Digital Library.

Bibliography: Center for Louisiana Studies, Lafayette. University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Louisiana Digital Library.

Item with collection information:

Notes: "Parker-Blake baseball team," 1908. Elizabeth Adolph Collection of Early 20th Century New Orleans Sports Memorabilia, Special Collections and Archives, Loyola University New Orleans.
<http://cdm16313.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16313coll5/id/130/rec/13>, Louisiana Digital Library.

Bibliography: Elizabeth Adolph Collection of Early 20th Century New Orleans Sports Memorabilia, Loyola University New Orleans Special Collections and Archives. Louisiana Digital Library.

Example of CMS citation of institutional repository content:

The same general format should be followed for institutional repository content, with the following things to be kept in mind:

Note whether item has been published externally or not. If work has not been published, use the name of the institution as the publisher. If the work has been published externally, include the publisher's information but also the institutional repository's persistent identifier or citable URL and date accessed.

Notes: Rosio Baez, *Art Engagement in an After-School Setting*, Powerpoint presentation, Trinity College, Hartford, CT, 2014, <http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/392/>, Trinity College Digital Repository.

Bibliography: Baez, R. *Art Engagement in an After-School Setting*. Powerpoint presentation, Trinity College, Hartford, CT, 2014. <http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/392/>, Trinity College Digital Repository.

Modern Language Association (MLA):

MLA does not explicitly provide for citing archival materials but does instruct on citing manuscripts or typescripts with inclusion of the “library, research institution, or personal collection housing the material.”¹⁹

Author, *Title or description of material*, date of composition, form of material (MS for manuscript, TS for typescript). Name and location of repository or collection.²⁰

This citation does not accommodate non-manuscript materials, however. For non-manuscript archival materials, the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue²¹ suggests the following:

Genre-appropriate MLA Citation. Box number, Folder number. Unique identifier and collection name. Archives name, Institutional affiliation, Location. Date accessed.

Additionally, digitized web files should be cited by consulting the format of the original (image, sound, video, etc) for the citation and then ending with the digital format (JPG, MP3, MP4, etc). MLA does instruct on citing “A Work on the Web Cited with Publication Data for Another Medium besides Print,” and includes examples of images and film in digitized archival collections.²² The citation format for these items is as follows:

Genre-appropriate MLA Citation for original item (minus medium of original publication). *Title of the database or website*. Medium of publication consulted (Web). Date of access.

Combining the OWL at Purdue recommendation for archival materials with MLA’s recommendation for digital files results in the following suggested citation format:

Genre-appropriate MLA Citation for original item (minus medium of original publication). *Name of digital repository*. Persistent identifier or citable URL. Access date. Digital file type.

Examples of MLA citations of digitized special collections materials:

Item without collection information:

Millard's Printing House. 1910. Photograph. Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette. *Louisiana Digital Library*.

¹⁹ “A Manuscript or Typescript,” in *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers 7th ed.* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009), 203.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 203-204.

²¹ <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/988/06/>

²² “A Work on the Web Cited with Publication Data for Another Medium besides Print,” in *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers 7th ed.* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009), 189-190.

<http://cdm16313.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/LSA/id/1023/rec/1>. Web. 11 December 2013. JPG file.

Item with collection information:

Parker-Blake baseball team. 1908. Photograph. Elizabeth Adolph Collection of Early 20th Century New Orleans Sports Memorabilia. Special Collections and Archives, Loyola University New Orleans. *Louisiana Digital Library*.

<http://cdm16313.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16313coll5/id/130/rec/13>. Web. 6 March 2015. JPG file.

Example of MLA citation of institutional repository content:

The same general format should be followed for institutional repository content, with the following things to be kept in mind:

Note whether item has been published externally or not. If work has not been published, use the name of the institution as the publisher. If the work has been published externally, include the publisher's information but also the institutional repository's persistent identifier or citable URL and date accessed.

Example:

Baez, Rosio M. "Art Engagement in an After-School Setting." 2014. *Trinity College Digital Repository*. <http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/392>. Web. 6 March 2015. PowerPoint file.

Future Steps and Conclusion

This document will be presented and discussed at the 2015 Digital Library Federation Forum as part of the session “Collaborative efforts to develop best practices in assessment: a progress report.” Other groups both within the Digital Library Federation and without are working on how best to display citation information in page markup so reference managers, local library catalogs, and discovery systems, and web search engines can easily parse digital repositories to import complete citation information. The citation recommendations made here will ideally be useful in informing what citation elements are included within digital repositories to help inform this process.

The use of uniform citation formats for unique digital assets will hopefully lead to better tracking of use of these assets by hosting libraries. In recommending these formats and, in particular, the inclusion of DOIs or other Handles, it is intended that both traditional citation metrics and altmetrics will better track the use of these digitized special collection and cultural heritage materials and institutional repository content.

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