Referencing websites: video tutorial

http://www.screencast.com/t/3fkRYd752

Transcript

Introduction: Welcome to this tutorial on Referencing Websites from the University of Reading Study Advice team. The tutorial is designed for you to go through at your own pace and you can pause it at any time.

Slide 1: When it comes to referencing, websites can seem like an alien species – they look different to print-based sources and you don't always know where to find the right details.

Slide 2: But don't panic – in fact referencing websites follows the same principles as referencing any other source. So just as a book has an author, year of publication, title, place of publication and publisher, a website has the equivalent details that you can use to construct your reference. Now we will look at some examples of frequently asked questions when referencing websites.

Slide 3: What if there isn't an individual author for the webpage? In these cases it is acceptable to use the organisation responsible for the website in place of an author. In this example, it would be the World Bank. You would integrate this into your reference list alphabetically under 'W' similar to any other author's surname.

As you can just about see on this example, the year the material was last published on the website can often be found here at the bottom.

Slide 4: But, what if you can't find a date of publication? – like this page on the Structure of the United Nations Security Council. If there is no date of publication available, you can use the abbreviation n.d. to signify no date.

Slide 5: If you access a journal article online, you may have noticed that some of them have something called a DOI or Digital Object Identifier. What does this mean? It is a unique and permanent link for identifying an electronic document. They are becoming more widespread especially in online publishing as unlike traditional web addresses, they don't change. If your referencing style asks you to include a DOI, you would find it labelled clearly as part of the document's details, such as this example here, and you

would usually put it in place of a web address. If your referencing style doesn't make use of DOIs just reference websites and journal articles as normal.

Slide 6: So what about the date that you accessed the website? It is important to capture this information as it shows that even if the website is later altered, as of this date, the material was accurate. In this example, the date the material was accessed was the 16th December 2013. Note that this is different to the date that the material was published on the site which was in 2012.

Slide 7: Here are some examples of a website referenced using some popular referencing styles. You can pause the tutorial to look at the formatting and layout more closely. A few important points to note – in 'name, date' referencing styles like Harvard and APA, you wouldn't put the web address in the in-text citation as this would make it very hard to read – as mentioned earlier, you would use the organisation responsible for the site if there was no individual author. And here you can see in the in text citations this is the date the material was published on the website just like the publication date of any other source, and here in the full reference is where you would include the date you accessed the material.

Slide 8: Knowing how to reference websites is one thing, but you also need to consider the reliability, suitability and bias of the websites you are using. For example if you were searching for information on changes in student numbers since the rise in university tuition fees, it is unlikely you would trust this angry man's personal blog as he is quite clearly biased. But, would you consider an article in popular daily newspaper a suitable academic source? What about statistics from this respected data collection agency? To find answers to these issues surrounding the use of internet sources click on this link to a guide on 'Using and Evaluating Websites'.

Summary: So to summarise, referencing a website follows the same principles as referencing any other source, you just find the equivalent publication details and apply them consistently according to your referencing style. Transforming the process of referencing websites from alien to easy!