Learning for Professional Practice

Referencing web pages and e-journals

One of the areas that can confuse students and authors alike is how to reference web pages and electronic journals (e-journals). The aim of this paper is to go back to first principles for referencing and see how with examples these should be referenced.

First principles

If you look at a standard reference for a journal paper, for example one of the Learning and CPD papers about citations, referencing and plagiarism[1], which would be a useful read.

Bryson, D. (2012) Using research papers: Citations, referencing and plagiarism. Journal of Visual Communication in Medicine Volume 35, Issue 2, Pages 82-84.

This contains all the necessary information to find the paper. This ultimately is the aim of a reference for a reader so they can look at the original source for themselves. Obviously it needs to be accurate. There is nothing worse than reading a paper and then trying to find a reference only to be unable to locate it.

If you analyse the reference above it comes in the form of

Author(s) Surname and Initial(s). (Year of Publication) Title of the paper. Journal Title Volume number, Issue number, Pages.

The order of this information and formatting will vary for example; Harvard, Vancouver, Chicago Manual of Style, American Psychological Association (APA) Style and all the others[2] but the type of content will stay the same as this is what is required to find the paper. However, with modern searching systems you could still find the article with less but it will take you longer especially if the papers title is very general e.g. “Clinical Photography”.

Web pages

The aim in referencing a web page is to glean as much detail as possible for your reference. One of the issues of just using a web link is that these can go out of date very quickly. For example a web designer might change the name of a section from “dermatology” to “dermatological_research” so your web link of http://www.greatwebsites.co.uk/dermatology/rashes.html will cease to

function and you will see an error page. However, if you have the pages title and author with a search it is more likely that the page can be found. This is also why when referencing a web page it is usual to state when it was accessed giving you an idea of its currency. The information below might not solve every web page problem but should cover the vast majority of issues.

Figure 1 shows where you might find some of the key details on a web page and another page that is commonly referenced a blog page. As a blog page is more like an article in a magazine getting details such as author is usually easier. If there is no author then the next best thing is to use the company or organization name as with the web page, see Figure 1 left hand side.

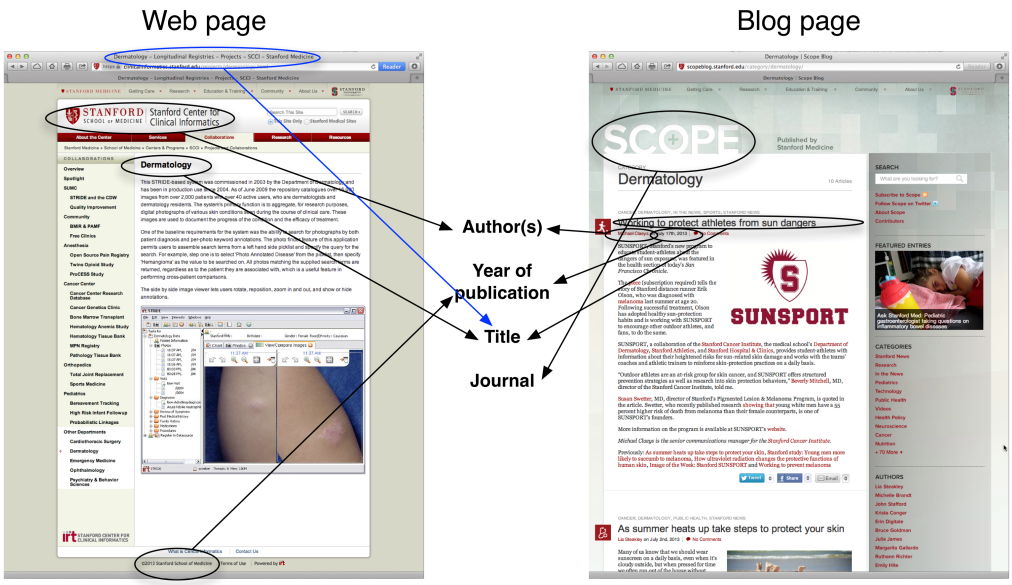


Figure 1 A web page[3] and blog page[4] with indications of where to find referencing information.

Finding a date can be more awkward and there is a standard order that you should use:

1. Date of publication, with a blog page and some web pages you may see not only the year but the date of publication or date last updated e.g. with the Wikipedia page cited above July 5th which was when it was last updated. In Figure 1 right hand side it would be the date the blog post was published according to the web page.
2. Copyright date, as at the bottom of the web page in Figure 1 left hand side. A page may have been written after this copyright date but without any other date it is the next best thing.
3. Date you accessed the page, this is only used if there is no indication anywhere of a date on the web page and obviously should only be used in that instance.

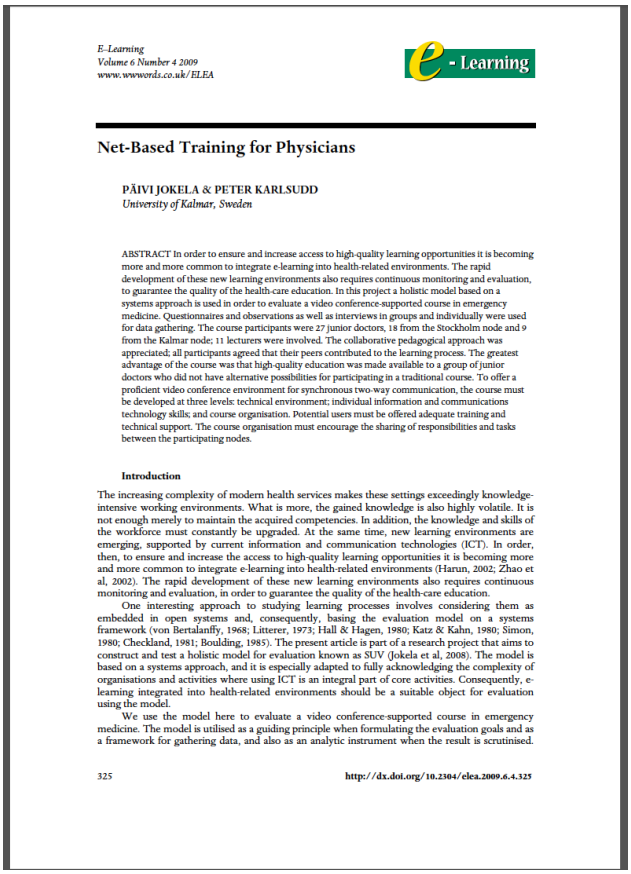
The title is usually easy to find as it is the main heading highlighted as a large font size. If you can't see one on the web page then you can use the title in the head of the web page as highlighted in blue on the web page in Figure 1.

The last elements like journal, volume, issue and page number are unlikely to occur but if they do then they should be included. For example in Figure 1 the blog page is part of the SCOPE publication. Similarly any extra details like actual date of publication can be useful especially with a blog page where new blogs appear first and old ones get pushed down the page and eventually onto another page or archive.

The other elements you need to add for a web page are the web address, often referred to as a Uniform Resource Identifier[5], and as mentioned earlier the access date. As examples look at the references for the web page and blog page from Figure 1 in the references.

Electronic journals

This is by far the easier section as an e-journal should be treated like a normal journal. I know that sounds to good to be true but it is. Whether you are referencing a journal that produces a hard copy and also provides an electronic version like the Journal of Visual Communication in Medicine or a journal that is only available as an e-journal you should reference them all as a normal journal.



E-Learning
Volume 6 Number 4 2009
www.wwwords.co.uk/ELEA

e-Learning

Net-Based Training for Physicians

PÄIVI JOKELA & PETER KARLSUDD
University of Kalmar, Sweden

ABSTRACT In order to ensure and increase access to high-quality learning opportunities it is becoming more and more common to integrate e-learning into health-related environments. The rapid development of these new learning environments also requires continuous monitoring and evaluation, to guarantee the quality of the health-care education. In this project a holistic model based on a systems approach is used in order to evaluate a video conference-supported course in emergency medicine. Questionnaires and observations as well as interviews in groups and individually were used for data gathering. The course participants were 27 junior doctors, 18 from the Stockholm node and 9 from the Kalmar node; 11 lecturers were involved. The collaborative pedagogical approach was appreciated; all participants agreed that their peers contributed to the learning process. The greatest advantage of the course was that high-quality education was made available to a group of junior doctors who did not have alternative possibilities for participating in a traditional course. To offer a proficient video conference environment for synchronous two-way communication, the course must be developed at three levels: technical environment; individual information and communications technology skills; and course organisation. Potential users must be offered adequate training and technical support. The course organisation must encourage the sharing of responsibilities and tasks between the participating nodes.

Introduction

The increasing complexity of modern health services makes these settings exceedingly knowledge-intensive working environments. What is more, the gained knowledge is also highly volatile. It is not enough merely to maintain the acquired competencies. In addition, the knowledge and skills of the workforce must constantly be upgraded. At the same time, new learning environments are emerging, supported by current information and communication technologies (ICT). In order, then, to ensure and increase the access to high-quality learning opportunities it is becoming more and more common to integrate e-learning into health-related environments (Harun, 2002; Zhao et al, 2002). The rapid development of these new learning environments also requires continuous monitoring and evaluation, in order to guarantee the quality of the health-care education.

One interesting approach to studying learning processes involves considering them as embedded in open systems and, consequently, basing the evaluation model on a systems framework (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Litterer, 1973; Hall & Hagen, 1980; Katz & Kahn, 1980; Simon, 1980; Checkland, 1981; Boulding, 1985). The present article is part of a research project that aims to construct and test a holistic model for evaluation known as SUV (Jokela et al, 2008). The model is based on a systems approach, and it is especially adapted to fully acknowledging the complexity of organisations and activities where using ICT is an integral part of core activities. Consequently, e-learning integrated into health-related environments should be a suitable object for evaluation using the model.

We use the model here to evaluate a video conference-supported course in emergency medicine. The model is utilised as a guiding principle when formulating the evaluation goals and as a framework for gathering data, and also as an analytic instrument when the result is scrutinised.

http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/elea.2009.6.4.325

Figure 2 Screen capture of electronic only journal publication[6] displayed as a portable document format (pdf) file.

For example “E-learning and Digital Media” (http://www.wwwords.co.uk/elea/) is only available online but it has an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) just like a hard copy journal. It still has Volume and issue numbers as well as page numbers for papers. So taking a particular journal paper, see Figure 2, the reference will be “Jokela, P. Karlsudd, P. (2009) Net-Based Training for Physicians. E-Learning and Digital Media 6(4), 325-335.”

The only extra thing that is worth adding is the digital object identifier (DOI) for the paper above that is http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/elea.2009.6.4.325. The DOI is used to uniquely identify an object and so enables the paper to be found using your web browser and this address is far more permanent than a normal web address. For further details about the DOI system go to http://www.doi.org.

You may have seen some very long web addresses used with e-journals these are not necessary and indeed can be unhelpful as no one is likely to type in a web link that is 3 lines or more long. For example the paper I mentioned at the beginning about plagiarism has this web link http://informahealthcare.com/action/doSearch?searchText=plagiarism&type=simple&filter=multiple&allowEmptyTermQuery=true&postback=true&categoryId=40054123. What this tells us is that I carried out a search using the word plagiarism in one of informa healthcare’s journals with the category id 40054213. Whilst this will get you to the page with the paper in it is not exact and could change with time if different search systems are implemented. If you do want to use a web link then you should use the DOI in this case http://informahealthcare.com/doi/full/10.3109/17453054.2012.690128 for the full text and with the word ‘full’ replaced with ‘pdf’ and ‘pdfplus’ for the other versions.

If you are searching via hospital or university systems then your web link could be even more complex and might only take you back to the main scholar web page or to a page that helpfully says “Forbidden You don’t have permission to access” whereas the doi will get you to the abstract then you can always see if you can access the full version.

References

---

[1] Bryson, D. (2012) Using research papers: Citations, referencing and plagiarism. Journal of Visual Communication in Medicine 35: (2): 82-84. http://informahealthcare.com/doi/full/10.3109/17453054.2012.690128

[2] Wikipedia (2013) Citation. July 5th. [URI http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citation accessed July 22nd 2013]

[3] Stanford Center for Clinical Informatics (2013) Dermatology. [URI http://clinicalinformatics.stanford.edu/projects/dermatology.html accessed July 22nd 2013]

[4] Claeys, M. (2013) Working to protect athletes from sun dangers. Scope blog, July 17th. [URI http://scopeblog.stanford.edu/category/dermatology/ accessed July 22nd 2013]

[5] Wikipedia (2013) Uniform Resource Identifier, July 11th. [URI https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniform_resource_identifier accessed July 22nd 2013]

[6] Jokela, P. Karlsudd, P. (2009) Net-Based Training for Physicians. E-Learning and Digital Media 6(4), 325-335. http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/elea.2009.6.4.325

Reference: Bryson, D. (2013) Referencing web pages and e-journals. Journal of Visual Communication in Medicine 36(3-4): 146-149.