

chicago manual bibliography for a database record

Chicago Manual Bibliography for a Database Record: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago manual bibliography for a database record requires meticulous attention to detail to ensure accuracy and adherence to established citation standards. Properly formatting these entries is crucial for academic integrity, allowing readers to locate the source material with ease. This guide delves into the nuances of creating a Chicago-style bibliography entry for database records, covering common database types, essential elements, and specific formatting considerations. Understanding these principles will equip researchers with the confidence to cite digital resources effectively, whether they are using academic databases, archival collections, or other online repositories. We will explore the foundational rules and then provide detailed breakdowns for various scenarios.

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Understanding Database Records in Citation

Database records, in the context of academic and research writing, represent a vast array of digitized information accessible online. These can range from scholarly articles found in academic journals to historical documents, government data, and digitized books. The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) provides guidelines for citing these resources, recognizing their growing importance in modern scholarship. Unlike traditional print sources, database records often possess unique identifiers, varying publication structures, and the potential for being updated or moved. Therefore, a clear understanding of what constitutes a database record for citation purposes is the first step in correctly formatting the bibliography.

The fundamental principle behind citing any source, including database records, is to provide enough information for your reader to identify and retrieve the original material. For database records, this means capturing details about the original content (author, title, publication date) and

the context of its retrieval (the database name, publisher, and access information). The Chicago Manual of Style offers flexibility, acknowledging that not all databases are structured identically. Consequently, the citation format often adapts to the specific nature of the database record being referenced.

Key Elements of a Chicago Bibliography Entry for Databases

When constructing a Chicago-style bibliography entry for a database record, several core components are essential. These elements work in concert to provide a complete and accurate citation. Adhering to the standard structure ensures that your references are consistent and professional, contributing to the overall credibility of your research. Even when citing seemingly straightforward database entries, paying close attention to each component is vital.

The most critical elements typically include:

- Author(s) or Editor(s) of the original work.
- Title of the specific article, book, or document.
- Publication information of the original work (journal title, book publisher, newspaper name, etc.).
- Publication date of the original work.
- Name of the database.
- Publisher of the database (if different from the database host or original publisher).
- Date of access.
- A stable URL or DOI (Digital Object Identifier) if available.

The presence and order of these elements can vary slightly depending on the type of database record. For instance, a government database entry might emphasize organizational authorship, while a scholarly journal article will focus on individual authors and journal details. The Chicago Manual of Style provides specific examples for various scenarios, but understanding the purpose of each element helps in adapting those examples to new or less common database types.

Citing Specific Types of Database Records

Different types of content found within databases necessitate tailored citation approaches within the Chicago Manual of Style framework. While the general principles remain the same, the emphasis

and specific pieces of information highlighted can change. This section breaks down common scenarios to provide practical guidance for researchers.

Journal Articles from Databases

This is perhaps the most frequently encountered type of database record. When citing a journal article accessed through a database like JSTOR, Project MUSE, or Academic Search Premier, the focus is on the original journal publication details, supplemented by database information.

The typical format is:

1. Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume, no. Issue (Year): Page numbers. Accessed Date. Database Name. DOI or URL.

For example: Smith, John. "The Impact of Climate Change on Arctic Wildlife." *Journal of Environmental Science* 45, no. 2 (2022): 112-130. Accessed October 26, 2023. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.1086/718017>.

If a DOI is unavailable, a stable URL provided by the database should be used. Always prioritize the DOI as it is designed to be a permanent link.

Books and Book Chapters from Databases

When a book or a chapter from a book is accessed through a database like Google Books or ProQuest Ebook Central, the citation should reflect the original book's publication details.

For a full book:

1. Author(s) or Editor(s). *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year. Accessed Date. Database Name. URL.

For example: Johnson, Sarah. *A History of Ancient Rome*. Oxford University Press, 2019. Accessed October 26, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/youruni/detail.action?docID=1234567>.

For a book chapter:

1. Author(s) of Chapter. "Title of Chapter." In *Title of Book*, edited by Editor(s), Page numbers. Publisher, Year. Accessed Date. Database Name. URL.

For example: Davies, Mark. "The Punic Wars." In *A History of Ancient Rome*, edited by Sarah Johnson, 255-280. Oxford University Press, 2019. Accessed October 26, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/youruni/detail.action?docID=1234567>.

Newspaper and Magazine Articles from Databases

Articles from newspapers and magazines found in databases like ProQuest Historical Newspapers or Nexis Uni follow a similar pattern to journal articles, emphasizing the original publication

information.

The format is:

1. Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Newspaper or Magazine*, Month Day, Year. Accessed Date. Database Name. URL.

For example: Chen, Li. "Innovations in Renewable Energy." *The Global Times*, October 20, 2023. Accessed October 26, 2023. Nexis Uni. <https://www.nexisuni.com/results/document?docLink=...>

Archival Finding Aids and Collections

When referencing materials found through archival databases or online repositories like the Library of Congress Digital Collections or national archives, the citation should point to the specific finding aid or collection description.

The format is:

1. Name of Collection or Finding Aid. Date of Collection or Finding Aid Creation. Name of Archive or Repository. Database Name (if applicable). URL.

For example: Records of the National Youth Administration, 1935-1944. National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.archives.gov/research/finding-aids/nyasearch>.

If you are referencing a specific digitized item within a collection, the citation becomes more specific, often including the item title, collection name, and archive.

Government Databases and Reports

Government data and reports accessed through official websites or specialized government databases require citations that clearly identify the issuing agency and the specific report or dataset.

The format is:

1. Issuing Agency. *Title of Report or Database*. Year. Accessed Date. URL.

For example: United States Census Bureau. *County Population Totals: 2020-2022*. 2023. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/demo/popest/counties-total.html>.

Other Digital Repositories

For less common digital repositories or specialized collections, adapt the general principles. Identify the creator, title of the specific item, name of the repository, and access information.

The key is to be as specific as possible while including all discoverable information. If an item is part of a larger curated collection, mention that collection.

Special Considerations for Database Citations

Citing database records involves several nuances that differentiate them from print sources. Understanding these specific considerations will help you avoid common mistakes and ensure your citations are robust and informative. The Chicago Manual of Style provides guidance on how to handle these unique aspects of digital resources.

Access Dates and URLs

Including the date you accessed the database record is crucial because online content can change or disappear. This allows readers to understand the state of the information at the time of your research.

The access date is typically formatted as "Accessed Month Day, Year." For example, "Accessed October 26, 2023."

The URL should be the most direct link to the specific item or record you consulted. If the URL is very long or complex, or if it is likely to change (e.g., a session-specific URL), use a stable URL or a DOI if available. Avoid using generic database homepage URLs unless that is the only way to access the information.

Publisher Information for Databases

Identifying the publisher of the database is important, especially for proprietary databases. This can sometimes be the same as the host or platform name (e.g., EBSCOhost, ProQuest), or it could be a distinct publishing entity. If the original source of the content (like a university press for a book) is distinct from the database provider, cite both where relevant according to the specific content type.

In many cases, the database name itself serves as sufficient locator information, and a separate publisher for the database might be omitted if it's redundant or not readily apparent.

Stable URLs and DOIs

A Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is a persistent alphanumeric string used to identify academic, professional, and other digital content. If a DOI is available for the database record (most commonly for journal articles and e-books), it should always be prioritized over a URL. DOIs are designed to be permanent links that will continue to work even if the original URL changes.

Stable URLs, often provided by academic databases, are also preferable to dynamic or session-based URLs. These are designed to be more permanent pathways to the content within the database.

When to Omit Certain Information

The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes practicality. If certain pieces of information are unavailable or not applicable, they should be omitted. For instance, if an article has no stated author, you would start with the title. Similarly, if a digital resource does not have a clear publisher or a direct URL, you would cite what is available and perhaps note the lack of other information if critical.

For older digitized materials, publisher information might be from the original print edition, and the database name and access date would be added to indicate how it was accessed.

Common Errors to Avoid in Database Bibliographies

Researchers often make predictable mistakes when citing database records, stemming from a misunderstanding of how to apply traditional citation rules to digital content. Being aware of these common pitfalls can help you produce more accurate and professional bibliographies.

Some frequent errors include:

- Using generic URLs instead of stable links or DOIs.
- Omitting the access date when citing online-only content.
- Incorrectly identifying the author or publisher of the database record.
- Failing to distinguish between the original publication and the database platform.
- Not providing sufficient detail to allow for retrieval of the source.
- Inconsistent formatting across different types of database entries.
- Including extraneous information that does not aid in locating the source.

By carefully reviewing your citations against the examples and principles outlined in the Chicago Manual of Style, you can ensure that your bibliography entries for database records are both accurate and effective.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary purpose of citing a Chicago manual bibliography for a database record?

A: The primary purpose is to provide readers with sufficient information to locate and verify the source material you used, ensuring academic integrity and allowing for further research by your audience. It also demonstrates that you have engaged with scholarly sources in a responsible and transparent manner.

Q: Do I always need to include an access date when citing a database record?

A: Yes, including the access date is generally recommended by the Chicago Manual of Style for online resources, including database records. This is because online content can be changed or removed, and the access date indicates when you last viewed the material, providing context for its

state at the time of your research.

Q: Should I cite the database host (e.g., EBSCOhost, ProQuest) or the original publisher of the content in my Chicago bibliography entry?

A: You should cite the original publisher of the content (e.g., the journal title and publisher for an article, the book publisher for a book chapter) and then include the name of the database and its publisher (if known and relevant) as the platform through which you accessed it. Prioritize details of the original publication first.

Q: What is a DOI, and why is it important for Chicago manual bibliography for a database record?

A: A DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is a unique, persistent alphanumeric string used to identify digital content, such as journal articles or e-books. It is important because it provides a stable, permanent link to the content, even if the original URL changes, making it easier for readers to locate the source.

Q: How do I cite a government report accessed through a government database in Chicago style?

A: For government reports accessed through databases, you would typically cite the issuing government agency as the author, the title of the report, the year of publication, the access date, and the URL. For example: United States Department of Agriculture. *National Agricultural Statistics*. 2021. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.usda.gov/...>

Q: When citing a book chapter found in a database, what information is essential for a Chicago manual bibliography entry?

A: For a book chapter found in a database, you need the author(s) of the chapter, the title of the chapter, the editor(s) of the book, the title of the book, the page numbers of the chapter, the publisher of the book, the year of publication, the access date, the name of the database, and the URL or DOI.

Q: What if the database record I'm citing doesn't have a clear author?

A: If a database record lacks an identifiable author, you should begin the citation with the title of the work. This applies to articles, reports, or other content where authorship is not attributed to an individual or organization.

Q: How do I handle database records that have been updated or revised since their original publication?

A: If a database record has been updated or revised, you should note this if the version is critical to your research. Include the original publication date and, if possible, mention the revision date or state "updated [date]." The access date still indicates when you consulted it.

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