

chicago style citation examples social media post

chicago style citation examples social media post are crucial for academic integrity and accurately crediting sources in today's digital landscape. As social media platforms become increasingly prevalent in research and everyday communication, understanding how to cite them correctly within the Chicago Manual of Style is essential. This comprehensive guide will delve into the nuances of citing various social media content, from tweets and Facebook posts to Instagram captions and YouTube videos, using Chicago's author-date and notes-bibliography systems. We will explore the specific elements required for each type of post, address common challenges, and provide clear, actionable examples to help you navigate this evolving area of citation. Mastering these citation techniques will ensure your work is both credible and compliant with academic standards.

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Understanding Chicago Style and Social Media

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) has evolved to accommodate the ever-changing nature of digital communication, including social media. Recognizing the widespread use and influence of these platforms, Chicago provides guidelines for citing content that was not traditionally found in scholarly works. The core principle remains the same: to provide enough information for a reader to locate the original source. This involves identifying the author, the specific content, the platform, and the date it was published or accessed.

When citing social media, it's important to distinguish between different types of content. A personal tweet differs significantly from a public Facebook post or a professionally produced YouTube video. Chicago style offers flexibility in how you present this information, allowing for adaptation based on the specific context and the platform's structure. The primary goal is always clarity and accuracy, ensuring that your citations are both helpful to your readers and ethically sound.

Citing Social Media in the Notes-Bibliography System

The Notes-Bibliography system in Chicago style uses footnotes or endnotes to cite sources, followed by a bibliography at the end of the work. When citing social media posts, the note

will typically contain more detailed information than the bibliography entry, though some elements may be duplicated. The key is to provide enough detail in the note for the reader to identify the specific post.

Notes for Social Media Posts

For notes, you'll generally include the author's name (or username), the content of the post (truncated if necessary), the platform, the date of publication, and the URL if it's publicly accessible. If the post is from a private account or group, you may need to indicate that it was accessed personally, and it might not be retrievable by others. However, for academic purposes, it's generally best to cite publicly available content.

- Author's Name or Username, "First 20 Words of Post" (Platform, Month Day, Year), URL.
- Username, "First 20 Words of Post," Platform, Month Day, Year, accessed Month Day, Year.

Bibliography Entries for Social Media Posts

The bibliography entry will be more concise but should still provide sufficient information for identification. It will typically include the author's name (or username), the title of the post (if applicable, otherwise a description), the platform, and the date of publication. A URL is generally included if the post is publicly accessible.

- Author's Last Name, First Name (or Username). "First 20 Words of Post." Platform, Month Day, Year. URL.
- Username. "First 20 Words of Post." Platform, Month Day, Year. Accessed Month Day, Year.

Citing Social Media in the Author-Date System

The author-date system, common in sciences and social sciences, uses parenthetical in-text citations that refer to a reference list at the end of the document. This system is also adaptable for social media citations, focusing on brevity within the text and comprehensive details in the reference list.

In-Text Citations for Social Media

In-text citations in the author-date system typically include the author's last name (or username) and the year of publication. If necessary, a specific time can be added for highly time-sensitive content, though this is less common for social media posts unless differentiating between multiple posts from the same day.

- (Username Year)
- (Username Year, Timestamp)

Reference List Entries for Social Media Posts

The reference list will provide the full details for each social media citation. Similar to the bibliography in the notes-bibliography system, this includes the author's name (or username), the content of the post, the platform, and the date. The URL is crucial for public posts.

- Username. Year. "First 20 Words of Post." Platform, Month Day. URL.
- Username. Year. "First 20 Words of Post." Platform, Month Day. Accessed Month Day, Year.

Common Social Media Platforms and Citation Examples

Different platforms have unique characteristics that influence how they are cited. Below are examples for some of the most commonly encountered social media types, using both Chicago citation styles where applicable.

Twitter (now X) Citations

Twitter posts, now X posts, are brief and often lack formal titles. The username and the exact text are paramount. If the post is part of a thread, you might need to indicate that.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- Note: @ExampleUser, "This is a sample tweet about citation styles and their importance for academic integrity," X (formerly Twitter), April 1, 2023, <https://twitter.com/ExampleUser/status/1234567890>.
- Bibliography: @ExampleUser. "This is a sample tweet about citation styles and their importance for academic integrity." X (formerly Twitter), April 1, 2023. <https://twitter.com/ExampleUser/status/1234567890>.

Author-Date System:

- In-Text: (@ExampleUser 2023)
- Reference List: @ExampleUser. 2023. "This is a sample tweet about citation styles and their importance for academic integrity." X (formerly Twitter), April 1. <https://twitter.com/ExampleUser/status/1234567890>.

Facebook Post Citations

Facebook posts can vary greatly in length and content. Citing them requires identifying the author, the content, the date, and the platform. If it's a public post, a URL is generally provided.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- Note: Jane Doe, "Excited to announce the publication of my new book on digital citation practices. A lot of hard work went into this!" Facebook, March 15, 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/janedoe/posts/1122334455667788>.
- Bibliography: Doe, Jane. "Excited to announce the publication of my new book on digital citation practices. A lot of hard work went into this!" Facebook, March 15, 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/janedoe/posts/1122334455667788>.

Author-Date System:

- In-Text: (Doe 2023)
- Reference List: Doe. 2023. "Excited to announce the publication of my new book on digital citation practices. A lot of hard work went into this!" Facebook, March 15. <https://www.facebook.com/janedoe/posts/1122334455667788>.

Instagram Caption Citations

Instagram citations focus on the username, the caption content, and the date. The visual element is key to the post, but the caption is what is typically cited textually.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- Note: @ArtGalleryOfficial, "Our latest exhibition explores the intersection of technology and art. Come visit us this weekend!" Instagram, May 5, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C7XyZ4zR2uS/>.
- Bibliography: @ArtGalleryOfficial. "Our latest exhibition explores the intersection of technology and art. Come visit us this weekend!" Instagram, May 5, 2023. <https://www.instagram.com/p/C7XyZ4zR2uS/>.

Author-Date System:

- In-Text: (@ArtGalleryOfficial 2023)
- Reference List: @ArtGalleryOfficial. 2023. "Our latest exhibition explores the intersection of technology and art. Come visit us this weekend!" Instagram, May 5. <https://www.instagram.com/p/C7XyZ4zR2uS/>.

YouTube Video Citations

Citing YouTube videos involves providing the uploader's name, the title of the video, the platform, and the date. A URL is essential. For longer videos, you might include a timestamp for a specific point you are referencing.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- Note: TED, "The Power of Social Media in Research," YouTube video, posted by TED, April 20, 2023, 15:32, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abcdef12345>.
- Bibliography: TED. "The Power of Social Media in Research." YouTube video, 15:32. Posted by TED, April 20, 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abcdef12345>.

Author-Date System:

- In-Text: (TED 2023)
- Reference List: TED. 2023. "The Power of Social Media in Research." YouTube video, 15:32. Posted by TED, April 20. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abcdef12345>.

Other Platforms and Considerations

Chicago style's principles can be applied to other platforms like LinkedIn, Reddit, or TikTok. The key is to identify the creator, the content, the platform, and the date. For user-generated content, the username often serves as the author. When in doubt, err on the side of providing more information to ensure clarity. For example, a Reddit post would include the subreddit name.

FAQ

Q: How do I cite a private social media post in Chicago style?

A: Citing private social media posts can be challenging as readers may not be able to access them. Generally, Chicago style prefers publicly accessible sources. If you must cite a private post, you should state in your note or reference that it was accessed personally and may not be retrievable by others. Include the author, content, platform, and date. Avoid citing private information without permission.

Q: What if the social media platform changes its interface or URL structure?

A: The core principle of Chicago style citation is to provide enough information for retrieval. If a platform's structure changes, focus on the most stable elements: author, content, and date. While URLs are important, if they become invalid due to platform changes, the other details will still help readers identify the source, perhaps through a general search on the platform.

Q: How do I cite a deleted social media post?

A: Citing a deleted social media post is problematic because the source is no longer retrievable. Chicago style emphasizes that sources must be locatable. If you have archived a copy of the post, you can cite that archive. Otherwise, it is generally best to avoid citing deleted content or to acknowledge its unavailability.

Q: Is it necessary to include the exact time of a social media post?

A: Including the exact time is usually only necessary if you are citing multiple posts from the same author on the same day and need to distinguish between them. For most social media posts, the date of publication is sufficient. However, check your specific style guide or instructor's requirements.

Q: What constitutes the "author" of a social media post?

A: The "author" of a social media post is typically the individual or entity that published it. This is usually their name or their username on the platform. For organizational accounts, the organization's name serves as the author.

Q: How do I cite a live stream on social media in Chicago style?

A: For live streams, treat them as a specific type of video content. Cite the platform, the title of the stream (if any), the host or organization, and the date and time of the broadcast. If you are referencing a specific moment, include a timestamp. The URL for the archived stream or recording is crucial.

Q: Should I cite a social media post that is part of a larger conversation or thread?

A: If you are referencing a specific post within a thread, it's good practice to indicate this. You might include a phrase like "in response to" or "part of the thread initiated by" in your citation, particularly in notes. The URL will usually lead to the specific post or the beginning of the thread.

Q: What is the difference between citing a comment and citing an original post?

A: When citing a comment, the author is the commenter, and the content is their comment. You would also identify the original post or article to which the comment was made, if possible, to provide context. The citation structure will be similar, but the focus shifts to the individual comment and its immediate context.

Q: How detailed should the "content of the post" be in a citation?

A: Chicago style suggests including the first 20 words of the post or a brief summary that accurately represents its content. The goal is to give the reader a clear idea of what the

post is about without making the citation overly long. If the post is a question or a statement that doesn't lend itself to a simple summary, quoting a representative phrase is often best.

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