

Descriptions for the DOI

Short Definition—The DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is a permanent link to the published full text. Use this alphanumeric or numeric string when citing the article.

What is a DOI?

During the process of gathering bibliographic citations for your research, you will find a numeric or alphanumeric string that is labeled “DOI.” Publishers assign a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) to articles or book chapters to provide a permanent link. The DOI assures that the document can be discovered, even if the URL for the journal article changes. If the URL changes, it is changed in the DOI resolver so that the DOI continues to link from all the places it might have been placed.

Why is a DOI Important?

DOIs are important to authors because the DOI guarantees that readers will always be able to find their work. They will be able to get to the author’s content in electronic form readily from anywhere in the world.

DOIs are important to students and researchers because the DOIs enable them to find the content time and again. All content on the Internet is prone to being moved, restructured, or deleted. The result is often broken hyperlinks and nonworking URLs in reference lists. To resolve this problem, most scholarly publishers assign a DOI to journal articles and other documents.

Using DOIs

Publishers who follow best practices will publish the DOI prominently on the first page of an article. When a DOI is available, include the DOI instead of the URL in the reference. Because the DOI string can be long, it is safest to copy and paste whenever possible. Provide the alphanumeric string for the DOI exactly as published in the article. Most style systems call for the DOI to be the last item in the citation. When an article is published and made available electronically, the DOI will be activated as a link to the content you are referencing.

In the electronic version of an article, the DOI may be hidden under a button labeled "Article," "Cross- Ref," "Full Text," or some other designation. Readers who wish to look up the source can then link either to the actual article, if they have authorized access, or to an abstract and an opportunity to purchase a copy of the item.

A search on Google Scholar will link from a DOI in the results list to the publisher web site. This assures the researcher that they find the article of record, which is crucial for the citation process.

If you don’t find a DOI for an article, you can look it up. Go to www.crossref.org and click on the Guest Query link. The link is in the middle of the page near the very top. You’ll find several options for searching for the DOI.