

# Is it ok to cite web pages in academic writing

## Description

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Yes, but for facts, stats and authoritative accounts I would always turn to refereed sources: journal articles, books, and reports commissioned by publicly accountable organisations. We are more confident about something in print (i.e. on the page) if it has been through a process of review by others who claim also to know about the topic â?? so called, peer review â?? and if it is backed up by a trail of accountability (i.e. you can check up on facts and supporting evidence). Thatâ??s one way to avoid building arguments on misleading, unreliable, and careless opinion â?? and â??fake news.â?•

Most peer reviewed sources these days come with a web link (at least as a DOI), but the sources may be behind subscription firewalls, accessible only to research organisations that pay their dues (e.g. universities). But thereâ??s a wealth of information out there that pops up in search engines. Itâ??s easy to access, is of the moment, and some of it even refers to academic sources. News reports are obvious examples.

Soon after the 8 June 2017 election, while the Conservatives were attempting to assemble a working minority government, labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said he could yet become prime minister, according to a report in the *Mirror* (Mudie, 2011). It is unlikely the information Iâ??ve just disclosed would get transmitted through peer-reviewed academic channels, but if useful in an essay or other academic output then I would cite it like this:

> Mudie, K. (2017), â??Jeremy Corbyn Vows to Oust Theresa May â??within a Matter of Daysâ?• after Spectacular Election Resultâ??. *Mirror*, 11 June. Available online: http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/jeremy-corbyn-vows-oust-theresa-10601306 (accessed 12 June 2017).

I have just edited my manuscript for *Network Nature*, due out this year, to comply with the Bloomsburyâ??s style guide. I had to identify about 100 bibliographic references that link to websites, and consolidate them in Endnote, the referencing software that I use.

Hereâ??s how the reference above looks as a raw bibliographic record.




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Blog posts can be referenced in a similar manner. But why would you want to cite such information from the web? See:

> Coyne, R. (2015), â??The Internet as Research Toolâ??. *Reflections on Technology, Media and Culture*, 16 May. Available online: https://richardcoyne.com/2015/05/16/the-internet-as-evidence-in-research/ (accessed 11 June 2017).



## Note

How to cite this page: Coyne , Richard. 2017. Is it ok to cite web pages in academic writing. *Reflections on Technology, Media & Culture*, 12 June. Available online: https://richardcoyne.com/2017/06/12/is-it-ok-to-cite-web-pages-in-academic-writing/ (accessed 6 December 2019).

### Category

1. Media

**Tags**

1. academic referencing
2. research

**Date Created**
June 12, 2017
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