Recording online research

Throughout this unit you will be required to view, search and research information on the Internet. Recording your searches and the web pages you visit is important; it is evidence of work. All documents, articles, pages and sites that you visit should be recorded and any information you use from these sources must be referenced. By declaring the sources of any information that is not your own, you can minimise the risks of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is the act of purporting that the ideas or works of someone else are your own. As with any professional writing, when a resource, such as a book or article, is used as a basis for ideas, it should be acknowledged. You need to provide the reader with details about the exact source and location of the information that you have used. Typically this is done by using footnotes, citations and a bibliography. However, these traditional forms of referencing are not always suitable for referencing online sources.

The American Psychological Association (APA) has developed a guide to assist with referencing electronic documents and articles, including websites and web pages. This guide can be found at the following web address:
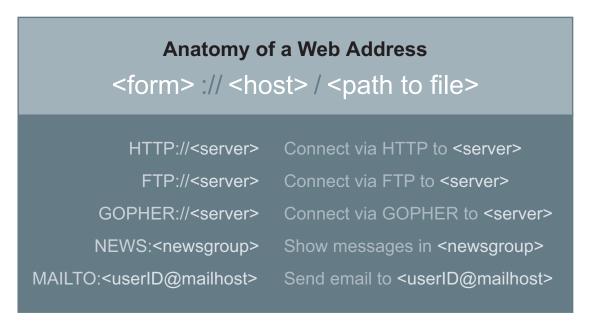
www.apastyle.org/

Referencing guidelines

The APA has developed two basic guidelines for referencing online resources:

1. Wherever possible, readers should be given the means to locate the original information being used. In the case of the Internet, the location of the source should be specific and not just the website's homepage or menu.

2. The URL (Universal Resource Locater) should be provided.

Anatomy of a Web Address
<form> :// <host> / <path to file>

HTTP://<server>	Connect via HTTP to <server>
FTP://<server>	Connect via FTP to <server>
GOPHER://<server>	Connect via GOPHER to <server>
NEWS:<newsgroup>	Show messages in <newsgroup>
MAILTO:<userID@mailhost>	Send email to <userID@mailhost>

The APA has also categorised information on the Web into three main types.

- Articles and periodicals – newspapers and journals.

- Stand-alone texts – research papers, government reports, online books and brochures.

- Web-based format texts – web pages and news groups.

The nature of the Web and the frequency with which information on it is moved, deleted or updated means that accurate referencing can often be a challenge. In this unit you will be required to provide **all** of the information listed below when referencing. You can use the Internet resource sheet provided in the resource section of this package or create your own recording sheet. Whichever method you choose, the following information must be included in your references:

1. the title of the text or, in the case of a website, its name and a description of the site

2. the date you accessed the website or web page

3. the address as a URL – you can copy and paste this address from your web browser and insert it directly into your work

4. the author of the text web page or site (if known).