

DOI Frequently Asked Questions

The UWT School of Business currently requires students to use a DOI in all citations, when available. New APA guidelines also suggest using a DOI. Now is the time to start becoming familiar with DOIs, because if it is not already required for your program of study, it most likely soon will be.

What is a DOI? A DOI is a Digital Object Identifier. The Digital Object Identifier is a unique, permanent code assigned to an item published by a scholarly publisher. The DOI code links to a permanently stable record of the published item. In other words, once a DOI is assigned, the DOI electronic link will never change. That item will always be available online via its DOI number.

Two examples of the same DOI:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1352/0047-6765%282005%2943%3C11:UMHTOM%3E2.0.CO;2>

OR

10.1352/0047-6765%282005%2943%3C11:UMHTOM%3E2.0.CO;2

What does the number code mean? A DOI number always begins with 10.

10.1352/0047-6765%282005%2943%3C11:UMHTOM%3E2.0.CO;2

The numbers after the 10 and before the forward slash (/) identify the publisher. Depending on the preference of the publisher, there can be a different number code for the publisher, for each journal published, or for each genre of article, etc.

10.1352/0047-6765%282005%2943%3C11:UMHTOM%3E2.0.CO;2

The code after the forward slash (/) identifies the unique published piece.

10.1352/0047-6765%282005%2943%3C11:UMHTOM%3E2.0.CO;2

How is the unique identifier determined? The publisher assigns a unique digital identifying code to each piece published. The publisher also determines the format for the identifying code (e.g., chronological sequence; incorporation of the ISSN number or other identifying information such as journal volume, issue and page number; or random sequence). The publisher is responsible for ensuring no unique identifiers are duplicated. The DOI system also will not allow duplications.

Why do some DOIs have URLs? The URL for DOI documents is currently <http://dx.doi.org/> followed by the complete DOI number code. At this time, the URL combined with the DOI allows direct access to the published material. However, due to the nature of the internet, it is assumed that the URL may eventually change, while the DOI will not. Thus, the most important identifying information for any Digital Object Identified material is only the number code (i.e., 10.1352/0047-6765%282005%2943%3C11:UMHTOM%3E2.0.CO;2).

How do I find an article's DOI? There are two ways to find an article's DOI.

1. When researching articles online, look at the complete reference information. The DOI should be listed along with other identifying information.
2. Go to <http://www.crossref.org/guestquery/>. You must have identifying information such as the author and journal name.

How do I find an article with a DOI and a URL? Simply copy the complete URL with the DOI number code, paste it into the address bar and hit enter. The browser will navigate to the article associated with that DOI.

How do I find an article with only a DOI but no URL? There are two options for finding an article with a DOI.

1. You can add the URL <http://dx.doi.org/> to the DOI code. Paste that information into the address bar and hit enter. The browser will navigate to the article.
2. You can use a DOI resolver. The DOI resolver uses only the DOI number (without the URL) to locate the article. In time, this is expected to be the necessary way to find material with a DOI.

Where do I find a DOI resolver? You can try www.doi.org or www.crossref.org.

Why use the DOI instead of the URL I've always used? The internet is notorious for change. Articles, Web sites, and information all get moved around frequently. A Web address that has worked for years may suddenly no longer be active or may direct you to a completely different site. An article link you have used can disappear by the time you turn your paper in to be graded. Using a DOI, a permanent link to a specific piece of published material, is far superior to only providing a URL.

Moreover, the internet offers access to more information to more people. Although students and faculty usually have access to research databases through their school, the general public typically does not. Professionals in the field as well as other disciplines may well be interested in your research. After you've graduated and are working, you may want to share articles or research with your employer or coworkers. By using a DOI, everyone can have access to the articles and research you've worked so hard to uncover.

All information was collated from International DOI Foundation [IDF], (2006, October 5). *The DOI Handbook vers. 4.4.1*. doi: 10.1000/186; Teaching and Learning Center, (2008, June 24). *APA Style Guide To Electronic References 2007 Training*. Collaborative discussion at the Teaching and Learning Center Summer 2008 Training at the University of Washington Tacoma.

Created by Tiffaney Duane. 6/26/2008.