

June 1999

# Group Therapy-Submitting an Article for Publication, Can You Cite an Electronic Journal Article and, If So, How?

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### Recommended Citation

Bazirjian, Rosann; Paul, Sandra K.; and Simmonds, Albert (1999) "Group Therapy-Submitting an Article for Publication, Can You Cite an Electronic Journal Article and, If So, How?," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 11: Iss. 3, Article 37.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3930>

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# Group Therapy — Submitting an article for publication, can you cite an electronic journal article and, if so, how?

Column Editor, **Rosann Bazirjian** (Penn State University)

*Hey y'all out there! Do you have any gripes? Come to your therapist! Try <rbazirji@mailers.fsu.edu> or FAX 904-644-5170.*



*Rosann is moving from Florida State to Penn State in June. She will be out of pocket until the middle of June. Submit your gripes to me (Katina at <strauchk@cofc.edu>) in the meantime and I will see that they are forwarded to Rosann!—KS*

**GRIBE:** (Submitted by **Nicholas G. Tomaiuolo, Central Connecticut State University**):

Scenario: Academic library with fulltext access to scholarly journals. A faculty member is submitting a manuscript to **Journal of Marketing Research**. He/she is worried that they will not accept the citations to electronic fulltext. I try to assuage the faculty member, but upon inspecting the peer-reviewed journal, I cannot find any references to an electronic fulltext journal article! The faculty member, therefore, wants the hardcopy on interlibrary loan, so he/she can identify the article in the traditional manner.

Other givens: neither the journal's Web page nor its "Instructions for Authors" mention citations to fulltext articles.

**RESPONSE:** (Submitted by **David Hughes, Head of Reference Services, Colgate University**):

First, I would assure the faculty member that we would get the articles from the print edition of the journal(s) if they are available in print. Certainly the library would expedite that process in any way possible to meet deadlines, if necessary.

It does not surprise me that there is no evidence of citations to electronic journals in this publication. I have seen very few in the publications I regularly consult. Yet, given the increasing number of print journals with electronic editions and electronic-only journals, it seems unlikely that publications would refuse such citations. Upon revisiting the periodical's Webpage, we discovered that the editor invites questions on matters not spelled out in the instructions to contributors. If the author is willing, I suggest that we do our best to formulate the citations in accordance with the indicated style manual, then ask the editor about them.

The manual choice here, the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 1993, does give instructions for citing electronic journals (Section 15.424). A footnote in the manual indicates that authors should also check the current ISO standard from the Secretariat for ISO/TC 46/SC 9, National Library of Canada. Connecting to the NLC Website and searching for "ISO" uncovers "Excerpts from ISO 690-2... Part II. Electronic documents" which has fulltext of the standard we need (<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/iso/tc46sc9/standard/690-2e.htm>).

Then I would suggest sending the proposed citations to the editor with an explanation of how they were constructed. I suspect that the editor might appreciate not being "surprised" by finding the citations in an article and take this opportunity to consider the journal's editorial policy on this matter. If the answer is "no way," then we get the copies from the print editions. If there are no print editions, I guess the author finds another publisher.

**RESPONSE:** (Submitted by **Dr. Mike Hannant, Publisher, The Royal Society of Chemistry**):

There are three main points to consider when referencing electronic information. Firstly, how do you reference an electronic article? Secondly, will the readers of the article be able to locate the referenced material when the journal is first published? And thirdly, will researchers, librarians or other informational professionals in years to come be able to locate the same information?

Publishers are now accepting citations to electronic forms of articles. However, as most readers will use the printed publication as their primary source, it would seem logical to cite the printed journal as well as the online form.

The least information required for dual referencing should be the normal print reference followed by the Web site address of the journal, e.g., Chem. Comm., Chem.Communi., 1998, 1107 ([www.rsc.org/chemcomm](http://www.rsc.org/chemcomm) <<http://www.rsc.org/cc>>).

However the journal Web address could be replaced with the exact URL of the article (<http://www.rsc.org/ej/CC/1998/E9801546.PDF> <<http://www.rsc.org/ej/CC/1998/E9801546.PDF>>) or by the **Digital Object Identifier (DOI)** for the article.

The **DOI**, at its lowest level, is a persistent identifier of digitized information. It is made up of two portions: a publisher identifier prefix, and a suffix that identifies the article, e.g., 10.1021/op980214p.

The **DOI** "maps" to a lookup table and is resolved to the Web address of the article. The mechanism allows the Web address of an article to change but its Web location to remain known through the DOI system. However, the DOI is not assigned by the majority of publishers at this time.

If it is not obvious from the online article how it should be cited, then the publisher should add the citation information within each article. This should include the DOI, if it has been assigned. If this information does not appear, there is an argument for not citing the article in the online form at all.

There are some moves to publishing new journals in electronic form only (with no print equivalent). It is important that publishers of this type of information give the citation details within each article. At present, publishers are assigning DOIs to these and/or assigning them article numbers, e.g., PhysChemComm, 1999, 1 (where the article is the first article to be published in the journal in 1999). However, the citation should be prominent within the article so that it is easy to reference.

It is important to consider the authenticity of the citation. If a URL is cited, will the document at that URL remain unchanged, or could it be updated in some way? Following a link to a reference on a publisher's Web site is likely to lead the reader to the same information that the author of the article was referring to. It is less certain that following a link to an individual Web site will deliver unaltered information.

The "scenario" above shows the difficulty that the electronic journal delivery systems have. The traditional means of identification and location of journal articles has worked well for many years. Any complementary or "replacement" electronic system will have to match or better these traditional means in terms of locating an item of information, the persistence of the data and the maintenance of its authenticity. The systems also need to gain the trust of users that they can deliver on all counts! 🐾