

## USGS Publishing Standards Memorandum No. 2014.03

<b>Date issued:</b>	March 26, 2014 (last revised May 28, 2019)
<b>Sunset date:</b>	May 28, 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Reference Format for Online Sources Cited in USGS Publication Series Products</b>
<b>Introduction:</b>	To ensure consistency throughout U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) publication series products, this memorandum establishes formats for references for various online information products, articles, databases, and web pages cited in publications. This memorandum supplements the information provided in the most current version of “Suggestions to Authors of the Reports of the United States Geological Survey” (STA).
<b>Publishing standard:</b>	Use of a consistent reference format for online sources cited in USGS publication series products is required.
<b>Implementation:</b>	<p>The format for references for online sources follows the same basic format and style used by the USGS for hardcopy sources but also includes the date the source was accessed online and a uniform resource locator (URL, also called “web address”) added to the end of the reference. The URL should be based on the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) when available. The date of access is critical—because some web pages are ephemeral or frequently updated, the information cited might not be available when readers attempt to access the source in the future. The access date refers to when the author consulted the source while conducting research, not when the editor checked the reference. The author’s backup copy of online sources consulted (see “Important Notes”) can be used to verify an access date. The only exception to the access date requirement is that a reference in a USGS publication series product for a publicly available dataset (such as a USGS data release product) that supports the conclusions in the series product does not include an access date. See the “Online Data” section of this memorandum for additional information about data releases.</p> <h3>Basic Format and Style</h3> <p>[Name of author(s) or information provider], [publication date], [title]: [publisher] [publication series and number (if applicable) or publication type], [number of pages or page range (if applicable)], [date accessed], at [URL (DOI URL or other web address)].</p> <p>Access dates are required for references for online sources that appear in the references list, except as noted above. Though an access date is not included in the suggested citation on the back of title page or web landing page for a USGS publication series product, it must be added to the reference when the product is cited in other USGS publication series products. The phrase “Also available at” may not be used to avoid providing an access date for a source consulted online.</p>

**Implementation  
(continued):**

## **USGS Publication Series Products**

For USGS products published before October 1, 2013, include the USGS URL at the end of the reference (for example, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2010/5025/>).

For USGS products published on or after October 1, 2013, including new versions of products, include the DOI URL at the end of the reference (for example, <https://doi.org/10.3133/sir20175001>). The DOI URL for each product can be obtained from the suggested citation on the USGS Publications Warehouse landing page for that product. Note, however, that in November 2016, Crossref, the DOI registration agency for USGS publication series products, recommended that DOI URLs begin with “<https://doi.org/>” rather than the previously recommended “<http://dx.doi.org/>”. References for these products, therefore, should include the DOI URLs in the “<https://doi.org/>” format regardless of the format shown on Publications Warehouse landing pages.

## **Non-USGS Products**

When citing non-USGS products that have been assigned a DOI, include a DOI URL at the end of the reference in the “<https://doi.org/>” format. Otherwise, include the direct URL. See the “Non-USGS Publications” and “Online Data” sections of this memo for example references.

## **Examples of Basic Format and Style**

### **USGS Publication Series Products**

#### **Online Publications**

If an online source was consulted, give the URL and the date the URL was visited. Optional information on other release media may be included in brackets at the end of the reference as a value-added service to the reader. There is no need to mention the printed version if an online version was used.

Alpine, A.E., ed., 2010, Hydrological, geological, and biological site characterization of breccia pipe uranium deposits in northern Arizona: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2010–5025, 353 p., 1 pl., scale 1:375,000, accessed February 8, 2018, at <https://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2010/5025>.

Bartholomay, R.C., 2013, Iodine-129 in the eastern Snake River Plain aquifer at and near the Idaho National Laboratory, Idaho, 2010–12: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2013–5195, 22 p., accessed November 19, 2016, at <https://doi.org/10.3133/sir20135195>.

Briskey, J.A., and Schulz, K.J., eds., 2007, Proceedings for a Workshop on Deposit Modeling, Mineral Resource Assessment, and Their Role in Sustainable Development [Proceedings of a workshop that followed the 31st International Geological Congress, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, August 18–19, 2000]: U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1294, 143 p., accessed February 8, 2018, at <https://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/2007/1294>. [Also available on CD-ROM and in print.]

Elskus, A.A., 2014, Toxicity, sublethal effects, and potential modes of action of select fungicides on freshwater fish and invertebrates (ver. 1.1, November 2014): U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 2012–1213, 42 p., accessed December 20, 2016, at <https://doi.org/10.3133/ofr20121213>.

**Implementation  
(continued):**

Heidemann, H.K., 2014, Lidar base specification (ver. 1.2, November 2014): U.S. Geological Survey Techniques and Methods, book 11, chap. B4, 67 p., accessed December 20, 2016, at <https://doi.org/10.3133/tm11B4>.

Hynek, B.M., and Di Achille, G., 2017, Geologic map of Meridiani Planum, Mars: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Map 3356, 1 sheet, scale 1:2,000,000, 9-p. pamphlet, accessed March 9, 2017, at <https://doi.org/10.3133/sim3356>.

Lightsom, F.L., Cicchetti, G., and Wahle, C.M., 2015, Data categories for marine planning: U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 2015–1046, 29 p., accessed December 20, 2016, at <https://doi.org/10.3133/ofr20151046>.

Smith, D., 2013, Relationships between health of Alaska Native communities and our environment—Phase I, Exploring and communicating: U.S. Geological Survey Fact Sheet 2013–3066, 4 p., accessed February 8, 2018, at <https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2013/3066/>. [Available as HTML and as a PDF file.]

U.S. Geological Survey, 2004, Revision of NFM [National Field Manual] chapter 6, section 6.7—Turbidity: U.S. Geological Survey Office of Water Quality Technical Memorandum 2004.03, accessed March 23, 2017, at <https://water.usgs.gov/admin/memo/QW/qw04.03.html>. [Although the technical memorandum is not an official USGS publication series as defined in USGS Manual chapter 1100.3 (December 29, 2003), many memorandums are publicly available and may be cited as shown.]

U.S. Geological Survey Geologic Carbon Dioxide Storage Resources Assessment Team, 2013, National assessment of geologic carbon dioxide storage resources—Data (ver. 1.1, September 2013): U.S. Geological Survey Data Series 774, 13 p., 2 app., accessed February 8, 2018, at <https://pubs.usgs.gov/ds/774>.

**Print Publications Also Available Online**

If a hardcopy source was consulted, no URL is required. If there is an online version of the product, however, the URL can be included as a value-added service to the reader; because it is not the version cited, no access date is needed. Using the format below helps the reader know that though an online version is available, it was not the version cited. Keep in mind that the online version of a product can be and commonly is different from the printed version.

Horton, J.W., Jr., Powars, D.S., and Gohn, G.S., eds., 2005, Studies of the Chesapeake Bay impact structure—The USGS-NASA Langley corehole, Hampton, Virginia, and related coreholes and geophysical surveys: U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1688–A–K [variously paged]. [Also available at <https://pubs.usgs.gov/pp/2005/1688/ak/>.]

Masterson, J.P., Pope, J.P., Monti, J., Jr., Nardi, M.R., Finkelstein, J.S., and McCoy, K.J., 2013, Hydrogeology and hydrologic conditions of the Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain aquifer system from Long Island, New York, to North Carolina: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2013–5133, 76 p. [Also available at <https://doi.org/10.3133/sir20135133>.]

Sayre, R., Comer, P., Warner, H., and Cress, J., 2009, A new map of standardized terrestrial ecosystems of the conterminous United States: U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1768, 17 p. [Also available at <https://pubs.usgs.gov/pp/1768/>.]

Implementation  
(continued):

## Non-USGS Publications

### Online Publications

Sohl, T., and Sayler, K., 2008, Using the FORE–SCE model to project land-cover change in the southeastern United States: *Ecological Modelling*, v. 219, nos. 1–2, p. 49–65, accessed January 6, 2017, at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolmodel.2008.08.003>.

Symonds, J., Morris, D.M., and Kwiaton, M.M., 2013, Effect of harvest intensity and soil moisture regime on the decomposition and release of nutrients from needle and twig litter in northwestern Ontario: *Boreal Environmental Research*, v. 18, no. 5, p. 401–413, accessed November 14, 2013, at <http://www.borenv.net/BER/pdfs/ber18/ber18-401.pdf>.

### Print Publications Also Available Online

Diehl, R.H., and Larkin, R.P., 2005, Introduction to the WSR–88D (NEXRAD) for ornithological research, in Ralph, C.J., and Rich, T.D., eds., *Bird conservation implementation and integration in the Americas—Proceedings of the Third International Partners in Flight Conference*, Asilomar, Calif., March 20–22, 2002: Albany, Calif., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, p. 876–888. [Also available on CD-ROM and at [http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw\\_gtr191/Asilomar/pdfs/876-888.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr191/Asilomar/pdfs/876-888.pdf).]

### Online Data

Per directives given by the Office of Science Quality and Integrity (OSQI) in fiscal year 2015, USGS scientific data approved for release are published as data releases. A data release is not a USGS publication series product (such as a data series report; see USGS Manual chapters 1100.3 and 502.8) and is therefore unnumbered, but as an approved USGS information product, each is assigned a DOI and shows the DOI URL in its reference (see below for reference format). Some data published previous to these directives (in database or other format) might also have DOIs assigned to them. In the reference for an approved USGS data release, the product descriptor “data release” replaces other descriptors such as “database,” “field activities,” “dataset,” or “website.” See the “Additional Information” section of this memo for links to USGS Manual chapters 502.6–502.9, which replaced the 2015 OSQI Instructional Memorandums about data management on January 13, 2017.

The references list in a USGS publication series product must include a reference for any companion dataset, such as a USGS data release, that supports the conclusions in the publication series product (see [USGS public access guidance](#)). Because such datasets are companion products and not cited sources of information per se, and because they are often published simultaneously with the USGS publication series product, a reference of this type does not require an access date and should not include one.

Online databases referred to in their entirety (as opposed to references to specific subsets of the data) are sometimes cited only within the body of the USGS publication series product (especially where space is limited, as in a fact sheet), and in those cases, the database URL is given in the text. In other situations, especially when the citation is to a subset of the dataset or to a companion dataset, a full reference is included in the references list.

If used in the context of mentioning that a database exists or directing the reader to supplemental information, a URL in the text will suffice, as shown in the following examples:

“Relevant USGS sources include the National Geologic Map Database ([https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ngmdb/ngmdb\\_home.html](https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ngmdb/ngmdb_home.html)), the Geologic Names Lexicon (<https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/Geolex/>), and the Publications Warehouse database (<https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/>).”

“The Geospatial Platform was developed by member agencies of the Federal Geographic Data Committee and is available at <https://www.geoplatform.gov>.”

**Implementation  
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If actual data from the database are cited, the database must have a complete reference in the references list. Remember to include as much information as possible, including the name of the data page, a direct URL, the date accessed (except in references for companion datasets), and if available, a record locator such as a data marker or accession number. Specific search parameters or data locators may be included at the end of the reference to aid the reader in accessing the data.

**USGS Data Releases**

*Cited in the companion USGS publication series product:*

Moreo, M.T., Andraski, B.J., and Garcia, C.A., 2017, Evapotranspiration, groundwater, and unsaturated-zone data, Amargosa Desert, Nye County, Nevada, 2011–13: U.S. Geological Survey data release, <https://doi.org/10.5066/F7R49NZN>.

*Cited in other USGS publication series products:*

Deacon, J.R., Lee, C.J., Toccalino, P.L., Warren, M.P., and Crawford, C.G., 2014, Tracking water-quality in the Nation’s streams and rivers over time: U.S. Geological Survey data release, accessed January 4, 2017, at <https://doi.org/10.5066/F70G3H51>.

Moreo, M.T., Andraski, B.J., and Garcia, C.A., 2017, Evapotranspiration, groundwater, and unsaturated-zone data, Amargosa Desert, Nye County, Nevada, 2011–13: U.S. Geological Survey data release, accessed December 15, 2017, at <https://doi.org/10.5066/F7R49NZN>.

**Non-USGS Data Releases**

Martinuzzi, S., Stewart, S.I., Helmers, D.P., Mockrin, M.H., Hammer, R.B., and Radeloff, V.C., 2015, The 2010 wildland-urban interface of the conterminous United States— Geospatial data: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Research Data Archive, accessed January 4, 2017, at <https://doi.org/10.2737/RDS-2015-0012>.

**USGS Databases With DOIs**

U.S. Geological Survey, 2016a, BioData—Aquatic bioassessment data for the Nation: U.S. Geological Survey database, accessed December 16, 2016, at <https://doi.org/10.5066/F77W698B>.

U.S. Geological Survey, 2016b, USGS 13200000 Mores Creek AB Robie Creek NR Arrowrock Dam ID, *in* USGS water data for the Nation: U.S. Geological Survey National Water Information System database, accessed December 16, 2016, at <https://doi.org/10.5066/F7P55KJN>. [Site information directly accessible at [https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/dv?referred\\_module=sw&site\\_no=13200000](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/dv?referred_module=sw&site_no=13200000).]

U.S. Geological Survey, 2016c, USGS water data for the Nation: U.S. Geological Survey National Water Information System database, accessed December 16, 2016, at <https://doi.org/10.5066/F7P55KJN>.

**Non-USGS Databases With DOIs**

Gärtner-Roer, I., Andreassen, L.M., Bjerre, E., Farinotti, D., Fischer, A., Fischer, M., Helfricht, K., Huss, M., Knecht, T., Kutuzov, S., Landmann, J., Lavrentiev, I., Li, H., Li, Z., Machguth, H., Naegeli, K., Navarro, F., Rabatel, A., Stenoft, P., and Zemp, M., comps., Glacier thickness database 2.0: Global Terrestrial Network for Glaciers, accessed January 17, 2017, at <https://doi.org/10.5904/wgms-glathida-2016-07>.

**Implementation  
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**USGS Databases Without DOIs**

U.S. Geological Survey, 2007, USGS 13200000 Mores Creek AB Robie Creek NR Arrowrock Dam ID: U.S. Geological Survey National Water Information System, accessed February 8, 2018, at [https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/dv?referred\\_module=sw&site\\_no=13200000](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/dv?referred_module=sw&site_no=13200000).

Note: If the NWIS database was accessed after February 23, 2015, follow the appropriate example in the section “USGS Databases With DOIs.”

U.S. Geological Survey, 2015, Cores in Alaska: U.S. Geological Survey Core Research Center well catalog search web page, accessed March 31, 2015, at <https://my.usgs.gov/crcwc/search/cores?max=50&crclibrarynumber=&townshipnumber=&state=AK&type=&cuttings=true&fieldsorting=%2Btwnnum&fieldsorting=%2Blibnum&fieldsorting=%2Bmindepth&wellname=&cores=true&operator=&section=&field=&rangenumber=&search=Search&county=&apinumber=&offset=0&formation=>.

**Non-USGS Databases Without DOIs**

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2007, International data base (IDB)—Country rankings [Largest countries for any year, 1950 to 2050, by total population]: U.S. Census Bureau database, accessed March 17, 2008, at <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/ranks.html>. [Database moved by time of publication; accessed November 21, 2013, at <http://www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/informationGateway.php>; search interface changed so that search parameters are different.]

**Online Software**

**USGS Software Releases**

Varela, B., 2016, Data cleaning methodology source code: U.S. Geological Survey software release, accessed January 17, 2017, at <https://doi.org/10.5066/F7TD9VG7>.

**Email Messages**

Similar to data from paper letters, information provided in an email message should be credited in the text as, for example, “(C.B. Smith, affiliation, written commun., year)” or “According to C.B. Smith (affiliation, written commun., year).” No reference is included in the references list for email. Keep a printed or electronic copy of the email message for records retention and disposition requirements.

Although emails may be cited as written communications, data used to support results in USGS publications may not be sourced solely from emails. As of October 1, 2016, all supporting digital research data must be freely available for public access. Emails may be cited if they identify the source of data or if they support or contradict findings but are not essential to the results and conclusions of the publication.

**Blog Posts**

A publicly available blog may be cited, when its use is deemed appropriate, in the references list as shown in the examples below. Keep a printed or electronic copy of the blog post for records retention and disposition requirements.

Rosenthal, D., 2007, Why preserve e-journals? To preserve the record: DSHR’s blog, June 10, 2007, accessed November 1, 2013, at <http://blog.dshr.org/2007/06/why-preserve-e-journals-to-preserve.html>.

Whithorne, B., 2013, Hurricane Sandy—Recovery efforts one year later: The White House Blog, October 28, 2013, accessed October 30, 2013, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/10/28/hurricane-sandy-recovery-efforts-one-year-later>.

Implementation  
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## Web Pages and Websites

### USGS Web Pages and Websites

U.S. Geological Survey, 2015, Well catalog search tips: U.S. Geological Survey Core Research Center web page, accessed February 8, 2018, at <https://geology.cr.usgs.gov/crc/>.

### Non-USGS Web Pages and Websites

Pennsylvania Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey [2013], Landslides in Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey web page, accessed December 19, 2013, at <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/topogeo/hazards/landslides/index.htm>.

## Online News Articles

Hunt, S., 2013, Ohio seeks limits on phosphorus in streams: Columbus [Ohio] Dispatch, October 14, 2013, accessed December 17, 2013, at <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/10/14/ohio-seeks-limits-on-phosphorus-in-streams.html>.

Oskin, B., 2013, 'Dante's Peak,' for real—Volcanic eruption creates deadly acid lake: NBC News, October 15, 2013, accessed October 29, 2013, at <http://www.nbcnews.com/science/dantes-peak-real-volcanic-eruption-creates-deadly-acid-lake-8C11396230>.

Primary sources should be cited when possible. In the rare situations when a primary source is no longer available online, a reputable news clipping service may be cited (example below). Include as much information about the primary source as is provided by the clipping service.

Alexander's Gas and Oil Connections, 2004, New gas pipeline linking Libya and Italy opened: Alexander's Gas and Oil Connections, October 8, 2004, accessed December 22, 2009, at <http://www.gasandoil.com/GOC/news/nte44584.htm>. [Originally published in Middle East Online.]

## Online Videos

Include the length of the video in hours, minutes, and seconds in HH:MM:SS format (for example, 01:15:00, 00:47:30, 00:02:16, 00:00:30), and include the month, day, and year that the video was posted (for example, "posted March 5, 2013"). If a posting date is not listed for the video, no posting date information should be included in the reference.

### USGS Publications

U.S. Geological Survey, 2004, Precipice of survival—The southern sea otter [Stephen Wessells, producer and director]: U.S. Geological Survey General Information Product 3, video, 00:47:30, accessed February 8, 2018, at <https://online.wr.usgs.gov/outreach/otter/index.html>. [Also available on 1 DVD, 00:47:30.]

U.S. Geological Survey, 2013, The science of sinkholes [Randall Orndorff, narrator]: U.S. Geological Survey video, 00:02:16, posted March 5, 2013, accessed November 19, 2013, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wubMuKDGBuk>.

U.S. Geological Survey, 2017, Groundwater use from the Ozark Plateaus aquifer system, 1900 to 2010 [Brian Clark, videographer]: U.S. Geological Survey video, 00:00:30, accessed February 8, 2018, at <https://www.usgs.gov/media/videos/groundwater-use-ozark-plateaus-aquifer-system-1900-2010>. [Also available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnPo3DX2e5s>, posted August 9, 2017.]

**Implementation  
(continued):**

**Non-USGS Publications**

Baker, V.R., 2013, The geological history of water on Mars and astrobiological implications: Geological Society of America 2013 Distinguished International Lecture Tour video, 00:50:10, posted October 22, 2013, accessed November 20, 2013, at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiT02piO40c&list=PLQu9MLRWAO9ZryDi2nHKrI89Ohr3\\_JXgR](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiT02piO40c&list=PLQu9MLRWAO9ZryDi2nHKrI89Ohr3_JXgR).

National Geographic, 2007, Earthquake destruction: National Geographic video, 00:48:00, posted July 12, 2007, accessed November 20, 2013, at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Y-62Ti5\\_6s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Y-62Ti5_6s).

**Legislation Online**

Citations of legal documents generally are in the text only (not included in the references list), and reference should be to the codified U.S. Code citation or the public law number with the U.S. Statutes at Large citation:

“... Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17001 note)...”  
[For laws that are permanent and enforceable in nature; they also usually lead to regulations being promulgated to define the enforceable action.]

“... No Budget, No Pay Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–3, 127 Stat. 51)...” [For laws that are temporary in nature and not codified in the U.S. Code.]

There are two cases when a law must be cited in the references list, as follows:

- When a law has just been signed by the President and has been assigned a public law number but has not been assigned a Statutes at Large citation or codified in the U.S. Code, cite the public law as prepared by the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO; this case will be rare).

U.S. Congress, 2007, Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007—Public Law 110–140: U.S. Congress, 311 p., accessed March 20, 2014, at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ140/pdf/PLAW-110publ140.pdf>.

- When a bill is still in the U.S. Congress (being debated in one or both chambers), cite the text of the bill (not yet a law).

U.S. Congress, 2013, Transportation reports elimination act of 2013: U.S. Congress H.R. 3628, 13 p., accessed January 9, 2014, at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hr3628rh/pdf/BILLS-113hr3628rh.pdf>.

For documents in the daily Federal Register (notices, proposed rules, final rules), use the format below:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2013, Amendment to standards and practices for all appropriate inquiries under CERCLA: Federal Register, v. 78, no. 250, p. 79319–79324, accessed March 31, 2015, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/30/2013-31112/amendment-to-standards-and-practices-for-all-appropriate-inquiries-under-cercla>.

For references for State legal documents and regulations, use the formats in the following examples:

California State Assembly, 2001, Groundwater monitoring act of 2001: California Water Code, division 6, part 2.76, §§10780–10783, accessed August 11, 2010, at <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=wat&group=10001-11000&file=10780-10783>.

Ohio Department of Health, 2011, Private water systems, chap. 3701–28 of Department of Health—Administration and director: Ohio Administrative Code, part 3701, accessed February 10, 2015, at <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3701-28>.



<p><b>Implementation (continued):</b></p>	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Style Tips</h2> <p><i>Ending period.</i>—All references end with a period.</p> <p><i>Date of access.</i>—The access date should include the month, day, and year in the following format: “... accessed March 28, 2010, at ... .” If only the year and month of access are known, do not set off the year in commas; thus, it would appear as “... accessed March 2010 at ... .”</p> <p><i>Date of publication.</i>—Online sources may lack dates, and the suggestions below may help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For an online product that is also available in hardcopy, the year of publication is usually provided on the title page or back of title page of the hardcopy version.</li> <li>• For some web pages, the publication date can be estimated on the basis of context or date of modification. Estimated dates of publication should be shown in brackets in the reference in the references list; for example, [1990]. The citation in the text omits the brackets.</li> <li>• For the few sources for which no date can be estimated, “[n.d.]” for “not dated” should be placed in the year position in the reference in the references list. An access date can show when the cited information was available, even when the publication date is not known. The citation in the text omits the brackets: “(U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, n.d.)”</li> </ul> <p><i>Paging.</i>—Many online sources do not use traditional pagination, so page numbers are not required for all online references (see “Online Data” section for examples). References for sources that are paginated, such as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file, should include the appropriate pagination. Some PDF publications are either unpaginated or have separate pagination for each chapter, section, or field trip. References for unpaginated products should use “[n.p.]” for “not paginated.” References for a whole publication containing separately paginated chapters should use “[variously paged],” but the reference for a single chapter should show its paging information.</p> <p><i>Highlighting of URLs.</i>—For USGS publication series products, URLs are shown in blue roman type in online publications and in black roman type in print versions of publications. In the USGS manuscript and open-file report templates, apply the “Hyperlink” character style. (Note that hyperlinks are no longer italicized in USGS style.)</p> <p><i>Parentheses and brackets.</i>—Use parentheses for additions after the title or for version numbers after the title and include bibliographic information found on the title or back of title page. Brackets are used to enclose supplemental information such as ancillary, editorial, and translation details, primarily of help to the reader.</p>
<p><b>Important notes:</b></p>	<p><i>Credibility.</i>—Authors should recognize that not all online sources are appropriate sources for a USGS publication series or other information product, and the same Fundamental Science Practices policy guidelines that apply to selecting print publications also apply to choosing online sources.</p> <p><i>Backup copy.</i>—The USGS Publishing Records Disposition Schedule instructs that background materials be kept until at least 6 months after publication of the USGS publication series or information product that cites them or until they are no longer needed, whichever date is later. Because many web resources are ephemeral or dynamic or are moved to archive sites that might charge access fees, authors should save electronic backup copies of the online sources used (additional printed copies are preferred) so that sources can be consulted if the online version becomes unavailable during the review process. If this step is overlooked, an image of a discontinued page might be obtained through resources such as the nonprofit Internet Archive (<a href="http://archive.org/web/">http://archive.org/web/</a>).</p>

<b>Important notes (continued):</b>	<i>Copyright.</i> —Like their printed counterparts, most nongovernmental sources on the internet are protected by copyright laws. The author is responsible for obtaining the necessary rights to, and releases for, copyrighted material that the USGS intends to reproduce and use in its publication series or other information products.
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