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Dr. Molly C. Dougherty, PhD, RN, FAAN
Editor, Nursing Research
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CB#7460 Carrington Hall
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Dear Dr. Dougherty:

Dr. Russell and I are submitting for your consideration a Letter to the Editor. In the letter we reflect on the recent release of the new *APA Style Guide to Electronic References*. We drafted this letter after reviewing the new guidelines in the light of our 2002 manuscript discussing the differences between APA 4th edition and APA 5th edition.

Thank you considering this letter.

Sincerely,

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The 5th edition of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), published in 2001, included a section on citation of electronic media with examples of citation formats for 25 different types of electronic media. To facilitate retrieval of electronic media, the guidelines recommended great caution in typing or cutting and pasting Unique Record Locators (URLs). Testing URLs was also recommended to ensure continued accuracy and availability of the electronic media as manuscripts moved through the submission and review process toward publication.

When we delineated the changes from *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* 4th edition to *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* 5th edition (Russell & Aud, 2002), we summarized the 5th edition's recommendations for citation of electronic media. Now the editors of APA's publication manual have provided us with a new guide. Released in 2007 and available from the APA website (www.apa.org/books/) as a downloadable .pdf file for a modest fee, the new *APA Style Guide to Electronic References* reflects the greatly increased availability of electronic media on the Internet since the 5th edition's publication in 2001.

The new guidelines for citation of electronic media answer many of the questions that have arisen with increased dependence on accession of media through the Internet. While suggesting inclusion of the same reference elements in the same order as if a fixed-media source was being cited, the guidelines recommend inclusion of as much electronic retrieval information as needed for others to locate the cited sources. Examples of numerous types of references are provided in the new guidelines.

The new guidelines include several departures from previous versions. Journal article citations must now include the journal issue in all cases, whether pagination is by

issue or by volume. Including the retrieval date is now only recommended for articles with content likely to change or for preprint versions of articles. A Digital Object Identifier (DOI), assigned to a journal article or other document by a registration agency, provides a permanent link to an Internet location and should be used instead of a URL. If no DOI is assigned, the exact URL should be provided for open access articles; the URL or home page of journals should be provided for articles available only to subscribers. Database names are no longer suggested except in rare instances. The home or menu page URL is recommended for online dictionaries, online encyclopedias, and for material presented in frames (when independent sections of materials are available using the same URL). Additional recommendations and examples are provided in the new guidelines.

References

Russell, C. L., & Aud, M. A. (2002). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association – 5th Edition: A review of additions and changes in style requirements. *Nursing Research*, 51(5), 332-335.

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