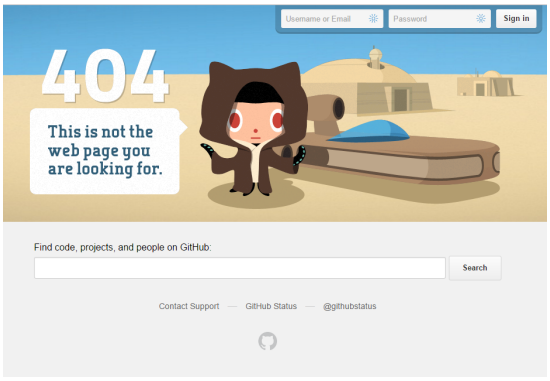
Persistent Identifiers: A Quick Primer & How-To

WHAT ARE PERSISTENT IDENTIFIERS?

Persistent identifiers are stable references, often to digital objects, created to maintain access to information for long periods of time.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?



Have you ever clicked a website link, only to find yourself on an error page alerting you that what you're looking for no longer exists? Almost all of us have encountered this problem while on the internet.

Unfortunately, URLs (uniform resource locators, or website links) often deteriorate over time, whether because of website updates, moving files to another location, or other issues. Broken links are sometimes referred to as 'link rot' (Persistent identifiers, n.d.), and not only are they annoying, they can prevent you from accessing research and other important sources. This is why persistent identifiers, such as digital object identifiers (DOI), international standard book identifiers (ISBN), and other similar systems have been created.

WHAT MAKES THEM USEFUL?

While full-length citations are still important for attribution, persistent identifiers are unique, which makes them ideal for conducting known item searches. Including a persistent identifier like a DOI in your references is an easy way to ensure that you (and your instructor) can find your references later. Shorter and more consistent than a citation, inputting a persistent identifier, like a DOI, into a search box should surface exactly what you're looking for on the first try. Plus, because they're meant to be permanent, persistent identifiers are more likely to take you to your source than a regular URL hyperlink, especially months or years down the road.

WHY NOT MAKE EVERY LINK A PERSISTENT IDENTIFIER?

While it would be great if all links were persistent, this is unlikely to happen any time soon. Creating persistent identifiers can be expensive and high-maintenance, so thus, it only makes sense to apply them to publicly available resources (Persistent identifiers, n.d.).

EXAMPLES OF PERSISTENT IDENTIFIERS

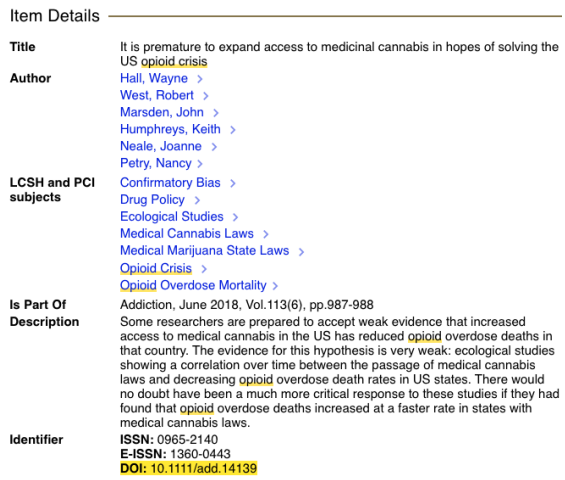
- DOI → digital object identifier, usually applied to academic journal articles
- ISBN → international standard book number, usually applied to books
- ORCID → researcher ID, usually applied to authors of academic journal articles
- Permalinks → found on many types of websites, from blogs to library databases

HOW-TO: DOIs

How to find a DOI

Usually, if a journal article has a DOI, you'll find it in the library catalog entry, in the citation, or somewhere in the article itself.

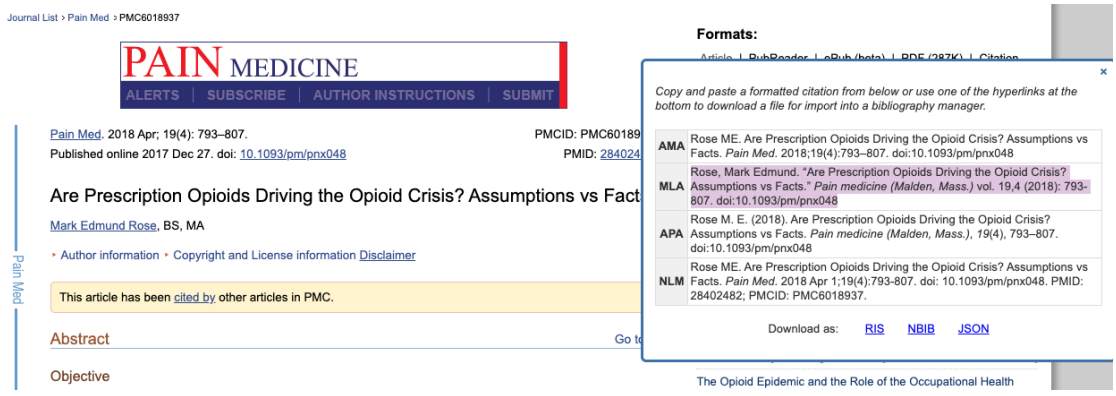
Example of the DOI listing in a library catalog entry (in UW Libraries, at bottom):



Item Details

Title	It is premature to expand access to medicinal cannabis in hopes of solving the US opioid crisis
Author	Hall, Wayne › West, Robert › Marsden, John › Humphreys, Keith › Neale, Joanne › Petry, Nancy ›
LCSH and PCI subjects	Confirmatory Bias › Drug Policy › Ecological Studies › Medical Cannabis Laws › Medical Marijuana State Laws › Opioid Crisis › Opioid Overdose Mortality ›
Is Part Of	Addiction, June 2018, Vol.113(6), pp.987-988
Description	Some researchers are prepared to accept weak evidence that increased access to medical cannabis in the US has reduced opioid overdose deaths in that country. The evidence for this hypothesis is very weak: ecological studies showing a correlation over time between the passage of medical cannabis laws and decreasing opioid overdose death rates in US states. There would no doubt have been a much more critical response to these studies if they had found that opioid overdose deaths increased at a faster rate in states with medical cannabis laws.
Identifier	**ISSN:** 0965-2140 **E-ISSN:** 1360-0443 **DOI:** 10.1111/add.14139

Example of a DOI listing in the citation (in PubMed, to the right):



Journal List › Pain Med › PMC6018937

PAIN MEDICINE

ALERTS | SUBSCRIBE | AUTHOR INSTRUCTIONS | SUBMIT

Pain Med. 2018 Apr; 19(4): 793–807.
Published online 2017 Dec 27. doi: 10.1093/pm/pnx048

PMCID: PMC60189
PMID: 284024

Are Prescription Opioids Driving the Opioid Crisis? Assumptions vs Fact

Mark Edmund Rose, BS, MA

• Author information • Copyright and License information Disclaimer

This article has been cited by other articles in PMC.

Abstract

Objective

Pain Med

Formats:

Copy and paste a formatted citation from below or use one of the hyperlinks at the bottom to download a file for import into a bibliography manager.

AMA	Rose ME. Are Prescription Opioids Driving the Opioid Crisis? Assumptions vs Facts. *Pain Med*. 2018;19(4):793–807. doi:10.1093/pm/pnx048
MLA	Rose, Mark Edmund. "Are Prescription Opioids Driving the Opioid Crisis? Assumptions vs Facts." *Pain medicine (Malden, Mass.)* vol. 19,4 (2018): 793-807. doi:10.1093/pm/pnx048
APA	Rose M. E. (2018). Are Prescription Opioids Driving the Opioid Crisis? Assumptions vs Facts. *Pain medicine (Malden, Mass.)*, *19*(4), 793–807. doi:10.1093/pm/pnx048
NLM	Rose ME. Are Prescription Opioids Driving the Opioid Crisis? Assumptions vs Facts. *Pain Med*. 2018 Apr 1;19(4):793-807. doi: 10.1093/pm/pnx048. PMID: 28402482; PMCID: PMC6018937.

Download as: RIS NBIB JSON

The Opioid Epidemic and the Role of the Occupational Health

Example of a DOI in the journal article itself (in this case, at the top):

Pain Medicine 2018; 19: 793–807
doi: 10.1093/pm/pnx048

Review Article

Are Prescription Opioids Driving the Opioid Crisis? Assumptions vs Facts

How to search with a DOI

Once you know the DOI for a journal article (e.g., in the two articles above, 'Are Prescription Opioids Driving the Opioid Crisis? Assumptions vs Facts', it's doi: 10.1093/pm/pnx048), you can use this to search for your article. In most library databases, all you need is alphanumeric string -- in this case, 10.1093/pm/pnx048. If you're googling it, you will likely need to include 'doi,' e.g. 'doi 10.1093/pm/pnx048.'

See this search now in:

- Seattle Central Library
- Google Scholar
- Google

How to cite a DOI

APA recommends the inclusion of a DOI over a regular 'retrieved from' link whenever possible, because it's more persistent (Reference List, n.d.). If a DOI exists for the article, you should include it at the end of the citation, as either doi:0000000/000000000000 or https://doi.org/10.0000/0000.

Example:

Rose, M. E. (2017). Are prescription opioids driving the opioid crisis? Assumptions vs facts. *Pain Medicine*, *19*(4), 793-80. doi:10.1093/pm/pnx048

REFERENCES

Persistent identifiers: Working level. (n.d.) Retrieved from https://www.ands.org.au/guides/persistent-identifiers-working.

Reference List: Electronic Sources (Web Publications). (n.d.). Retrieved from https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_electronic_sources.html.