

chicago manual of style geographic data sources citation

The Chicago Manual of Style Geographic Data Sources Citation

chicago manual of style geographic data sources citation is a critical aspect of academic and professional writing, ensuring that readers can locate and verify the geographical information used in a text. Properly citing these sources lends credibility to your work and adheres to scholarly standards. This comprehensive guide will delve into the intricacies of citing various geographic data sources according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), covering everything from foundational principles to specific examples for digital maps, databases, and even historical atlases. Understanding these guidelines is paramount for researchers, geographers, historians, and anyone utilizing spatial information.

Table of Contents

Understanding the Core Principles of Chicago Style Citations
Citing Digital Geographic Data Sources
Citing Maps and Atlases
Citing Geographic Databases and Datasets
Citing Government and Institutional Geographic Information
Handling Variations and Complexities in Geographic Data Citation
The Importance of Consistency in Geographic Data Citation

Understanding the Core Principles of Chicago Style Citations

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) emphasizes clarity, accuracy, and completeness in citations. When it comes to geographic data, these principles translate to providing enough information for a reader to retrieve the exact data used. This involves identifying the author or creator, title, publication or release date, and the source or location of the data.

CMOS typically employs two citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. For geographic data, the notes-bibliography system is often preferred as it allows for more detailed descriptions in footnotes or endnotes, which can be particularly helpful for complex digital datasets. The author-date system, while more concise, may require careful adaptation to adequately describe the nature of the geographic data.

Components of a Geographic Data Citation

Regardless of the specific type of geographic data, certain core components are generally required for a robust citation:

- **Author/Creator:** This could be an individual, an organization, a government agency, or a software developer.
- **Title:** The specific name of the map, dataset, atlas, or GIS layer.
- **Publication/Release Date:** The date the data was published, released, or last updated.
- **Publisher/Distributor:** The entity that made the data available.
- **Location/Access Information:** This can include a URL for online data, a physical location for printed materials, or a database name.
- **Date of Access (for online sources):** Crucial for dynamic or frequently updated online data.
- **Version/Edition:** Important for software or datasets that undergo revisions.

Citing Digital Geographic Data Sources

The advent of digital mapping and geographic information systems (GIS) has introduced new challenges and formats for citation. CMOS provides guidelines that accommodate these digital resources, recognizing their increasing prevalence in research.

Citing Online Maps and Mapping Services

When referencing online mapping services like Google Maps or OpenStreetMap, the citation should specify the service, the date of access, and the specific map view or query used if it contributes significantly to your argument. For instance, citing a general use of Google Maps is less critical than referencing a specific route or area highlighted through a particular search query.

A typical note might look like this: 1. Google Maps, accessed October 26, 2023, <https://maps.google.com/>. For a more specific instance:

- Note: 2. Street view image of the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Adams Street, Chicago, taken June 15, 2023, Google Street View, accessed October 26, 2023,
<https://maps.google.com/?ll=41.8781,-87.6298&z=17&hl=en&lat=41.8781&lon=-87.6298&layer=1>.

In a bibliography, this would be adapted to focus on the service itself, with specific details elaborated in the notes.

Citing GIS Data Layers and Geodatabases

Geographic Information System (GIS) data, often found in shapefiles, geodatabases, or other spatial formats, requires detailed citation. This includes the name of the data layer, the software used to access or analyze it, the source of the data, and the date of access.

For a bibliography entry:

- Author/Organization. "Title of Data Layer." Last modified/created Year. Data format. Publisher/Distributor. Accessed Month Day, Year. URL or other access information.

For example:

- Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). "World Administrative Boundaries." Last modified 2022. Shapefile. ESRI. Accessed October 26, 2023.
<https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=8d9193e071374f89860a49079488582d>.

Footnotes or endnotes can provide even more granular details, such as specific projections or attribute tables consulted.

Citing Maps and Atlases

Traditional cartographic materials, whether printed or digital reproductions, also require careful citation following CMOS principles.

Citing Printed Maps

For a printed map, the citation should include the cartographer (if known), the title of the map, the place of publication, the publisher, and the year of publication. If it's part of a larger work, such as an atlas or a report, this information must also be included.

Bibliography example:

- Smith, John. "Map of Chicago's Downtown." 1955. Offset lithograph, 30 x 40 cm. Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

Citing Atlases

When citing an atlas, you will typically cite the editor or author of the atlas, the title of the atlas, and its publication details. If you are referencing a specific map within the atlas, you would note the page number or map number.

Bibliography example:

- Jones, Eleanor, ed. *The New Historical Atlas of Illinois*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

In a note, you might specify a particular map:

1. Eleanor Jones, ed., "Map of Illinois during the Civil War," in *The New Historical Atlas of Illinois* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 45.

Citing Geographic Databases and Datasets

Beyond specific map layers, researchers often work with broader geographic databases or statistical datasets that contain spatial components. Citing these accurately is vital for reproducibility.

Citing Statistical Data with Geographic Components

When using datasets like census data or demographic information that includes geographic breakdowns, the citation should clearly identify the data source, the specific variables used, the geographic units of analysis (e.g., state, county, census tract), and the year of the data.

Bibliography example:

- U.S. Census Bureau. "2020 Census Demographic and Housing Estimates." Accessed October 26, 2023.
<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/dec/decennial-census-data-summary-files.html>.

A note could then specify the particular data file or table used.

Citing Government and Institutional Geographic Information

Many governmental and academic institutions provide authoritative geographic data. Citing these sources requires identifying the issuing agency as the author.

Bibliography example:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). "Global Sea Level Rise Trends." Last updated September 15, 2023. Data accessed via NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information.
<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/products/sea-level>.

The specific URL or access method should be as precise as possible. For internal institutional data, internal reports or data archives may serve as the source.

Handling Variations and Complexities in Geographic Data Citation

The ever-evolving nature of digital data and the variety of geographic information available necessitate flexibility in citation. CMOS acknowledges

that perfect uniformity is not always achievable, but the goal remains clear attribution.

Citing Satellite Imagery and Remote Sensing Data

Satellite imagery and remote sensing data often come from specific sensors and platforms. Citations should include the sensor/satellite name, the processing level of the data, the data provider, and the date of acquisition and access.

Bibliography example:

- NASA. "Landsat 8 OLI/TIRS Collection 2 Level-1 Data." Processed by U.S. Geological Survey. Acquired May 10, 2021. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/>.

Citing Proprietary Geographic Data

When using commercial geographic data, such as that from Esri or other private companies, the citation should reflect the vendor and the specific product or dataset name, along with licensing or access information if relevant to the context of your work.

Ensuring Reproducibility with Geographic Data

A key aim of robust citation is to allow others to replicate your work. For geographic data, this means providing not just the source but also information about any processing or analysis performed. This can include software versions, parameters used in analysis, and projection information.

The Importance of Consistency in Geographic Data Citation

Above all, maintaining consistency in your citation style throughout a document is paramount. Whether you are using the notes-bibliography system or the author-date system, apply the chosen format rigorously for all geographic data sources.

Consulting the latest edition of The Chicago Manual of Style is always

recommended, as guidelines for digital and emerging data formats are periodically updated. By adhering to these principles, you ensure that your research is credible, transparent, and ethically sound.

FAQ

Q: How do I cite a specific Google Earth Pro placemark or KML file in Chicago style?

A: When citing a specific Google Earth Pro placemark or KML file, you should treat it like a custom map or GIS layer. Include the creator (if applicable, otherwise the user who created it), the title of the placemark or file, the date it was created or saved, the software used (Google Earth Pro), and the date of access with a URL if it was shared online, or a description of where it is stored if it's a local file.

Q: What is the best way to cite a dynamic web map that is updated frequently?

A: For dynamic web maps that are updated frequently, the date of access is crucial. In your citation, clearly state the name of the map service or application, the specific URL of the map view you used, and the exact date you accessed it. This ensures that even if the map changes, the reader knows precisely which version you referenced.

Q: How should I cite geographic data downloaded from a government portal like the USGS or NASA?

A: When citing geographic data from government portals, list the agency as the author (e.g., U.S. Geological Survey, NASA). Follow with the title of the specific dataset or product, the date it was last updated or released, the format of the data (e.g., shapefile, GeoTIFF), the name of the portal or repository, and the date of access with the direct URL if possible.

Q: What information is essential when citing a historical atlas in Chicago style?

A: For a historical atlas, cite the editor or author of the atlas, the full title of the atlas, the place of publication, the publisher, and the year of publication. If you are referencing a specific map within the atlas, also include the title of that map and the page number or map identifier.

Q: How do I cite geographic data that I have personally collected or generated using GIS software?

A: If you have collected or generated your own geographic data, you are effectively the author. Cite it as a personal communication in a note or acknowledge it within the text, providing details about the data collection methods, the software used for analysis and creation (including version numbers), and the date of generation. If you plan to share this data, create a formal citation as you would for any published dataset.

Q: Should I include the coordinate reference system (CRS) when citing geographic data?

A: Including the coordinate reference system (CRS) or projection is highly recommended, especially when working with GIS data or when the CRS is critical to the interpretation of your spatial analysis. It adds a layer of precision that aids in reproducibility and clarifies the spatial context of the data. Add this information after the data format or before the access date.

[Chicago Manual Of Style Geographic Data Sources Citation](#)

Chicago Manual Of Style Geographic Data Sources Citation

Related Articles

- [chicago manual of style front matter for publishers](#)
- [chicago manual of style for journalism evolution](#)
- [chicago manual of style geographic research methods](#)

[Back to Home](#)