

chicago style georeferencing citations

Chicago Style Georeferencing Citations: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago style georeferencing citations are crucial for academic and professional work that involves the use of geospatial data. Whether you are a cartographer, a historian researching historical maps, or a researcher analyzing spatial trends, accurately citing your georeferenced sources is paramount. This guide delves into the intricacies of citing georeferenced data using the Chicago Manual of Style, exploring its various components and providing practical advice for ensuring compliance and clarity. We will cover the fundamental principles, different types of georeferenced sources, and the specific elements required for a robust citation. Understanding these nuances will not only enhance the credibility of your work but also allow your readers to easily locate and verify the spatial information you present.

Table of Contents

Understanding Georeferencing and Its Citation Needs

Core Components of Chicago Style Georeferencing Citations

Citing Different Types of Georeferenced Sources

Best Practices for Georeferencing Citations in Chicago Style

Common Pitfalls to Avoid in Chicago Style Georeferencing Citations

Understanding Georeferencing and Its Citation Needs

Georeferencing is the process of assigning geographic coordinates to digital spatial data. This can involve aligning scanned historical maps to modern coordinate systems, digitizing features from aerial imagery, or linking tabular data to specific geographic locations. The resulting georeferenced data allows for spatial analysis, mapping, and integration with other geographic information systems (GIS) datasets. Given the inherent complexity and often proprietary nature of spatial data, clear and consistent citation is vital. It acknowledges the origin of the data, enables reproducibility, and provides context for its use.

The need for precise georeferencing citations stems from the fact that spatial data is not static; it can be derived, transformed, and reinterpreted. Without proper attribution, it becomes challenging to trace the lineage of the data, understand its accuracy limitations, or assess its suitability for different research purposes. Chicago style, known for its adaptability to various disciplines, provides a framework for presenting these technical details in a scholarly manner.

Core Components of Chicago Style Georeferencing Citations

When citing georeferenced data in Chicago style, several key components are generally required to ensure completeness and clarity. These elements help the reader understand the nature and origin of the spatial information being presented.

Author or Creator of the Georeferenced Data

This is the entity responsible for creating or curating the georeferenced dataset. It could be an individual researcher, a government agency, a commercial company, or an academic institution. Identifying the creator is the first step in attributing ownership and effort.

Title of the Georeferenced Dataset

The title should be specific and accurately reflect the content of the georeferenced data. For datasets that may not have a formal title, a descriptive phrase that clearly identifies the data (e.g., "Digitized Soil Survey Boundaries, 1950") should be used.

Publication or Distribution Information

This includes details about where and when the data was made available. For digital datasets, this often involves the name of the repository, archive, or website where it was accessed, along with the date of access. If the data was published in a physical format (e.g., on a CD-ROM), then the publisher and publication date would be included.

Geographic Scope and Coordinate System

Crucially, any citation for georeferenced data should include information about its geographic coverage and the coordinate system or projection used. This might be expressed as a spatial extent (e.g., bounding box coordinates) or by naming the specific projection (e.g., UTM Zone 16N, NAD83).

Date of Creation or Last Update

Understanding when the georeferenced data was created or last updated is essential for assessing its relevance and potential for temporal changes. This information helps in understanding the historical context or currency of the spatial information.

Access Information and URL (if applicable)

For digital datasets, providing a stable URL or persistent identifier (like a DOI) where the data can be accessed is critical for reader verification and reproducibility. If direct access is not possible, information about how to request or obtain the data should be included.

Citing Different Types of Georeferenced Sources

The specific format of a Chicago style georeferencing citation can vary depending on the type of source. Each category of spatial data has its unique characteristics that necessitate slightly different citation approaches.

Georeferenced Historical Maps

When citing historical maps that have been georeferenced and digitized, treat them similarly to other graphic materials, but with added spatial detail. Include the map title, cartographer/publisher, publication date, and location of the original map. Crucially, add information about the georeferencing process, including the software used, the coordinate system, and the date of digitization or georeferencing. If the georeferenced map is available online, provide the URL and access date.

Georeferenced Aerial or Satellite Imagery

For imagery, the creator is often the agency that acquired the data (e.g., USGS, NASA, a private surveying company). Include the sensor type, acquisition date, project name, and resolution. If the imagery has been processed or georeferenced by another entity, cite that entity as well. The coordinate system and projection used for the georeferencing are essential additions. A direct link to the image data or the portal where it was accessed is also important.

Georeferenced Vector and Raster Datasets from GIS Repositories

Many georeferenced datasets are available through online GIS data portals or repositories. In these cases, cite the dataset by its title, the organization or individual who created it, the repository name, the URL, and the date of access. If a specific version or update of the dataset is used, this should be noted. Including any accompanying metadata that describes the data's accuracy, scale, and intended use is also recommended.

Georeferenced Data Derived from Other Sources

If you have georeferenced data that was originally in a non-spatial format (e.g., geocoding addresses from a database), you need to cite both the original source of the data and the method or software used for georeferencing. For instance, "Addresses from the City of Chicago Business Directory (2022), geocoded using ArcGIS geocoding tools, NAD83 (2011) State Plane Illinois East FIPS 1200."

Best Practices for Georeferencing Citations in Chicago Style

Adhering to best practices ensures that your Chicago style georeferencing citations are not only compliant but also highly effective in communicating the origin and nature of your spatial data.

Consistency is Key

Maintain a consistent format for all georeferencing citations within your work. Choose a particular

approach based on the type of data and stick to it throughout your document to avoid confusion for the reader.

Clarity and Specificity

Be as clear and specific as possible. Avoid vague descriptions. For example, instead of "map data," use "Digitized 1900 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Chicago, Block 35." Similarly, specify the coordinate system and datum used.

Prioritize Direct Access Information

If the georeferenced data is publicly accessible online, always provide a direct URL. This allows readers to easily locate and verify the data, enhancing the transparency and reproducibility of your research.

Include Metadata When Possible

If metadata files (e.g., .xml, .txt) are available with the georeferenced data, it is good practice to mention their availability or, if space and format allow, include key details from them within your citation or a footnote.

Use Footnotes or Endnotes for Detailed Information

Chicago style allows for flexibility with notes. For complex georeferenced datasets, a brief in-text citation followed by a detailed explanation in a footnote or endnote can be an effective way to provide all necessary information without disrupting the flow of the main text.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid in Chicago Style Georeferencing Citations

Navigating the citation of specialized data like georeferenced information can present challenges. Being aware of common mistakes can help you produce accurate and reliable citations.

Omitting the Coordinate System or Projection

This is a critical error. Without knowing the coordinate system and datum, the spatial data is meaningless for many analytical purposes. Always include this information.

Vague Descriptions of Data Source

Simply stating "online map" or "spatial data" is insufficient. Be precise about the origin, title, and content of the georeferenced material.

Forgetting the Date of Access for Online Data

Web content can change or disappear. Citing the date you accessed online georeferenced data is essential for temporal accuracy and reproducibility.

Not Citing Intermediate Processing Steps

If you have downloaded raw data and then georeferenced it yourself or processed it significantly, you must cite both the original source and your own work, including the methods and software used for your transformations.

Properly citing georeferenced data is an integral part of producing scholarly and credible work in any field that utilizes spatial information. By understanding the core components, adapting to different source types, and following best practices, you can ensure your Chicago style georeferencing citations are both accurate and informative, empowering your readers to engage more deeply with your research.

FAQ Section

Q: What is the most crucial piece of information to include when citing georeferenced data in Chicago style?

A: The most crucial piece of information is the coordinate system and datum (e.g., WGS84, NAD83) used for the georeferencing. Without this, the spatial accuracy and usability of the data are fundamentally compromised.

Q: How should I cite georeferenced data that I downloaded from a government agency's website?

A: You should cite the agency as the author or creator, the specific title of the dataset, the name of the website or portal, the URL, and the date you accessed the data. If a DOI is available, use that instead of the URL.

Q: Is it necessary to cite the software used for georeferencing?

A: Yes, especially if you performed the georeferencing yourself or if the software is integral to understanding the data's characteristics or potential limitations. Include the software name and version.

Q: What if the georeferenced data doesn't have a formal title?

A: If the georeferenced data lacks a formal title, create a descriptive phrase that accurately identifies the content of the spatial dataset. For instance, "Digitized historical land parcels, downtown Chicago, 1890."

Q: Should I cite the original source of data that I later georeferenced?

A: Absolutely. You must cite the original source of the data, and then also cite your own georeferencing work, specifying the method, software, and coordinate system you applied. This creates a clear data lineage.

Q: How do I handle georeferenced imagery acquired at different times?

A: When citing georeferenced imagery, it's essential to include the acquisition date of the imagery itself. If you are using multiple images from different acquisition dates, you may need to cite them individually or describe the date range covered by the dataset.

Q: What if the georeferenced data is part of a larger published work, like a book with a CD-ROM?

A: In this case, you would cite the book as the primary source, following standard Chicago style for books. Then, in a note or within the citation, you would specify the georeferenced data found on the accompanying media, including its title, format, and any relevant spatial information.

[Chicago Style Georeferencing Citations](#)

Chicago Style Georeferencing Citations

Related Articles

- [chicago style in-text citations for unpublished works](#)
- [chicago style formatting handbook rules](#)
- [chicago style for scholarly works ip](#)

[Back to Home](#)