

**Bocconi**

**PROPER USE OF  
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

The protocols for borrowing, reusing, and modifying information on the Web are less well-defined than they are in more traditional academic work, and are far less diligently observed.

With the Web's countless sites offering text and images for the taking, the lines between public and private ownership of intellectual property have become blurry. The depersonalized nature of electronic information can devalue the sense of intellectual ownership: the information seems to belong to nobody and to everybody.

This creates two different problems. First, because one cannot readily trace the sources for the information found on the Web, one may feel less obligated to acknowledge electronic sources.

**At Bocconi, you are expected to observe the regulations for academic citation of all sources, print or electronic. The same rules apply to copying verbatim text or images, paraphrasing, and summarizing material from the Web.**

**Information and quotations from electronic resources must be properly acknowledged, including personal e-mail correspondence.**

Second, given that information and data available on the Web may not receive the same stringent review as more traditional scholarly sources, it is necessary to be extra careful about evaluating and acknowledging Web sources for such information.

Unlike most books and journal articles, which undergo strict editorial review before publication, **much of the information on the Web is self-published**. For vast amounts of Web-based information, **no impartial reviewers have evaluated the accuracy or fairness of such material** before it's made available across the globe. Websites may provide partial, deceptive, or false information.

Before you take information from a source you have found on the Internet, assess its reliability by looking for the following:

1. Name of the author (is it a student or a recognized authority?).
2. Name of sponsoring institution (If you cannot locate this information or you are not sure of the reliability of the institution, do not use the information.)
3. Date of posting.

**As a researcher using the Web, you must be extremely careful about the validity of the information that you find.**

### Wikipedia

Many use Wikipedia as a source of information when searching for a quick explanation of something. However, Wikipedia or other wikis, collaborative information sites contributed to by a variety of people, cannot always be considered reliable sources for academic citation.

**The bibliography published at the end of the Wikipedia entry may point you to potential sources. However, do not assume that these sources are reliable – use the same criteria to judge them as you would any other source.**

### Accuracy web-based information

Do not assume the information you find on the Internet is necessarily accurate. Everything on the Internet **has been written by someone** and needs to be cited whenever possible. **Simply including a URL may not enough.** If the ultimate source cannot be traced, probably the information is not accurate and should not be used.

### Authenticity of Social Media Posts

In evaluating social media posts, the authenticity of the author should be assessed. If you are in doubt of the person's true identity, do not use the source.

When you must cite a social media source, cite it by its complete URL. This ensures you are accurately reflecting your source to the reader.

### Plagiarism in computer programs

Writing a computer code is similar to academic writing in that when you use or adapt a code developed by someone else as part of your project, you must cite your source. However, instead of quoting or paraphrasing a source, **you include an inline comment in the code.** These comments not only ensure you are giving proper credit, but help with code understanding and debugging.

In those cases where individual computer programs are submitted based on work involving collaboration, you must acknowledge the extent of the collaboration when the program is submitted.

When you copy a code from an external source, whether you are copying just a few lines of a code or an entire module, you must credit the source.

When you copy the code and adapt it, you should still credit the source.

- In order to cite the code, generally the URL and the date of retrieval are sufficient.
- If you adapted the code, you should indicate "Adapted from:" or "Based on" so it is understood that you modified the code.

Writing codes and Open source softwares

When you use code from an open source project, you need both to attribute the source and follow the terms of any open source license that applies to the code you are using.

When you download the source, the license is typically part of the download. Also, the source code itself will typically contain the copyright and terms of use.

When you incorporate open-source-licensed code into a program, it is good practice to duplicate the copyright in your code, and/or store the license in a file with the code.

Although it is common practice to adapt code examples found on the web, **you should never copy a code from other students.** Your peers are not considered an authorized source. You should not simply re-use code as the solution to an assignment.

<sup>1</sup> This document heavily borrows from the codes of other international institutions and in particular from the code of academic integrity of MIT (<http://integrity.mit.edu>) and Princeton (<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/intro/index.htm>)