



STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

## Links

Links form the basis of navigation in digital projects, so it is crucial to properly deploy them. To ensure a smooth transfer between development and publication server environments and to avoid link breakage, we recommend the following protocols.

### Internal Links

Use relative links rather than absolute urls when linking to media or content within the project. This practice will ensure that when the project moves from its development environment to our publication server, the links will still point to the correct files and won't break as they try to find content at an old location.

For example, use `<a href="file_name.ext">` rather than `<a href="http://domain.org/file-name.ext">`. The same concept applies to style sheets and media src tags, including images and videos.

### External Links

Ideally, a project will not link unnecessarily or arbitrarily to outside content or websites. Because we cannot control the behavior of outside material, we cannot ensure the links will continue to point to active content or the content that was originally stored at the linked url at the time of development or initial publication. When links to outside content are necessary, it is best to limit the number of links to that content. For instance, links may be included in a bibliography or reference page but not within the content pages that reference those sources. Instead, references within content pages may link to the bibliography, where a reader can then access the external link embedded in a full citation to the source. It is important that a bibliography include full citations along with links so once a link does inevitably fail, a reader can still discern the reference source and potentially find the linked content at its new location.

### Link Targets

While it is up to each author to determine the most appropriate target function for links, we do recommend consistency and deliberate structure regarding how links open. Whether a link opens in a new tab/window or replaces the current content of a tab/window carries certain rhetorical implications. It is important to consider whether you want links to generate new and multiple reading portals or to take the reader along a single path that they determine through their interaction with the content.

### Resources

World Wide Web Consortium recommendations on links:

[https://www.w3schools.com/html/html\\_links.asp](https://www.w3schools.com/html/html_links.asp)