

OPEN KNOWLEDGE FOR THE SOCIAL SECTOR

Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs)

Improving trackability

In its simplest form, a Digital Object Identifier, or DOI, is a unique identifier that can be attached to a digital object (in the case of social sector knowledge products these are often a publication). The DOI provides a permanent record of that object and a permanent link to it. DOIs are maintained by the DOI Foundation and the DOI system has been around since 1998.

There are currently more than 100 million DOIs in existence. In fact, you would be hard-pressed to find an academic or scientific journal article that doesn't have a DOI. DOIs are so ubiquitous in other sectors because they provide enormous value to authors, publishers, and the organizations they work for in tracking interest in and use of their knowledge products. Until now, confidently tracking interest is not something that the social sector has been able to do. Instead we have relied on proxy measures such as counting downloads across websites.

Here are capabilities that DOIs provide your organization:

- **Provide a permanent link to a document**, giving users easy and ongoing access regardless of whether a micro-site is retired, a website is redesigned, or an organization closes its doors.
- **Track “click metrics”** collected by the DOI Foundation and reported as a cumulative measure to the publisher, no matter where on the Internet a user clicks the DOI link.
- **Track citations** by using DOIs to capture how many, and which, articles have cited a work.
- Access **alternative metrics**, or “altmetrics”, to better measure and visualize social media, and new media, attention around a digital object.

Until now it hasn't been possible for foundations and nonprofits to request DOIs on individual works. But, as



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of 2015, you can request DOIs directly from IssueLab. When you share your work through IssueLab's open repository you can also request that it be given a DOI for free. Visit doi.issuelab.org for complete details.

