

Provenance Reference

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Discussion

A Provenance Reference associates information with applicable [Provenance](#) without copying the complete Provenance information into every information structure.

A Provenance Reference contains or uses sufficient information to identify and, when applicable, resolve the referenced Provenance information. This information may include:

- A Provenance Record Identifier
- The identifier scheme
- The assigning authority
- A version
- A repository or service reference
- Resolution information
- An integrity value

The applicable Information Structure Definition determines which information the Provenance Reference requires.

A Provenance Reference remains distinct from Provenance. Provenance describes the entities, activities, Actors, sources, transformations, and relationships associated with the origin or processing history of information. A Provenance Reference associates another information structure with that Provenance.

A Provenance Reference also remains distinct from an [Evidence Reference](#). A Provenance Reference identifies information about origin and processing history. An Evidence Reference identifies Evidence supporting a claim.

The same record may contribute to both Provenance and Evidence when the applicable model explicitly assigns both functions.

Definition

reference that identifies and permits association with [Provenance](#) applicable to a specified subject

Source

Adapted from:

- [W3C PROV-O: The PROV Ontology](#)
 - Relevant concepts: Entity, Activity, Agent, derivation, generation, attribution, and association

- Retrieved: 2026-10-08
- 2. [W3C PROV-DM: The PROV Data Model](#)
 - Relevant concepts: Provenance Description, Entity, Activity, Agent, and Identifier
 - Retrieved: 2026-10-08
- 3. [OMG Commons Identifiers Ontology](#)
 - Relevant concepts and relationships: Identifier, identifies, and is identified by
 - Retrieved: 2026-10-08

This corpus defines the expression *Provenance Reference*. The referenced sources provide the underlying Provenance and Identifier concepts but do not define a concept having this exact name.

Note

- A Provenance Reference identifies or resolves to applicable Provenance
- A Provenance Reference is not the Provenance it references
- More than one information structure may reference the same Provenance
- One information structure may have more than one Provenance Reference
- A Provenance Reference does not independently establish the truth or validity of the referenced Provenance
- A Provenance Reference may include version and integrity information
- A Provenance Reference does not replace an Evidence Reference
- The platform-independent definition does not require a URI, database key, object pointer, DDS key, or programming-language reference

Example

A system derives a Valuation from market observations and an FX Contract.

The Valuation contains a Provenance Reference identifying the Provenance record that describes:

- The source market observations
- The Contract state used
- The valuation method
- The processing activity
- The responsible system
- The processing time

The Valuation does not need to duplicate the complete Provenance record.

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