

# Don't Let Your Code Go Uncredited

Code and scripts are vital yet historically undercited research outputs. Citing them acknowledges creators, supports reproducibility, and ensures proper credit. Researchers and developers are encouraged to include a CITATION.cff file in their code repositories to guide proper attribution.

Code and scripts don't have title pages, and key details are not always obvious and (re)users may feel lost:



- What is the software called?
- Whom should I credit?
- Which version should I cite?

## What are CFF files?

CITATION.cff (Citation File Format) is a both human and machine-readable plain-text file that stores citation metadata for software, datasets, or research tools. It lets developers specify how their work should be cited, including details like authors, title, version, and DOI.



## What does it look like?

```
cff-version: 1.2.0
message: "If you use this software, please cite
it as below."
authors:
  - family-names: Druskat
    given-names: Stephan
    orcid: https://orcid.org/1234-5678-9101-1121
title: "My Research Software"
version: 2.0.4
identifiers:
  - type: doi
    value: 10.5281/zenodo.1234
date-released: 2021-08-11
```

EXAMPLE

## How can you create this file?

CFF INIT

You may copy and edit an example, or use the web application [CFF init \(initializer\)](#) to create and update your CITATION.cff files.



## Where should you add it?

The CITATION.cff file should be added to the root directory of the code repository, so that it can be automatically detected and displayed for easy citation.



## Which platforms support it?

### GitHub

- Automatically detects CITATION.cff files
- Adds a "Cite this repository" button with APA & BibTeX citations for users

### Zenodo

- Uses your .cff metadata when you archive code releases
- Helps generate DOIs and formal citations

### Zotero

- Imports citation data directly from repos with .cff through the Zotero Connector browser extension
- Converts the .cff into any citation style of choice

LEARN MORE



Check the website [citation-file-format.github.io](https://citation-file-format.github.io) for additional tools to create and validate CITATION.cff files and other helpful tips.



Smith AM, Katz DS, Niemeyer KE, FORCE11 Software Citation Working Group. 2016. Software citation principles. PeerJ Computer Science 2:e86. [doi.org/10.7717/peerj-cs.86](https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj-cs.86)