

Choosing a Citation Manager

About citation managers

A citation manager is a tool that helps you organize, store, and cite references. The Knowledge Center at the Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library strongly recommends choosing a citation manager early in your research for the smoothest experience.

Benefits of using citation managers

- **Import citations directly from databases.** It's easy to build your reference collection with direct exportation from most literature databases (i.e. PubMed, Embase, etc.), as well as resources such like Cochrane, Google Scholar, WorldCat, TRIP Database, and many more.
- **Organize, tag, and annotate citations.** Keep track of all your references for assignments and research areas in one place.
- **Attach PDFs (and other files) directly to the corresponding citation.** Forget about trying to find that full-text on your hard drive, it stays with the citation and all your notes and highlights.
- **Create bibliographies and cite papers in hundreds/thousands of citation styles.** No longer is it a chore to keep your citation formats correct and in the proper order.

What are the different citation managers?

EndNote is a desktop-based program for PC and Mac. It is the most popular citation manager at the medical center, and is currently the only one that Columbia has a site license for. There is also a cloud-based online component called Endnote Web that can be synced to your desktop program.

Mendeley is a free cloud-based program with desktop software. It was created with biomedical researchers in mind. Up to 2GB of storage is free, with opportunity to upgrade space for as little \$4.99/month. There are also team accounts for larger collaborations.

Papers is a desktop-based program originally designed for Macs, but now available for Windows and iOS devices. Papers is known for its iTunes-like interface and internal searching capabilities. It is a popular tool among many faculty with Macs at the medical center. The cost for a single license with installation on two computers is \$79 (\$49 with a student discount).

F1000Workspace is a cloud-based program created by Faculty of 1000 as a workspace for scientists to collect, write, and discuss scientific literature. It is free for Columbia students, faculty, and staff.

Zotero is a free open-source program, but requires a monthly fee (as little as \$20/year) for storage upgrades beyond 300MB. It is used primarily on Morningside Campus by humanities researchers.

RefWorks is a cloud-based program. Individual subscriptions are \$100/year. Graduates from institutions with a current RefWorks site license have access via their previous institution for as long as that institution has an account.

Which citation manager should I choose?

Deciding which citation manager to choose depends on many factors, such as your workflow, needs, and budget. Ask your professors and colleagues for advice, as different departments lean toward different tools. Certain circumstances may require you to use more than one tool.

I need to...	Use:	Why:
... work from multiple computers or locations	Mendeley Workspace Zotero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mendeley is the best option for working on multiple computers/locations because it has both desktop and cloud options with full capabilities from all locations. • F1000 Workspace is a web-based tool so it can be accessed from anywhere. • Zotero also allows you to login online and from multiple computers.
... work on a mobile device	Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papers' free iOS app is separate from the desktop version, but can be synced to that account. • EndNote and Mendeley both have apps to use on iPads, however both lack many necessary features.
... work without an internet connection	EndNote Papers Mendeley Zotero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EndNote and Papers are both desktop programs that can be accessed and modified without the Internet. • Mendeley and Zotero can be used offline in the desktop version but must be synced when on an Internet connection.
... research on the web, import citations from websites, or archive webpages	Mendeley Workspace Zotero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mendeley and Zotero can capture webpages and extract website information directly into a citation through a browser extension. • F1000Workspace has a browser extension that allows you to save articles and webpages directly into Workspace.
... collaborate with others	EndNote Mendeley Papers Workspace Zotero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EndNote versions x7.2 and later allow you to share and work on a library with up to 14 other users. • Mendeley's free account allows you to have a private group with up to 3 people. • Papers for Teams is available starting at \$79/year. • F1000Workspace has private projects where members can share citations and full-text. • Zotero lets you create public and private groups.
... get customer assistance	EndNote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EndNote has full-service customer support, as well as tutorials and guides on endnote.com.
... save money	EndNote Workspace Mendeley Zotero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EndNote is available for all Columbia students and staff through a site license. • F1000Workspace is available for all Columbia students and staff through a Faculty of 1000 subscription. • Mendeley is free for the first 2GB of storage. Upgrades cost as little as \$4.99/month. • Zotero is a free, open-source tool. Additional storage space may be purchased, starting at \$1.67/month.