NTU library
Managing bibliographic references

NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Managing bibliographic references

During the course of a research project you will collect, read, and review a large amount of literature and information. Reference management software can help you to manage and organise this information and generate citations and references during the writing process.

Which product should I choose?

NTU Library supports [RefWorks](#) and all members of the university can register a free account using their NTU username and password. However, there is a wide range of products available to help you manage your references. Many of them are free to register but require payment for additional features such as increased storage. Each has its strengths and weaknesses and you may wish to use more than one to meet your needs. You may also want to find out what your colleagues are using. The products considered in this guide are compatible with each other but you may find it easier to share references and support each other if you are using the same product.

Things to consider:

I Need to:	Consider using:
…work from multiple devices or locations.	*RefWorks* is web-based, use wherever you have an internet connection. *Mendeley* has a web-based library and a desktop installation. The desktop can be installed on multiple PCs and syncs online across multiple devices.
…work offline	The *Mendeley Desktop can be accessed offline.* Only the *RefWorks Citation Manager feature within Word works offline.*
…extract metadata from PDFs	*Mendeley* can extract metadata from PDFs downloaded from journal websites.
…attach PDFs to your account	Both products will allow you to attach PDFs to individual records.
…work on a group project or share my citations with others	*Mendeley* allows you to create a private or public group to share documents with others. *RefWorks* allows you to share citations in folders or your entire library.
…use a product that is compatible with LaTeX	Any product that allows you to export references as a BibTex file is compatible with LaTeX. *RefWorks* and *Mendeley* will support this.
…require a lot of storage for PDFs.	RefWorks offers unlimited storage. The free version of Mendeley gives you 2GB of storage and you must pay to increase it.

Getting the most out of your reference management software

Collecting references

- Get into the habit of saving useful references as soon as you find them. This will save time during the writing process.
- Export references from library databases, e.g. Scopus and Web of Science and publisher's websites. You can download multiple references and the bibliographic details have been quality assured.
- Configure Google Scholar to work with RefWorks – go to settings, then choose the appropriate option from the bibliography manager link.
- Download web importer tools if available (e.g. Mendeley browser extension, 'Save to RefWorks' bookmarklet).
- Be prepared to add/edit some references manually if they are for non-standard or older materials.
- **Always** check imported references to ensure they contain all the details needed for a correct citation. A reference manager will accurately import a source's metadata but the metadata may not be accurate.

Organising references

- A good reference manager will let you search and/or sort by author, year, title, source.
- Consider creating folders and organising references by topic.
- Add your own keywords to references. This allows you to search/download all references with a specific keyword.
- Some reference managers will let you add notes to the reference's record or annotate and/or highlight the saved pdf.

Working with existing references
It's not too late to start using reference management software if you are part way through your research process and have already gathered numerous pdfs and/or bibliographic references in various formats.

- Copy and paste titles into Google Scholar for quickest import to RefWorks.
- Mendeley will allow you to save a pdf and then extract the bibliographic details.
- No reference manager can extract metadata from a Word file containing bibliographic references. You will have to search for them in a database or Google Scholar (often quickest as you can cut and paste details into its search engine).

Comparison Chart

This chart compares the leading free reference management products. See the following link for a comparison of a wider range of material: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_reference_management_software
All products are compatible with Macs, Windows and Linux operating systems and are supported by IE, Chrome, Firefox, and Safari.

	RefWorks	**Mendeley**
Overview	Focussed on traditional reference management. Offers excellent integration with NTU databases and NTU Harvard style is installed. Sharing and collaboration features are more limited than Mendeley.	A reference manager with a crowd-sourced catalogue and social network features. Direct PDF import makes it simple to add references. Excellent sharing and collaboration functionality. Heavy users are likely to have to pay for extra storage.
Access	NTU subscription; login with your NTU credentials. Web-based.	Register a free account with 2GB storage. Paid upgrade for additional storage and sharing. Web-based and desktop installation. App for Android and IOS.
Work Offline?	Yes (RefWorks Citation Manager only)	Yes (desktop)
Maximum number of records per library	Unlimited	Unlimited
Getting data in		
Import from databases	✓	✓ (Elsevier databases)
Import direct from PDF?	✓ (successful import is inconsistent)	✓
DOI look up	✓	✓ (Desktop only)

Web importer (browser extension)	✓	✓
.txt/ris import	✓	✓
Attach PDFs and other files?	✓	✓ (2GB personal, additional cost for extra)
PDF viewer/ editor	✓	✓
Citation and bibliography functionality		
NTU Harvard	✓	✗ British Standard Harvard is available
Create a bibliography /reference list and in-text citations	RefWorks Citation Manager 'add-in' available from Microsoft Store for word processing software.	Mendeley plug-in for word processing software.
Create a quick standalone bibliography	✓	✗
Sharing of references	Via folder permissions and export option.	Via Mendeley Desktop or Web. Limits apply for file-sharing, but not for references.

For further advice and support please contact the Library Research Team