

# Citation Management Software

## What is citation management software?

“A reference manager supports researchers in performing three basic research steps: **searching, storing, and writing** [...]. It helps researchers find relevant literature, allows them to store papers and their bibliographic metadata in a personal database for later retrieval, and allows researchers to insert citations and references in a chosen citation style when writing a text.<sup>1</sup>

Citation managers can save researchers a lot of time, help reduce mistakes, and help avoid plagiarism. For those reasons, they are highly recommended.

[Click here for a comparison of different citation managers.](#)

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<sup>1</sup>Fenner, Martin, Kaja Scheliga, and Sönke Bartling. 'Reference Management'. In *Opening Science*, edited by Sönke Bartling and Sascha Friesike, 125–37. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2014. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-00026-8\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-00026-8_8).

## Comparison of citation management software



[Zotero](#) is a popular free and open-source option among researchers that offers many features as well as extensions.



[Mendeley](#) is a proprietary option from Elsevier. BI faculty and staff have free access via our partnership with BAU.

Source: [Wikipedia](#) (retrieved 04 Mar 2022)

Software	Developer	First public release	Latest stable release date	Latest stable version	Cost (USD)	Free software	License	Notes
<a href="#">Bebop</a>	<a href="#">ALaRI Institute</a>	2007-11-08	2009-11-10	1.1	Free	Yes	<a href="#">BSD</a>	web-based BibTeX front-end (Apache, PHP, MySQL)
<a href="#">BibBase</a>	Christian Fritz	2005	2013-07	v3	Free	No	<a href="#">Proprietary</a>	centrally hosted website, intended for publication pages
<a href="#">BibDesk</a>	BibDesk developers	2002-04	2021-08-15	1.8.3	Free	Yes	<a href="#">BSD</a>	<a href="#">BibTeX</a> front-end + repository; <a href="#">Cocoa</a> -based; integration with <a href="#">Spotlight</a>

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<b>Biblioscope</b>	CG Information	1997	2015-06-22	10.0.3.6	US\$ 79-299 <sup>[1]</sup>	No	Proprietary	ODBC; web access in Pro ed; optional client/server; discontinued?
<b>BibSonomy</b>	University of Kassel	2006-01	2019-12-11	3.9.2	Free	Yes	AGPL , GPL , LGPL <sup>[2]</sup>	centrally hosted website
<b>Bibus</b>	Bibus developers	2004-06-03	2013-05-23	1.5.1	Free	Yes	GNU GPL	discontinued?
<b>Bookends</b>	Sonny Software	1988 (Mac) / 1983 (Apple II+)	2021-01-23	13.5.1 <sup>[3]</sup>	US\$ 59.99 <sup>[1]</sup>	No	Proprietary	Desktop & iOS synced via iCloud, integrated web search, PDF download, auto-completion, Word plugin, BibTex support, PDF annotations stored as notes
<b>Citavi</b>	QSR International <sup>[4]</sup>	2006-02-13	2022-01-05	6.11.0.0	US\$ 89-1947 <sup>[5]</sup>	No	Proprietary	data can be saved locally on the computer, or, for team access, in the Citavi Cloud or an intranet <a href="#">Microsoft SQL Server</a> ; <sup>[6]</sup> search databases from interface <sup>[7]</sup>
<b>CiteULike</b>	Oversity Limited	2004-11	Shut down in 2019-03-30 <sup>[8]</sup>		Free	No	proprietary <sup>[9]</sup>	centrally hosted website

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<b>colwiz</b>	colwiz Ltd	2011	2016-05-09		Free / Online storage free up to 3 GB / Additional storage space available	No	Proprietary	Now combined with wizdom.ai
<b>EndNote</b>	Clarivate Analytics	1988	2021-11-30	20.2.1	US\$ 299.95 <sup>[1]</sup>	No	Proprietary	The web version <a href="#">EndNote basic</a> (formerly, EndNote Web) is free of charge
<b>JabRef</b>	JabRef developers	2003-11-29	2021-07-05	5.3	Free	Yes	MIT license	<a href="#">Java BibTeX</a> and <a href="#">BibLaTeX</a> manager
<b>KBibTeX</b>	KBibTeX developers	2005-08	2020-04-26	0.9.2	Free	Yes	GNU GPL	<a href="#">BibTeX</a> front-end, using the <a href="#">KDE Software Compilation</a>

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<b>Mendel ey</b>	Elsevier	2008-08	2020	1.19.8	Free / Online storage free up to 2 GB / Additional storage space available	No	proprietary (OS API clients exist)	Account required, Desktop & Web components, Windows, Linux, macOS (not macOS 11 Big Sur)
<b>Paperpile</b>	Stefan Washietl, Gregory Jordan, Andreas Gruber	2013	Continually updated online		US\$ 2.99/ month for academics, 9.99/ month otherwise	No	Proprietary	web-application, integrates with Google Docs, collaboration & sharing features, currently only on Google Chrome
<b>Pybliographer</b>	pybliographer developers	1998-10-30 (0.2)	2018-04-03	1.4.0	Free	Yes	GNU GPL	Python/GTK2
<b>Qiqqa</b>	Qiqqa	2010-04	2020-10-04	v80	Free	Yes	GNU GPL	From end 2020, Open Source

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<b>ReadCube Papers (now Papers)</b>	ReadCube	2011-10	2021-03-09	v.4.23.3	US\$ 3/month for students, 5/month academics	No	Proprietary	Web-app, Desktop (MacOS, Windows), Mobile (iOS and Android). Microsoft Word and Google Docs add-in. Browser extension (Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari)
<b>refbase</b>	refbase developers	2003-06-03	2014-02-28	0.9.6	Free	Yes	GNU GPL	web-based for <a href="#">institutional repositories</a> / <a href="#">self-archiving</a> <sup>[10]</sup>
<b>RefDB</b>	refdb developers	2001-04-25	2007-11-05	0.9.9	Free	Yes	GNU GPL	network-transparent; <a href="#">XML/SGML</a> bibliographies
<b>Reference Manager</b>	Thomson Reuters	1984	2010	12.0.3	Not for sale anymore, sales ceased December 31, 2015	No	Proprietary	network version; built-in web publishing tool; discontinued
<b>Referencer</b>	Referencer developers	2008-03-15	2014-02-27	1.2.2	Free	Yes	GNU GPL	<a href="#">BibTeX</a> front-end

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<b>RefME</b>	RefME	2014	Shut down in 2017		Free	No	Proprietary	Web, iOS and Android; Chrome and Safari Extensions available; discontinued
<b>RefWorks</b>	Ex Libris / ProQuest	2001	2018	3	Institutional subscription	No	Proprietary	web-based, browser-accessed, Word & Google Docs
<b>SciRef</b>	Scientific Programs	2012	2020-07-30	1.6.2	US\$ 38.90 / Free trial version	No	Proprietary	
<b>Sente</b>	Third Street Software, Inc.	2004	Shut down in 2017	6.7.9	US\$ 60–80 [1] / Free for libraries up to 100 refs	No	Proprietary	Desktop and iPad, centralized backup/synching; discontinued
<b>Wikindx</b>	Mark Grimshaw	2004-02	2021-07-07	6.4.10	Free	Yes	ISC license	web-based
<b>WizFolio</b>	WizPatent	2008-06	Shut down in 2017	Avatara	US\$25 / Free Basic version	No	Proprietary	centrally hosted website; discontinued

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<b>Zotero</b>	Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at GMU	2006	2021-01-11	5.0.95 <a href="#">[11]</a>	Free / Online storage free up to 300 MB / Additional storage space available	Yes	<a href="#">AGPL</a>	Multi-platform desktop version with connectors for <a href="#">Firefox</a> , <a href="#">Chrome</a> and <a href="#">Safari</a> . Web-based access to reference library also available through Zotero.org or through a personal cloud-based database folder on a user's computer (Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.).

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