

Comparison of Reference Management Systems (1st edition)

	Zotero	Citavi	Mendeley	EndNote	JabRef
Technical Specifications					
URL	zotero.org	citavi.com	mendeley.com	endnote.com	jabref.org
Operating system	Windows, Mac, Linux	Citavi for Windows and DBServer: Windows, by use of a virtual machine running Windows on your Mac; Citavi Web: platform independent	Windows, Mac, Linux	Windows, Mac	Windows, Mac, Linux, Ubuntu, Debian, RPM-Download
Mobile app	„Zotero for Mobile“ with Zotero-Bookmarklet; Several third-party solutions for iOS and Android	---	---	„EndNote for iPad“ (iOS)	---
Tested version	version 5.0.96.3	version 6.8.0.0	version 1.19.8	version 20.1	version 5.3
Client based version / web based version	client-based version: desktop app for Windows, Mac, Linux, Unix, incl. Connectors for usual browsers; web-based version: Zotero WebLibrary	client-based version: desktop app for Windows (see also: operating system), plus Pickers for usual web browser; web-based version: Citavi Web	client-based version: desktop app for Windows, Mac, Linux, Unix, WebImporter for usual web browser; MendeleyWeb: web-based; New tool: Mendeley Reference Manager	EndNote Desktop: client-based incl. cloud service for shared libraries; EndNote Basic: web-based	client-based extension for common web browsers
Maximum number of stored records	unlimited	Citavi for Windows / for DBServer: unlimited (recommendation: max. 50.000 records per project) Citavi Web: currently no experience	unlimited	EndNote Desktop: unlimited EndNote Basic: 50.000	unlimited
Maximum online storage space	300 MB for free additional storage = additional costs free external storage can be integrated via WebDav	depending on user group and chosen edition: min. 1 GB (overview >> products)	2 GB for free; additional storage and features = additional costs	EndNote Desktop: unlimited via EndNote-Cloud EndNote Basic: 2 GB	---
Licence	free open source software (Affero General Public License)	commercial, different licences ; free 30 day trial	commercial, free of charge, additional Premium plan	EndNote Desktop: commercial, various licence types ; free 30 day trial version; EndNote Basic: free	free open-source-software (MIT-licence)

	Zotero	Citavi	Mendeley	EndNote	JabRef
Import / Export					
Direct import from databases & websites	yes, via Connectors , COinS, Translators and Zotero Bookmarklet	yes, via COinS and Citavi Pickers	yes, via COinS and Web Importer	yes, via Capture Reference bookmarklet (via EndNote Basic - Account)	extensions for Firefox, Chrome, Edge, Vivaldi
Data import via import filter (e. g. BibTeX, RIS, TXT, XML)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Data export to another RMS	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Built-in search in databases	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Full text serch	yes, via OpenURL, CrossRef, Google Scholar, Unpaywall	yes, via CrossRef, OpenURL and other databases	no	yes, via OpenURL and CrossRef	yes, via CrossRef
Editing References					
Manual entry of references	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of supported document types	34	35	20	54	19 (BibTeX-libraries) 34 (BibLaTeX-libraries)
User generated fields	no	yes (9 fields)	no	yes (8 input options)	yes (unlimited)
Complete metadata from other sources	yes, manually	yes, manually; automatically by entering ID numbers ISBN, DOI, PMID...	yes, incomplete metadata manually or automatically via Research Catalog (contains metadata of other Mendeley users) or by entering PubMed-ID, ArXiv-ID, DOI,...	yes, manually	yes, manually
Linking datasets (e. g. new edition, reprint)	yes, manually	yes, manually	no	no	yes, manually
Attachements (e. g. ppt, xls, doc, jpg)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Duplicate checking	yes, matching fields ISBN, DOI, title, publication year, author (check of duplicates only within a library not across groups)	yes, matching ID numbers (ISBN, DOI, et al.) and fields author, editor, title, year, volume	yes, automatically and manually by merging of datasets	yes EndNote Desktop: checking 17 individually definable data fields (among others DOI, PMCID, author, year, title, publisher); EndNote Basic: checking author, year, title and reference type only	yes, with a focus on fields like author, editor, title und journal

	Zotero	Citavi	Mendeley	EndNote	JabRef
Searching and sorting					
Display references	preview and full record	preview and full record, preview in the form of selected citation styles	preview and full record, preview in the form of selected Output Styles	preview and full record, preview in the form of selected Output Styles	preview and full record
Sorting references	yes, incl. filter options	yes, incl. filter options	yes, incl. filter options	yes, incl. filter options	yes, incl. filter options
Searching within references and fulltexts» basic / advanced search; Boolean operators, truncation, ...	simple and advanced search; Boolean operators and truncation; searching pdf full texts and text fields	simple and advanced search; Boolean operators and truncation; searching pdf full texts (single full texts in local projects, all full texts in cloud projects)	simple search; Boolean operators and truncation; searching pdf full texts, notes and pdf annotations	simple and advanced search; Boolean operators and truncation; Search via Smart Groups and Combined Groups; Searching PDF-full texts, PDF-annotations and via rating of references	simple and advanced search; Boolean operators and truncation; Searching PDF-full texts
Saving searches	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Cite & write					
Common styles available (e. g. APA, MLA, Chicago, IEEE)	yes, ships with 16 popular styles, more than 10,000 styles are available	yes, more than 11.000 styles available, pre-set „Citavi Default Style“	yes, ships with 16 popular styles, more than 10,000 Styles available	yes, more than 7000 Output Styles available	indirectly via BibTeX and BibLaTeX , preset styles available on the website
Styles editable	yes here is how you do it	yes here is how you do it ; This option is currently not available with Citavi Web!	yes here is how you do it	yes here is how you do it	indirectly via BibTeX and BibLaTeX , no editor support
Importing references into word processing software	yes, via plugins for Word, LibreOffice und Google Docs	yes, via plugins for Word, Word online and various TeX editors	yes, via plugins for Word and LibreOffice	yes, via plugin "Cite While you Write" for Word and OpenOffice	yes, support of BibTeX and BibLaTeX, Open Office / LibreOffice; in Word via Bibtex4Word
Generating bibliographies	static: yes dynamic: yes	static: yes dynamic: yes	static: yes dynamic: yes	static: yes dynamic: yes	static: yes dynamic: yes



	Zotero	Citavi	Mendeley	EndNote	JabRef
Collaboration					
Sharing references with others (read only)	yes, via groups	yes, with all editions	yes, via private groups	yes, via Shared Groups with EndNote basic account	indirectly via BibTeX-files or Shared SQL
Editing references by multiple users (Account required)	yes, assigning dedicated access rights	yes, with all editions; assigning dedicated access rights	yes, varying access rights	yes, depends whether desktop and/or web version is used; varying access rights	indirectly via BibTeX-files or Shared SQL
Knowledge management					
Adding tags and subject terms	assigning individual tags and transfer from catalogues & databases	assigning individual tags and transfer from catalogues & databases	assigning individual tags and transfer from catalogues & databases	assigning individual tags and transfer from catalogues & databases	assigning individual tags
Evaluating fulltexts & creating notes	AddOn ZotFile extract highlighted text and annotations from the pdf, extracted text is saved as a Zotero note; adding also personal notes	full text excerpts as citations (direct /indirect), mark and save summaries and notes; apply categories /groups to knowledge items; categories (= chapter headings in Word) and knowledge items form base of publications	annotations and markings in pdfs, text excerpts in the form of notes; adding personal notes	annotations and markings in PDFs, text excerpts in the form of Notes; adding personal notes; 5-star-rating system to rate references	annotations and markings in PDFs; adding personal notes
Creating folders and categories	yes, folders and subfolders	yes, categories (hierarchic) and groups (heterarchic)	yes, folders and subfolders	yes, group sets and groups	yes, groups and subgroups
Automatic renaming of attachments	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Citation counter	yes, via add in „ Zotero Scholar Citations “ and „ Zotero CitationCounts “; see field “Extras”	yes, recorded in field „note“	no	yes, recorded in the field “Notes“	no
Task planning	no	yes, defined and individual tasks with priority and deadline	no	no	no

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Special Features					
	Zoterobib >> web-based creation of literature lists according to citation style of your choice without installation or registration	supports the process of scientific writing with detailed functions in the program modules „knowledge organizer“ and „task planning“	supports research data management and careers	author identification provided (z.B. ORCID, Publons ResearcherID) – displayed in the field „Notes“ bibliometrical analyses provided (generation of Citation Reports in Web of Science) Manuscript Matcher – integration of a tool for recommending journals to publish your manuscripts Statistics for single references in „Record Summary“ (Date Added, Last Updated, Fields Used, Groups) and for complete library in „Library Summary“	recommended literature with integration of Mr. DLiB; Via the tab "related articles" in JabRef, the current title is imported to Mr. DLiB and similar titles are searched for and displayed in the database; Function can be disabled
Support					
Help/ instruction	detailed help incl. video tutorials; Zotero Blog for newest information Zotero Forum	internal help option; detailed manual ; films, tutorials, advice ; support forum	„ Getting started with Mendeley Desktop “; detailed help guides ; blog	help option incl. in program; Product Training, videos, guidelines ; comparison of desktop and webversion	detailed manual ; JabRef Blog for recent information ; feedback forum
Video tutorials	„ Zotero Quick Start “	„ Citavi Training Videos “	„ Guide – Mendeley “	„ Endnote “	---
Detailed comparison of notable reference management software	Comparison of reference management software				



Complete rating – strengths and limits

zotero

- + free open source software
- + compatible with Windows, MacOS and Linux
- + easy handling and networking
- + user-friendly interface
- + synchronous work in a desktop and web application
- + optimization through additional apps and plugins
- + free external storage can be integrated via WebDav
- expand the internal storage (e.g. for teamwork) is chargeable

Suitable for:



In addition to the literature management, students and scientists of all disciplines will appreciate the uncomplicated handling, the collaboration possibilities and the "social network".

citavi

- + easy handling with user-friendly interface, many self-explaining functions
- + coherent explanations in user manual, context-sensitive help
- + exceptional support in the process of writing through unequalled knowledge management with categories and evaluation of full texts
- + only programme with task planning
- + different Tex editors support writing with typesetting programs
- no desktop application for Mac and Linux
- supports only MS Word, no other text processing programs
- currently reduced functionality of Citavi Web compared to Citavi or Windows /DB Server ([overview](#))

Suitable for:



Students and scientists in humanities, because of the easy integration of citations and text passages in your own publication via Citavi Word Add-In.

MENDELEY

- + free of charge
- + compatible with Windows, MacOS and Linux
- + synchronous working within desktop and web application
- + integration/synchronisation of citations from other literature management programmes and social bookmarking services (Zotero, CiteULike, 2collab)
- expanding the storage of the web application requires fee
- in version 1.19.8, the „Mendeley Research Catalog“ is only used for correcting or editing metadata
- only English interface available
- current product variety is confusing, some functions are missing in the Reference Manager (no searching pdf full texts, common attached file formats are not recognised), Mendeley Cite requires a Microsoft account

Suitable for:



Medics and scientists.
The focus is on exchange and sharing information. Students and academics alike will appreciate the complementary aspect of "social networking".

EndNote™

- + compatible with Windows and MacOS
- + easy import and organisation of full texts
- + creates bibliographies and illustration lists automatically, even chapter by chapter
- + platform-independent, synchronous working with free web-based EndNote-Basic
- fee required, partially also for product trainings
- significant differences between desktop and web version (number of saved references and Output Styles available, search options, ...)
- „Citation Report“ only available with Web of Science licence
- only English interface available

Suitable for:



With the integration of PubMed and other natural science databases, EndNote is especially interesting for medical and related fields.

JabRef

- + open source, free of charge
- + compatible with Windows, MacOS and Linux and others
- + user interface customisable and available in many languages
- + excellent LaTeX support incl. editors
- + functional support for prioritisation of literature references
- no comfortable functions for collaboration (via „Shared SQL Database“ comparatively complex)

Suitable for:



Students and scientists of all subjects, who use BibTeX and LaTeX. The selection of integrated searchable databases appeals in particular to the STEM sector.