

Use of Reference Management Tools in Research Work

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Abstract:

Referencing or citing is important in a research work. A researcher should cite the work accurately. Referencing helps other researchers or readers to trace out the original source as quickly and easily as possible in order to verify. Reference Management Tools can be used effectively to cite the document effectively. These tools may help in collecting, reading organising, searching and citing documents by using various citation styles. These tools also help to annotate and highlight the document. These tools also help to communicate, collaborate and share the research with others.

Keywords: Referencing Tools, Citation, Style Manual, Reference Management Tools, Plagiarism

Introduction:

Main Purpose of a research work is to create new piece of information which can be used for the welfare of the society. Research also aims to develop and test new theories. There are several ways of collecting and understanding information and finding answers to your questions - research is one way.¹ Writing a research paper, project or thesis is a tedious work. A concrete plan is mandatory to carry out the research work. Researcher has to follow many stages such as identifying research problems, defining objectives, constructing hypothesis, carrying out the literature review, collecting, organising and analysis the data and deriving conclusions. Literature review is an important stage in the process of research writing or writing a research article. Researcher use or refer various types of information sources such as books, articles, websites, book chapters etc. and carry out a literature review. It helps a researcher to validate, prove and strengthen his or her ideas. A Good library will be a great help to the researcher at this stage.²

Citation or Referencing:

According to Macmillan English Dictionary, citation is ‘a phrase or sentence taken from a piece of writing or speech’.³

Referencing or citing is important in a research work. A researcher should cite the work accurately. Referencing helps other researchers or readers to trace out the original source as quickly and easily as possible in order to verify. It is completely appropriate to use other works in research project, but it is not appropriate to claim those ideas as your own. To avoid “stealing” others’ ideas, cite the sources you use. Citing sources means listing the materials you used for your research.⁴ Thus Referencing helps to show where to find the information cited, to acknowledge the creator of information or idea, to find out more information for further reading, to verify the information cited by researcher. Citation also helps the researcher to distinguish his idea from the other researcher.

Types of Citation:

There are two types of citations. First one is In-text Citations and References or Bibliography.

1. In-text citations Writing a research paper, project or thesis is a tedious work. Researcher use or refer various types of information sources such as books, articles, websites, book chapters etc. and carry out a literature review. It helps a researcher to validate, prove and strengthen his or her ideas. Referencing or citing is important

- are used when you quote or paraphrase a source
- are short and occur in the body of your text, along with the information used from the source
- show which reference supports a particular statement or idea in your writing
- link to a corresponding full reference
- are formatted slightly differently, depending on whether you are paraphrasing or quoting.⁵

2. Reference List or Bibliography:

- It is a complete list of citations along with full bibliographic details used for the research work.
- References are listed alphabetically usually by author’s name at the end of the work.

Use of Style Manuals:

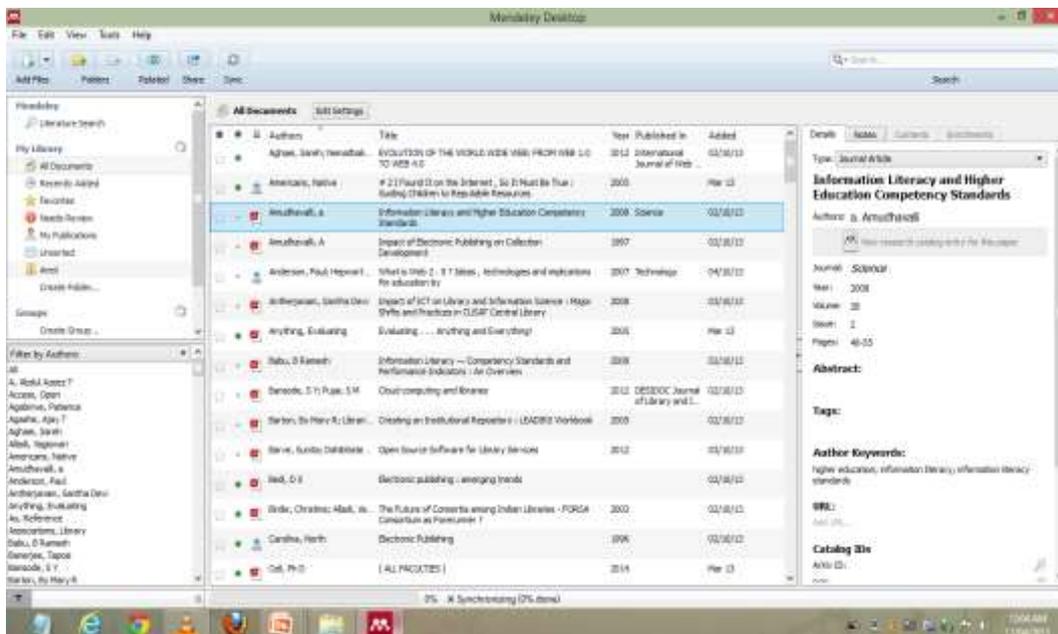
According to Wikipedia, A style guide or manual of style is a set of standards for the writing, formatting and design of documents. A style guide establishes standard style requirements to improve communication by ensuring consistency both within a document, and across multiple documents.⁶ Style manual helps researcher to cite a source accurately, properly and with a standard way. Style manuals are manuals with a set rules for referencing. There are different styles of referencing, e.g. American Psychological Association (APA) Style, American Chemical Society (ACS) Style, IEEE Style, Modern Language Association (MLA) Style, Chicago Style etc.

Reference Management Tools:

Researcher refers variety sources such as books, journal articles, edited books, manuscripts, documents from websites, reports etc. He or she has to handle multiple references from variety of sources and managing these references in an organised manner is tedious task. Apart from this, there are different styles of citing these resources. Reference Management software can help researcher to tackle this problem.

Reference management software also known as citation management software or personal bibliographic management is software that allows all manners of scientists, researchers and scholars to record and use citations when creating bibliographies. These programs will let you import citations from various databases and websites, build and organize bibliographies and format citations for papers. They can also save and organize PDFs, screenshots, graphs, images and other files for your research.⁷

There are many Reference Management software or tools are available. e.g. Ms-Word, Mendeley, Zotero, Endnote, Papers etc. Most of this software are available free of cost to use. Some of these are available in web-based as well as desktop version.



Mendeley- Desktop Version



Mendeley- Web Application

Uses of Reference Management Tool:

1. It helps researcher to read, collect, organise, and cite the document in an organised manner.
2. Documents can be added, organised, sorted and searched easily.
3. The papers or documents can be added from anywhere using web application.
4. The documents can be imported from search engines as well as databases.
5. Researcher can store references, notes, annotations and highlight pdfs. These notes or annotations can be shared with others.

6. These tools can be used to cite using numerous citation styles. These tools help to insert In-text citation as well as to create bibliography or reference list instantly. These tools allow researcher to switch from one citation style to another without disturbing the order.
7. Researcher can collaborate his research with others by creating groups. A kind of Academic Social Network can be formed.
8. Backup and synchronisation of data is possible. The web version allows to use the application across as well as multiple computers.
9. These tools can be used on different operating systems such as Windows, iOS, Mac, Linux etc.
10. These tools can be effectively used to collaborate research, search millions of papers, form public groups, discover new collaborators and to create online identity as a researcher.
11. Citations from different software can be imported.
12. Indexing and cataloguing of the document is possible with the help of these tools.
13. References menu in Microsoft Word allows manage different types of sources, choose different citation styles and insert In-text citations as well as create bibliography. Apart from this this menu can be used to create Table of Contents, Insert Footnote or Endnote, insert Table of Figures, insert Index, insert Table of Authorities while writing a research project or thesis.
14. The practice of citing the documents helps researcher to avoid plagiarism. If a researcher using a piece of writing from other works and using it without acknowledging the author is called as plagiarism. Even if the researcher is citing the work but if the citation is incomplete or incorrect is also called as act of plagiarism. So, the honesty of researcher in writing the academic work is necessary.

Plagiarism:

The goal of research is to produce knowledge, and the aim of producing knowledge is to improve human situation while doing research using unethical or inappropriate means leads to scientific corruption, which is against scientific knowledge production.⁸

Plagiarism has been defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica as “the act of taking the writings of another person and passing them off as one’s own.”⁹ It is an act of forgery, piracy, and fraud and is stated to be a serious crime of academia.¹⁰

Conclusion:

Thus, reference management tools can be handy while writing a research proposal or paper. These tools can be effectively used to cite the documents properly and accurately. Use of these tools may help researcher to avoid errors in citing the documents.

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