

Computerized Bibliography Using zotero with Firefox

A free plugin for the Firefox web browser, called zotero, can save you time, and is a possible alternative to EndNote for managing your references. You need to be aware that your stored references are held rather obscurely within your Firefox profile and we would be slightly dubious about the effect of very a very large database of references. http://www.zotero.org/support/using_portable_firefox_on_a_usb_drive explains how to back up your references and transport them between computers.

Install zotero

- Open Firefox and use it to go to <http://www.zotero.org>
- Click on the download link and follow the instructions to download and install Zotero.
- When you restart Firefox you will see that “zotero” appears on the bottom right of your browser window.

Search a suitable database

- Go to <http://scholar.google.co.uk/> (many other online databases are also suitable; for example Cambridge Scientific Abstracts) and search for a topic that interests you.
- Now, if you look just to the right of the address bar at the top of your browser you will see an icon shaped like a folder.
- Click on the folder icon and you will see a list of all the found references on the current page.
- Select the ones you want to save and click OK
- The references you selected will be saved into Zotero (quite slow).

View your references in zotero

- Click the zotero icon at the bottom right of the browser window
- The zotero pane will open and you will see a list of your saved references and Zotero’s menus.
- Click on any reference to see it displayed to the right of the list of references. You can use the various tabs to add your own notes and tags, or link the reference to other files.

Download the plugin for MS word

- Go to http://www.zotero.org/support/microsoft_word_integration and select either the Mac or Windows version for download. Follow the instructions there to install the plugin and add formatted citations to your word document.
- The number of available formats is fairly limited in comparison with EndNote, but may well be sufficient for your needs if your department’s main requirement is that you should be consistent in the way you cite your references. Do take care to check that your chosen method is acceptable by printing some sample pages *before* you have invested a large amount of effort.

Displaying your reference collection online

If you want to share your references online (for example if your department needs to show a list of papers published by its staff during the past year) you can collect the references in a zotero folder and publish the folder over the Web using Zotz (another Firefox add-on).

- Go to <http://simile.mit.edu/wiki/Zotz> using Firefox as your browser, and download Zotz. Firefox will probably ask you to confirm that this is software that you trust, so click Allow at the prompt.
- When you have installed Zotz, restart Firefox and click the zotero icon to open the zotero pane.
- Click the small folder icon (top left) to create a new collection folder, and give it a suitable name. Drag some of your saved references into the new folder (this doesn’t delete them from the main folder). Highlight the new folder so that its contents are displayed in the middle part of the pane.
- Click the icon that looks like a small gear wheel (mid-top of the zotero pane).

- Select “Export to Citeline...” (3rd option).
- Your collection of references will appear in the top pane (you may need to close the zotero pane to see it properly). It has been assigned a reference URL which can be used to view it online from any other machine connected to the Internet. You can also download the collection in HTML format which can be renamed and published via your own web server, if you have one.

If you have any further questions, we can be contacted by emailing LLCC@ucs.cam.ac.uk