

Reference Management Software Comparison - 10th Update (February 2025)



Reference Management Software Comparison

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Updated by Lea Neubauer (University Library of the Technical University of Munich; Citavi and Citavi Web), Sebastian Podschull (University Library of the Technical University of Berlin; JabRef and Papers), Nadine Wachnau-Lippe (Ruhr-University Bochum; Mendeley), Jana Behrendt (Paperpile), and Katja Faßbender (University Library of the Technical University of Munich, EndNote, Zotero, organization and final editing) February 2025.

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and mediaTUM at: <https://mediatum.ub.tum.de/1320978>

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"Literaturverwaltung für LaTeX-Neulinge" (Reference Management for LaTeX Newbies): <http://mediatum.ub.tum.de/1315979>

All information for this software comparison was compiled after comprehensive software testing. However, due to the complexity and continuing development of applications, we can not assume any guarantee of the accuracy of the information. If you detect any errors or omissions, please contact us at workshop@ub.tum.de

Key questions for selecting a reference management software

Answers to many of the following questions can be found in this software comparison document. However, some questions will be answered only by testing the program

Ease of Use / Usability

- > Do I like the interface? Is it intuitive to me?
- > Do I easily find the functions I'm looking for?

Operating system

- > Which software can I use with my operating system (Linux, Mac, Windows)?
- > Which software offers a web-based version?
- > Which software offers a mobile version / app?

Help

- > Are there any training courses for beginners?
- > Are there any materials for self training (e.g. videos, manuals)?
- > Is there any support if I need help (library, company, IT hotline, forums, etc.)?

Compatibility

- > What external programs should my reference management software support (e.g. word processor)?

Cost

- > Does the software cost anything?
- > Is there a campus licence for my institution?
- > Are there potentially additional costs (e.g. after leaving institution, need for more storage space)?

What features should my reference management software offer?

- > Catalogue and database search from within the program?
- > Indexing and structuring of content?
- > Searching for full texts?
- > PDF editing?
- > Creating reference lists?
- > Online access to my references?
- > Sharing and / or jointly editing references?
- > Task planning?
- > LaTeX support?

Where do I usually work?

- > Do I always use the same computer or do I switch devices?
- > Do I have permission to install software on the computer I use?
- > What reference management software do my colleagues / collaborators use?

General

	Provider / URL	Tested version	License model	Price estimate	Language
			<i>Open Source, Freeware or commercial? Individual or collective licenses?</i>		
Citavi	Lumivero, https://www.citavi.com	7.0.3.0 Citavi for Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Commercial > 30-day free trial version > Citavi for Windows (can also be combined with Citavi Web) > Citavi for DBServer (large groups and companies) > Single licenses (Academic, Commercial + NFP, Students), multiple licenses (from 9 licenses), campus licenses as a one-time purchase or subscription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Individual licenses as Citavi Desktop and Web Bundle > Business customers from €425.00 plus VAT > Public authorities from €340.00 plus VAT > University members & researchers from €269 plus VAT > For students / private users from €73 plus VAT for 1 year > Various price models in a bundle with Citavi Web (subscription) > Additional storage space can be purchased 	German, English, French, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish
Citavi Web	Lumivero, https://www.citavi.com	6.17.0.174 Citavi Web	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Commercial > Free 30-day trial version > Single licenses (Academic, Commercial + NFP, Students), multiple licenses (starting from 9 licenses), campus licenses as a subscription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Annual subscription for Citavi Web only > Academic and Government: €145 plus VAT > Commercial: €254.49 plus VAT > Additional storage space can be purchased 	German, English, French, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish
EndNote	Clarivate Analytics, http://www.endnote.com	21.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Commercial (distributed by Clarivate Analytics) > Full license, student license, volume license, license upgrades from previous versions > Free EndNote online version "EndNote Basic" with limited functionality and storage volume (2 GB storage space, 50,000 data records, 21 selectable citation styles) > Endnote Web (included in the desktop license for three years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Single-user license from \$275, incl. VAT > Student license from \$150, incl. VAT > Multiple user license (starting from 5 users) price on request > License upgrade (single user) from \$125, incl. VAT > EndNote Online: Basic (free of charge) > EndNote Web: included in desktop license 	English (EndNote Online also offers German, traditional and simplified Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish)
JabRef	JabRef-Open-Source-Community https://www.jabref.org	5.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Free, open source software > MIT license, used libraries include Apache, LGPL, CC, ... 	Free	German, English, Russian, Italian, French, Spanish and 20 other languages
Mendeley Reference Manager	Mendeley Ltd. (part of Elsevier) http://www.mendeley.com	2.119.0 (Desktop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Commercial > Free model with up to 2 GB storage space > Paid models for single users, groups, and institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Free of charge, storage space extensions from \$5 per month > Max. 5 private groups with max. 25 members each and 100 MB shared web storage 	English
Paperpile	Paperpile LLC https://paperpile.com/	1.5.720 (Web), 1.3.7 (iOS App)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Commercial > In addition to single licenses, group licenses and campus licenses are available > Free 30-day trial version 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Academic license: \$2.99 per month > Business license: \$9.99 per month 	Englisch
Papers	Readcube https://www.papersapp.com	4.16.0 (Web) 4.37.2394 (Desktop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Commercial > Fee-based licenses: single licenses and volume licenses (e.g. campus licenses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Single license (annual payment) > Student license \$3 per month > Academic license \$5 per month > Corporate license \$10 per month > Volume, multi-year and company/campus licenses available on request 	English
Zotero	Corporation for Digital Scholarship https://www.zotero.org/	6.0.36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Free, open-source software > Up to 300 MB file storage included in the web version > Possible to buy more file storage space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 2 GB: \$20 annually > 6 GB: \$60 annually > Unlimited storage: \$120 annually 	43 languages available in the desktop version; complete list at: https://www.transifex.com/zotero/zotero/

Technological aspects

	Installation	Platform / operating system	Use via mobile devices	Character encoding	Maximum number of references	Maximum web storage
	<i>local / web-based</i>			<i>Unicode / special characters</i>		
Citavi	Local	+ > Windows > Alternatively, use programs such as „Parallels“ or „VMWare“ (free of charge) to emulate a Windows operating system	- No	Unicode support	+ Max. 50,000 titles per project (depending on the structure of the data)	> Storage space in the cloud 5 GB, additional storage can be purchased > Individual PDF files max. 100 MB, other files max. 50 MB
Citavi Web	Web-based	+ Platform-independent	+ > Limited functionality for tablets > No optimization for tablet stylus pens	Unicode support	Max. 50,000 titles per project	> Storage space in the cloud 5 GB, additional storage can be purchased > Individual PDF files max. 100 MB, other files max. 50 MB
EndNote	> Local > Web-based	+ > Desktop: Windows, Mac > EndNote 21: Windows 10 / MacOS 10.14 > EndNote Online and EndNote Web: platform-independent	+ > EndNote available oriPad, iPhone > EndNote Web Mobile (mobile view for EndNote Web)	Unicode support	+ > Desktop version: unlimited > EndNote Online: 50,000 data sets > EndNote Web: unlimited	> Desktop: unlimited > Online: 2 GB > Web: unlimited
JabRef	Local	+ > Windows, Mac, Linux > Available as Portable version > requires Java (will be automatically installed in Windows if still needed)	+ Yes, limited for tablets using Windows or Linux	Unicode support	+ Unlimited	No web version available
Mendeley Reference Manager	> Local > Web-based	+ > Desktop: Windows, Mac, Linux > Web: platform-independent	- No	Unicode support	+ Unlimited	> 2 GB free of charge > Upgrades to 5 GB, 10 GB or unlimited storage are subject to a charge
Paperpile	> Web-based > Google Chrome Plugin needed	+ Windows, OS X, Linux, iPad, iPhone or Android and Chrome OS	+ iPad, iPhone and Android App	Unicode support	+ Unlimited	Storage space depends on your own Google Drive storage space (15 GB free for private users)
Papers	> Local > Web-based	+ > Desktop: Windows, Mac > Web: platform-independent	+ > iOS and Android app available	Unicode support	+ Unlimited	> Single license: No storage limit, but max. 5 "shared libraries" with max. 30 users each > Enterprise license: no limitations
Zotero	> Local + browser add-in (Chrome, Edge, Firefox, Safari) > Web-based	+ > Desktop: Windows, Mac, Linux > Web: platform-independent	+ > Mobile version of online library > Official iOS version > Beta version of official Android app > Various apps from third-party providers https://www.zotero.org/support/mobile	Unicode support	+ Unlimited	> 300 MB for attachments with free version > Paid upgrades for more storage space > External web storage can be integrated via WebDAV

Import I

	Research in databases		Importing files	
	<i>Is it possible to search from within the software?</i>	<i>What interfaces are available for this?</i>	<i>Is it possible to import files via an import filter?</i>	<i>Which import filters are available? (bibliographic databases and other reference management programs)</i>
Citavi	+ Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 4,500 accesses for databases or catalogs > New accesses can be requested from Citavi > AI assistant for researching in Semantic Scholar 	+ Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Various reference management programs (EndNote, Mendeley Reference Manager, RefWorks, Word's references tool, Zotero) > RIS, BibTeX, EndNote Tagged, etc. > Approx. 4,500 database-specific filters > Configurable import for self-created tables, text files, special formats or databases > New filters can be requested
Citavi Web	+ Yes, but unreliable performance	Only in freely available databases	+ Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Various reference management programs: EndNote, Mendeley, RefWorks, Zotero > RIS, BibTeX, EndNote Tagged, etc.
EndNote	+ Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 3,620 predefined accesses, 382 of which are included in the are included in the installation package > Further accesses can be requested or ordered via the EndNote website http://endnote.com/downloads/connections 	+ Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > RIS, Delimited tab > Over 620 database-specific filters (databases searchable under: http://endnote.com/downloads/filters)
JabRef	+ Yes	Interfaces to various databases and search engines (including Springer, IEEEExplore, Medline / PubMed, arXiv, CiteSeerX, Crossref)	+ Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > BibTeX, RIS, Tab Delimited, EndNote, etc. > Creation of own import filters possible
Mendeley Reference Manager	+ Yes, in a limited way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Article search in the Mendeley Web Catalog; articles from different publishers can be searched > Sources are not transparent 	+ Yes	BibTeX (.bib), RIS (.ris), EndNote XML (.xml)
Paperpile	+ Yes, in a limited way	Integrated search in Google Scholar, PubMed and arXiv	+ Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > RIS, EndNote, BibTeX, NBIB, RefWorks > Direct import from Mendeley, Zotero, Papers, EndNote and Citavi
Papers	+ Yes	Focus on journal articles, predominantly CrossRef	+ Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > BibTeX (.bib), RIS (.ris), (.xml) EndNote XML > Direct import from Zotero and Mendeley possible
Zotero	+ Yes, in a limited way	Search by identifier only (ISBN, DOI, arXiv-ID, ADS Bibcodes or PubMed-ID)	+ Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 20 file formats, including: RIS, BibTeX, MODS, RDF, Refer / BibX etc. > Complete list under: https://www.zotero.org/support/kb/importing_standardized_formats

Import II

	Import from databases		Import from websites	Further import options	Full-text search
	Direct import into the software possible?	From which databases?			Option to search for full-texts?
Citavi	+ Yes	> Databases that offer exchange formats (e.g. RIS, BibTeX, EndNote) > COinS format or HighWire Press tags	+ > Via Citavi Picker (for Firefox, Chrome, Microsoft Edge) Transferring metadata or content from a website > Transfer of bibliographic data of an ISBN, DOI, PubMed, PMC, arXiv ID with the help of the picker > Transfer of marked text/image as (image) citation, abstract, table of contents or keyword > Screenshot of a web page can be saved as a PDF > Transfer of / from PDFs using the Citavi Picker from opened PDF	+ > Import of bibliographic data by entering the ISBN, DOI or PubMed-, PMC-, arXiv-ID > Import from bibliographies > PDF documents via drag-and-drop > Import entire folders and their subfolders > Import of / from PDFs using Citavi Picker from opened PDF	+ Yes (including licensed full texts after entering the OpenURL + EZproxy / HAN)
Citavi Web	+ Yes	Databases that offer exchange formats (e.g. RIS, BibTeX, EndNote)	+ > Via Citavi Picker (for Firefox, Chrome, Microsoft Edge) Transferring metadata or content from a website > Transfer of bibliographic data of an ISBN, DOI, PubMed-, PMC-, arXiv-ID with the help of the picker > Transfer of marked text / image as (image) citation, abstract, table of contents or keyword	+ > Import of bibliographic data by entering the ISBN, DOI or PubMed-, PMC-, arXiv-ID > Drag and drop PDF documents > Transfer of / from PDFs via Citavi Picker from an opened PDF	- No
EndNote	+ Yes	Databases that offer exchange formats (e.g. RIS, BibTeX, EndNote)	- Google Chrome plug-in EndNote Click available for finding full-texts online	+ > Import of bibliographic data via online search function or by DOI or ISBN > Files via drag-and-drop > Folders with subfolders (folders are adopted as groups) are taken over) > Automatic import of documents from the "Auto import folder" in EndNote > Possibility of automatic "Find Full Text" search in EndNote "Auto Import Folder"	+ Yes, also via OpenURL + Ezproxy
JabRef	+ Yes	Databases that offer exchange formats (e.g. RIS, BibTeX)	+ Browser plugin (Chrome, Edge, Firefox, Vivaldi)	+ > Import of bibliographic data by entering DOI, ISBN, PubMed ID, and other identifiers > Paste DOI / ISBN / BibTeX entry from clipboard into main window clipboard into the main window automatically triggers import > Import of plain text > Import of PDF metadata (also via drag-and-drop)	+ Yes
Mendeley Reference Manager	+ Yes	> Databases that offer exchange formats (e.g. RIS, BibTeX) > COinS format	+ Via web importer (bookmarklet): Metadata, abstracts and full texts (PDF)	+ > Drag and drop files (PDF) and folders > Import of bibliographic data by entering ISBN, DOI, PubMed-ID, arXiv-ID and other identifiers > Automatic import of documents from the "Watch folder"	+ Yes, by accessing the Mendeley Web Catalog, some full texts are linked there, especially for well-known journals; authentication with Shibboleth may be necessary
Paperpile	+ Yes	Databases that offer exchange formats (e.g. RIS, BibTeX)	+ Browser Plugin available	+ > Import via browser plugin (Google Scholar, PubMed, arXiv) > PDF import > Import of supplementary files	+ Yes, proxy settings can be stored
Papers	+ Yes	Databases that offer exchange formats (e.g. RIS, BibTeX, XML)	+ Via Web Importer (browser plugins for Chrome, Firefox, Edge)	+ > Automatic import via university network > Files via drag and drop > "Watch folder", from which new documents are automatically imported automatically > Import of bibliographic data by entering PubMed-ID, arXiv ID or DOI	+ Yes, if the entry already exists in the program
Zotero	+ Yes	> Direct transfer via browser plugin > Databases, the exchange formats formats (e.g. RIS, BibTeX)	+ > Direct transfer via browser plug-in > Screenshot of a web page can be saved as PDF > If possible, the full text is also imported immediately	+ > Drag and drop files > Import bibliographic data by entering the ISBN, DOI, ADS bibcodes, arXiv ID or PubMed ID	+ > "Find available PDF" function > Google Scholar, Crossref and OpenURL and others

Data format

	Document types			Fields		
	<i>How many document types (monograph, paper, etc.) are supported?</i>		<i>Can document types be defined by the user?</i>	<i>How many fields are defined in a data entry?</i>		<i>Can fields be defined by the user?</i>
Citavi	35 document types	-	No	Depending on document type 16-50 fields	+	9 document type-specific fields freely definable (free text)
Citavi Web	36 document types	-	No	Depending on document type 16-50 fields	+	9 document type-specific fields freely definable (free text)
EndNote	57 document types	+	Yes (adaptation of the existing document types and redefinition of 3 "unused" document types)	Depending on document type 28-51 fields (incl. Custom Fields)	+	8 "Custom Fields" freely definable
JabRef	BibTeX mode: 19 document types BibLaTeX mode: 39 document types	+	Yes (customization of all existing and definition of any number of new document types including definition of mandatory fields)	Up to 44 fields depending on document type	+	Any number of fields can be freely defined for each document type
Mendeley Reference Manager	20 document types	-	No	Up to 66 fields depending on document type	-	No
Paperpile	36 document types plus 96 sub types	-	No, but large number of predefined document types	Depending on the document type about 30 - 70 fields	-	No
Papers	36 document types	-	No	About 25 fields depending on document type	-	No
Zotero	36 document types	-	No	About 35 fields depending on document type	-	No, but there is an additional field that can be filled with any content

Editing Data I

	Indexes		Supplementing metadata	Links
	<i>Are term lists / indexes automatically generated from the data entered (authors, journals, keywords)?</i>	<i>Automatic completion from the term lists during data entry?</i>	<i>Can entered data be supplemented by the program from other sources?</i>	<i>Can data records be linked to each other (e.g. new editions, translations)?</i>
Citavi	+ Yes (keywords, categories, persons and institutions, journals and newspapers, publishers, libraries, series, location)	+ Yes	+ > When entering the ISBN, DOI or PubMed-, PMC-, arXiv ID: addition of the bibliographic data and the cover > Automatic retrieval of metadata from PDF files documents via DOI	+ > The anthology and the articles it contains are linked with each other > Links between titles possible within a project
Citavi Web	+ Yes (keywords, categories, persons and institutions, journals and newspapers, publishers, libraries, series, location)	+ Yes	- No	+ Anthologies and the containing articles are linked
EndNote	+ Yes (authors, keywords, journal titles); term lists can also be defined by the user; predefined term lists for journals can be imported	+ Yes	+ > Retrieve metadata via "Find Reference Updates" > Automatic retrieval of metadata from PDF files documents via DOI	- No
JabRef	+ Yes (self-definable for which fields)	+ Yes	+ > When entering DOI, ISBN, or other identifiers: addition of the bibliographic data > Retrieval of metadata from PDF documents	+ Yes, via the "Crossref" field using the BibTeX key of the parent work
Mendeley Reference Manager	+ Yes (authors, tags)	+ Yes	+ > Automatic retrieval of metadata from PDF documents > Addition of bibliographic information when entering DOI, PubMed, or arXiv ID	- No
Paperpile	+ Yes, but for labels only	- No	+ Yes, retrieving metadata via "Auto-update"	- Workaround possible: add a link to the other data record as a note or create a link to another data record via a comment in a PDF file of a data record using Markdown
Papers	+ Yes, but only for self-created "smart lists"	+ Yes	+ Yes	- No
Zotero	+ Yes (Keywords / tags and publication date / timeline as direct lists; authors, place of publication, publisher, journal title)	+ Yes	+ Retrieve metadata for PDF documents (manually via right-click)	+ Yes, via the "related" function (no hierarchical links)

Editing data II

	Integration of documents	Editing documents (PDFs)	Checking for duplicate items	Global changes	Folders / Groups
	Can documents or files be added to the database?				Can folders or groups be added or assigned?
Citavi	+ Yes	+ > Inserting highlights and comments > Adding text passages as a citation or task in the knowledge area in Citavi > Adding images as image citations > Adding highlighted text from other PDF programs as knowledge elements > AI summaries	+ Yes	+ Yes	+ Yes > Categories (several hierarchy levels possible) > Groups (one hierarchy level) > Multiple assignment possible for categories and groups
Citavi Web	+ Yes	+ > Inserting highlights and comments > Adding text passages as quotations in the knowledge area in Citavi	- No	+ Yes	+ Yes > Categories (several hierarchy levels possible) > Groups (one hierarchy level) > Multiple assignment possible for categories and groups
EndNote	+ Yes	+ Inserting highlights, comments, underlining and strikeouts in the text	+ Yes (also configurable)	+ Yes	+ Yes > 3 group types (Groups, Smart Groups, From Groups) > Groups: manual assignment > Smart Groups: automatic assignment with saved search > From Groups: shows defined intersection > Multiple assignments possible
JabRef	+ Yes	+ > Inserting the bibliographic data into the PDF metadata ("Document properties") > Batch renaming of the files based on metadata metadata according to a freely selectable scheme > No content editing (Highlights, comments etc.)	+ Yes	+ Yes	+ Yes > Several hierarchy levels > Multiple assignments possible > Automatic assignments possible
Mendeley Reference Manager	+ Yes	+ > Inserting notes and markers in the text > Transferring text passages to the notes area of the reference or in a superordinate notebook	+ Yes, duplicate items with an identical DOI are saved in a separate folder	+ Yes	+ Yes > Folder (multiple hierarchy levels) > Multiple assignments possible
Paperpile	+ Yes	+ > Extensive content editing, also on mobile devices mobile devices (multicolored highlights, comments, arrows, circles, boxes, text) > printout as a summary	+ Yes	- No	+ Yes > Folders with multiple hierarchy levels > Multiple assignments possible
Papers	+ Yes	+ Annotation is possible, e.g. highlighting, comments	+ Yes, duplicate items are not imported	- No	+ Yes > Called lists > "Smart Lists" can also be created according to predefined criteria; updated automatically
Zotero	+ Yes	+ > Highlighting and underlining text, adding text and notes, drawing, and cutting out images possible > Annotations with page numbers are displayed in a sidebar and can be highlighted in color and tagged	+ Yes, duplicate items can be merged	- For tags only	+ Yes > Folder; several hierarchy levels > Multiple assignments possible > automatic assignments possible

Display / Search

	Display <i>What options are there to display entries? (Short / Full / freely definable)</i>	Sorting <i>What sorting options are available?</i>	Search <i>Simple and advanced search with Boolean Operators?</i>			<i>Possible to save searches?</i>	<i>Search in full-texts possible? Per document or across documents?</i>
Citavi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Index card view (tab customizable) > List view (formatted) > Table view (display of the fields is configurable) > View of a source reference in selected citation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Table view: by clicking on field headings > Sorting is customizable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Simple search > Advanced search (both with Boolean operators) > Search in embedded PDFs > Search filter (document type, keyword, person, etc.) 	+	Yes	+	Yes, also across documents
Citavi Web	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Index card view (tab customizable) > List view (formatted) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Sorting customizable by title, year, last added, last modified, rating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Simple search > Search in embedded PDFs 	-	No	+	Yes, also across documents
EndNote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > List view (display of the fields is configurable) > Full view > View of a source reference in selected citation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > By clicking on the field headings (Author, title, year, document type, etc.) > Via "Sort Library", sorting according to several criteria possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Simple search > Fielded search with Boolean operators > Search in embedded PDFs and their comments 	+	Yes	+	Yes, also across documents
JabRef	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > List view (fields configurable) > Full view with tabs > BibTeX source text view > Preview for desired citation styles > Display of cited LaTeX documents for a BibTeX key (project-specific) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > by clicking on field headings > sorting according to several criteria possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Simple search > Advanced search (Boolean operators and regular expressions possible) > Global search across all open databases > Full-text search across all linked PDFs 	+	Yes (as a dynamic group and as a systematic literature review)	+	Yes, also across documents
Mendeley Reference Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > List view > Short display > Full display 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 6 fields can be sorted ascending or descending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Simple search > Advanced search by author and tags > Boolean operators possible 	-	No	-	Search in individual PDFs
Paperpile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Short display > Full display 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > By date, year, title, journal, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Only simple search in bibliographic data available 	-	No	-	Search in individual PDFs, across documents only via Google Drive
Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > List view > Table view > Full view of an entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 18 fields can be sorted ascending or descending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Simple search > Advanced search by author, title, publication, year, notes > Boolean operators can be used 	+	Yes	+	Yes, also across documents
Zotero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > List view (customizable) > View by tags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > By clicking on the column heading; secondary sorting possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Simple search > Advanced search (any / all / phrase search) > Search for tags > Search in embedded PDFs, notes and annotations 	+	Yes	+	Yes, also across documents

Collaboration

	Sharing References	Collaborative Editing	Social software functionalities
	<i>Is it possible to share (read-only) data records with external users?</i>	<i>Is it possible for several users to use and edit data records?</i>	
Citavi	+ Yes, title by e-mail (including PDFs); add-on "Send title by e-mail" required	+ > Yes, when saving in the cloud with different rights assignment for readers (read), authors (edit) and project manager (manage project) available (Note: no rights assignment for Citavi for Windows) > For larger groups via Citavi for DBServer; Data storage on Microsoft SQL server, local hard disk or network drive	+ Chat in team projects
Citavi Web	+ Yes, title by e-mail (including PDFs); add-on "Send title by e-mail" required	+ > Yes, when saving in the cloud = team use with different rights assignment for readers (read), authors (edit) and project manager (manage project) available (Attention: no rights assignment for Citavi for Windows) > For larger groups via Citavi for DBServer; Data storage on Microsoft SQL server, local hard disk or network drive	+ Chat in team projects
EndNote	+ Yes, individual references by e-mail (including PDF)	+ > Yes, individual folders (groups) or the entire library can be shared > Share folder: several users have read / write rights (only references can be shared, not full texts) > Share library: users have read / write access to the entire library incl. full texts (only via desktop version)	- No
JabRef	+ Yes, by e-mail or in Kindle format	+ > Joint processing of a database via Integration of an external SQL database possible (Postgres, MySQL, Oracle) > Warnings and merge function if the BibTeX file is changed by an external program	- No
Mendeley Reference Manager	- No, sharing only in private groups	+ > Yes, via private groups > PDFs can also be viewed by all members and can also be commented on, etc.	+ Publication of a personal profile with CV and professional preferences, including information on job vacancies
Paperpile	+ Yes, by link or e-mail (in both cases including PDF)	+ Yes, via "shared folders" other people can get read-only access or editing rights	- No
Papers	+ Yes, via e-mail, Facebook, X, LinkedIn	+ Yes, but only in the enterprise version (campus or company license)	- No
Zotero	+ Yes, via the group feature (you can choose between read-only sharing for all logged-in Zotero users or sharing only for added group members)	+ > Collaboration in public or private groups > Different rights assignment possible	+ > Exchange via interest groups > Create your own researcher profile

Citing

	Citation styles		Create bibliographies (static)		Link with word processing / typesetting program	Create bibliographies (dynamic)
	Which citation styles are available? Are important styles such as MLA, APA, Harvard available?	Can citation styles be defined or customized?	Is it possible to export individual (formatted) bibliographic details?	Can bibliographies be created and exported as a text file?	Can bibliographic information be inserted into a word processor by the software?	Is the bibliography automatically updated when further citations are added?
Citavi	+ > Over 11,500 predefined citation styles > New citation styles can be requested from the manufacturer: http://www.citavi.com/stylerequest	+ Yes	+ Yes	+ Yes	+ > Yes > Word-Add-In > LaTeX editors (LEd, Lyx, Texmaker, TeXnicCenter, TeXstudio, TeXworks, WinEdt, WinShell)	+ > With Word-Add-In: Yes, permanent automatic update > For LaTeX: Updating the bibliography after next BibTeX / LaTeX run
Citavi Web	+ > Over 11,500 predefined citation styles > New citation styles can be requested from the manufacturer: http://www.citavi.com/stylerequest	- No	+ Yes	+ Yes	+ > Yes > Citavi Assistant in Word > Support for TeX editors	+ Yes, constant automatic updating
EndNote	+ Over 7,000 predefined citation styles, 500 included in the installation package, more available via the EndNote website http://endnote.com/downloads/styles	+ Yes	+ Yes	+ Yes	+ Yes, Add-In („Cite While You Write“) available for Microsoft Word, Office 365 Desktop, Google Docs, Wolfram Mathematica 8, Apple Pages, OpenOffice (Windows), LibreOffice (Windows)	+ Yes, constant automatic updating
JabRef	+ Formatting and citation styles with BibTeX / BibLaTeX	+ Only with BibTeX / BibLaTeX	+ Only with BibTeX / BibLaTeX	+ Only with BibTeX / BibLaTeX	+ > Yes, support for several LaTeX editors > Supports LibreOffice > Workaround for using Microsoft Word	+ > Update of the literature list after the next run of LaTeX and BibTeX > Constant updating in LibreOffice
Mendeley Reference Manager	+ > 10 citation styles for initial installation > Expandable by over 10,000 additional styles (incl. user-modified styles) see: https://citationstyles.org	+ Yes, using Citation Style Editor: https://editor.citationstyles.org/about/	+ Yes, via clipboard	+ Yes, in BibTeX format	+ Yes, Add-In Mendeley Cite available for Microsoft Word	+ Yes, constant automatic updating
Paperpile	+ Over 10,000 citation styles (CSL styles)	+ Yes, using Citation Style Editor: https://editor.citationstyles.org/about/	+ Yes, via clipboard	+ Yes	+ > Yes, in Google Docs, BibTeX, and Overleaf > Beta version for an add-In for Microsoft Word	+ Yes, via plugin for Google Docs and Microsoft Word
Papers	+ Word add-in with online connection, allowing direct use of over 8,000 CSL styles and 5,400 additional styles from scientific journals	+ > Yes, upload using Word-Add-In > CSL-Layout	+ > Yes, single or multiple > formatted in clipboard	+ Yes, in BibTeX or RIS format	+ > Yes > Add-In available for Word and Google Docs > LaTeX support	- Only by clicking on "Refresh References"
Zotero	+ > 15 citation styles for initial installation > Expandable by over 9,000 additional styles (incl. user-modified styles), see: http://www.zotero.org/styles	+ Yes, using Citation Style Editor: https://editor.citationstyles.org/about/	+ Yes	+ Yes	+ Yes, Add-ins are available for Microsoft Word and OpenOffice / LibreOffice / NeoOffice and Google Docs	+ Yes, constant automatic updating

Miscellaneous

	Export	Further functions	Additional Information	What's new?
	Is it possible to export data in a specific data format?			
Citavi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Yes > BibTeX, BibLaTeX, EndNote, RIS, (BibTeX- / BibLaTeX export configurable) > Output in table formats (.xls, .odt) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Adding quotations (link to a place in the text) and your own thoughts > Create an outline in Word from Citavi categories > Access to categories, literature sources and citations via Word Add-In > Task planning (organization of tasks, deadlines, etc.) > Automatic generation of a BibTeX key > Citation style finder (allows you to search for a style even after formatting individual elements in the citation via the "Advanced search") > Automatic backup of Citavi files when closing the project > Import / export categories as mind maps (MindManager, FreeMind, ConceptDraw) > RSS reader > Citavi script: Word document with collection of all citations by category > Working in a team in the cloud (tasks can be delegated, rights assignments possible, communication via chat) > Various functions can be added via add-ons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Since 2022, Swiss Academic Software GmbH has been part of Lumivero > Data from the Citavi accounts of the cloud projects remain in Europe (see press release: www.citavi.com/de/news/articles/citavi-ist-jetzt-teil-von-qsr-international) 	AI assistant for summarizing PDFs and searching for literature in Semantic Scholar
Citavi Web	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Yes > 22 formats available, e.g. Nvivo, BibTeX, EndNote Tagged Import Format, RIS > Output in Word, PDF, and Open Document Text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Adding quotations (link to a place in the text) and your own thoughts > Create an outline in Word from Citavi categories > Access to categories, literature sources and citations via Citavi Assistant > Task planning (organization of tasks, deadlines, etc.) > Automatic generation of a BibTeX key > Citation style finder (allows you to search for a style even after formatting individual elements in the citation via the advanced search) > Automatic saving in the Citavi Cloud > Working in a team in the cloud (tasks can be delegated, rights can be assigned, communication via chat) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Since 2022, Swiss Academic Software GmbH has been part of Lumivero > Data from the Citavi accounts of the cloud projects remain in Europe (see press release: www.citavi.com/de/news/articles/citavi-ist-jetzt-teil-von-qsr-international) > Regular performance issues 	Citavi Web is new in this comparison.
EndNote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Yes > BibTeX, RIS, Tab Delimited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > "Manuscript Wizard" offers Word templates for publication in various journals (https://endnote.com/downloads/templates) > Automatic renaming of PDFs at import > Automatic search for PDF full text of new references in the Auto Import Folder possible > "Manuscript Matcher" in EndNote Web: suggesting journals for publication > Retraction Alert: retracted articles are checked for retractions by DOI / PubMed ID in "Retraction Watch database" and displayed in a "Retractions" folder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Support through Clarivate Analytics > Distribution in Germany by Clarivates Analytics, Alfasoft and Bilaney Consultants > BibTeX keys must be entered manually for each record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tags > PDF Tab > Share EndNote library with up to 1,000 other users > EndNote Web > Restore a broken EndNote library > Restore previous version of a reference
JabRef	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Yes > BibTeX, RIS, EndNote, other HTML options, CSV, ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Auto generation of BibTeX key > Export filter editor > 5-level ranking, 3-level prioritisation and relevance marking as well as quality marking > Check for duplicates and merging of entries > Integrity check > Batch processing of multiple datasets > Search for citations in LaTeX projects > Creation of a sub-library based on the sources used in the LaTeX project (aux parser) 	Selection of the databases or search engines focused on STEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Import of BibDesk files possible > Recognition of IEEE references in PDF files > Finding "Citing / Cited by" references for a title > Transfer of titles to a Kindle account (via e-mail)
Mendeley Reference Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Yes > BibTeX (.bib), RIS (.ris), EndNote XML - EndNote 8, X1 to X3 (.xml), Microsoft Word (.xml) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Complete synchronization of Mendeley Reference Manager and Mendeley Web > Individual entries can be annotated > a notebook can be used to collect notes > Mendeley profile can be customized with professional preferences and resume and job search can be used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Own publications can be synchronized with Mendeley via a Scopus profile > For some data sources, the web importer only delivers mixed results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Extensive list of shortcuts, which makes work easier > "Watched Folders" function can be used be used via the Mendeley Reference Manager. > PDF documents can be automatically edited where you last left off
Paperpile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Yes > RIS, BibTeX, CSV und JSON 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Automatic generation of BibTex keys and synchronization of a BibTeX file > Summary of notes in PDFs > Synchronization across different devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A Chrome installation (or Chromium, Brave, Vivaldi or Edge) is required > Login via existing private or institutional Google account: requires permission to access Google Drive storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Integration in Microsoft Word > New Paperpile version with new functions (e.g. search in full-text PDFs and notes, Safari support, global changes) announced for summer 2024: https://new.paperpile.com/
Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Yes > BibTeX, RIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Display of bibliometric data on articles (number of citations, RCR number) with the option to directly access and download cited articles > Recommendations for further articles on the basis of the already existing reference entries 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Import of PubMed files (.nbib) > Improved copying of titles between different libraries
Zotero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Yes > BibLaTeX, Bibliontology RDF, BibTeX, Bookmarks, COinS, CSL, JSON, CSV, EndNote, XML, HTML, MODS, Note Markdown, Refer / BibX, RefWorks, Tagged, RIS, Simple Evernote Export, TEI, Unqualified Dublin Core RDF, Wikidata Quick Statements, Wikipedia Citation Templates, Zotero, RDF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Create independent notes > Transfer notes as quotations in Word > Color coded tags > Create publication lists in the zotero.org account > Subscribe to RSS feeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Many plugins available > Regular backup of the database or use of the online sync function recommended > Create an RSS feed of your own database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Zotero 7 with new design > EPUB viewer > New annotation options: Drawing, inserting text in PDF > Insert notes directly into the word processor

Use

	Performance	Usability	Support / guides
	<i>Speed, response times</i>	<i>How intuitive / user-friendly is the interface?</i>	<i>What help / instructions are available?</i>
Citavi	+ Good	+ Very good, very intuitive to use, the individual steps and options are explained in each case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Quick reference guides > Handbook > Handbook for scientific work (2017) > Films and animations (own YouTube channel) > Very good context-sensitive help > FAQ > Forum (German + English) > Contact form > Citavi blog: "Useful mistakes" > Training courses
Citavi Web	- Regularly long loading times	+ Good, explanations available for many steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Manual > Movies and animations (own Youtube channel) > Context-sensitive help > FAQ > Forum > Contact form > Training courses
EndNote	+ Good	- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Interface english only > Many functions are very 'technical' and require explanation, e.g.: Input fields, RIS export, syntax for citation styles, import via import filter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Handbook > Handbook for scientific work > Online training materials > Online tutorials > Mailing list > Forum > E-mail / chat / contact form
JabRef	+ Good	+ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Good, intuitive use and easy to configure > Meant for LaTeX users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Online documentation (including FAQ) > Support forum > Issue tracker
Mendeley Reference Manager	+ Good	+ Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Online help pages > Getting Started Guide > Chat > Good starting aids and many explanations; help pages somewhat confusing for specific questions
Paperpile	+ Good	+ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Good, clean Interface > Comfortable to use on mobile devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Forum > FAQ > Contact form > Blog > Welcome e-mail and Getting Started Guide > Visual onboarding that explains core functions at first launch > Changelog and roadmap > New help center in the making
Papers	+ Good	+ Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Online database with numerous articles > Quick Start Guide for beginners with brief documentation and several videos > Live webinars for beginners
Zotero	+ Good	+ Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Video tutorials (e.g. Quick Start Guide) > Help pages / documentation > Forum with large community, questions are often answered quickly and directly by the answered directly by the developers

Overview

	License Model		Installation		Operating System		Use via Mobile Devices		Research in Databases		Export in Databases		Export from Websites		Adding Metadata		Linking References		Check Duplicate Items		Sharing with External Users		Social Software Functionalities		Work with Word Processing Program		Updating BibTeX Files		Intuitive User Interface	
	commercial	free of charge	local	web-based	Windows	Mac OS	Linux																							
Citavi	●	○		●	●		●*	●*	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	○	●					
Citavi Web	●	○			●		●	●	●*	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	○	●	●	●	●	○	●					
EndNote	●	●*		●	●		●	●	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	○	●	○	○						
JabRef	○	●		●	○		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Mendeley Reference Manager	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	●	○	●					
Paperpile	●	○		○	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Papers	●	○		●	●		●	●	●*	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Zotero	○	●		●	●		●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	

- vorhanden
- * teilweise vorhanden
- nicht vorhanden

Overall Assessment

Overall Assessment			
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> License model and price> Platform / operating system> Search in databases> Import options> Search for full texts> Supplementing metadata> Integration of documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Release, joint editing> Usability> Social software functionalities> Linking with word processing programs> Further functions> Help / instructions	
	Strengths	Weaknesses	Users
	Under "Strengths" and "Weaknesses", the characteristics that stand out particularly positively or particularly negatively within the above criteria are listed.		For which users is this reference management program suitable? Beginners / scientists / ...?
Citavi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Search for full texts> Extensive knowledge organization and task planning> Very intuitive user interface> Joint editing for small teams via shared drive or in the cloud, for large groups via a separate database server and Citavi for DBServer> Extensive help services and good personal end user support> Easy-to-use Word add-in with useful functions> PDF reader with many editing functions> unique citation style finder	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Windows OS only> Performance issues with AI assistant for literature research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Windows user> Intuitive use for beginners and professionals
Citavi Web	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Platform-independent> Intuitive user interface> Extensive help offers> Teamwork possible	Limited range of functions compared to Citavi for Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Mac and Linux users> Beginners who don't need advanced functions (e.g. editing citation styles)
EndNote	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> For Windows and Mac> Web version as EndNote Basic can also be used free of charge> App for iPhone / iPad> Automated import of PDFs and search for full texts> Search in metadata, PDF full text and PDF comments> Retraction Alert supports the recognition of retracted articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Not very intuitive> English interface only> PDF reader has only rudimentary annotation options> Web version: only bibliographic information can be shared, not files	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Suitable for Windows and Mac users> From beginner to professional

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Users
	Under "Strengths" and "Weaknesses", the characteristics that stand out particularly positively or particularly negatively within the above criteria are listed.		For which users is this reference management program suitable? Beginners / scientists / ...?
JabRef	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Can be used with Java on Windows, Mac, and Linux > Works well with various LaTeX editors > No size restrictions, good performance even for databases with less than 10,000 entries > Sensible default settings for document types and fields, but still completely freely definable > Ranking, relevance, quality, and priority specifications possible > Open source and free of charge > Intuitive operation > Search in and for full texts > Uses BibTeX format natively and is therefore easily accessible for LaTeX users without any problems during data conversion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No social software functionality > Cannot be used on mobile devices except Windows tablets > Team collaboration not possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Particularly suitable for LaTeX users > Useful for very large literature collections > Specialized (database selection), especially for anyone working in STEM > For beginners as well as experienced users
Mendeley Reference Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Desktop version for Windows, Mac and Linux plus web version making it platform-independent > Free of charge (up to 2 GB) > Collaboration within private groups is very easy > Access to data from anywhere thanks to synchronization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Only PDFs are recognized and displayed correctly when uploading files > Mendeley Cite requires an account in the Microsoft Store and only works with Microsoft Office 365, Microsoft Word 2016 and higher and Microsoft Word App for iPads > LibreOffice plug-in no longer available > Mendeley Cite only in the Microsoft browser Edge browser 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Compared to other programs Smaller range of functions, suitable for users who prefer reduced program interfaces > Particularly suitable for users who mainly work with PDF full texts
Paperpile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Independent of operating system > Extensive PDF editing options also on mobile devices incl. summary printout of notes > Support for many word processing tools: Microsoft Word (in beta stage), Google Docs, BibTeX, Overleaf > Many document types and data fields to choose from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Only available for Chrome > No cross-document search in PDFs > At the time of testing only simple search in metadata 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Suitable for all disciplines, from beginner to professional > Particularly suitable for users who mainly work with PDF full texts
Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Good team function > Tidy and intuitive interface > All operating systems > Good import function for full texts > Synchronization function between different platforms and devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No free version > No automatic import of books possible, Focus on articles ("papers") > Word add-in could be improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > More suitable for subjects in which mainly articles are used > Good for beginners, as the surface is very tidy and intuitive
Zotero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Open Source > Desktop version for Windows, Mac, Linux and web version, therefore platform-independent > Zotero Connector to record literature directly in the browser > Social software functionalities: Release of papers via interest groups, group work > Creation of independent, title-independent notes > Annotating PDFs and direct transfer of citations from PDF files 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No search in databases from within Zotero > No hierarchical links possible > Only simple structuring and sorting options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Suitable for beginners and professionals

Imprint

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Disclaimer:

All information for this software comparison was compiled after comprehensive software testing. However, due to the complexity and continuing development of applications we can not assume any guarantee for the accuracy of the information.