Reference Management

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Reference Software

The aim of this column is to highlight those tools that support the management of references – the main stable of the information profession. The use of such tools has grown exponentially over the last decade, and now the decisions on which one to use is based on identifying where references are obtained from (propriety software, websites), the budget (open-source verses commercial) and the resources available (for example, how good is the support).

If this is a new area to you then take a look at one of several comparison pages on the Web, including

- Adept Science comparison site at http://www.adeptscience.co.uk/products/

- Beyond my mind : comparison of free bibliographic software packages http://mahbub.wordpress.com/2007/03/04/comparison-of-free-bibliographic-managers/

- UKeiG factsheets on how to manage references and what to look for in a package http://www.ukeig.org.uk/

- Wikipedia also has a useful comparison site at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reference_management_software.

Open-source and reference software

Many of us think of Linux when we hear "open source". While Linux is a great example of the open-source process, it is a small segment of the movement. Many open-source applications are available to help manage the reference process and most applications are available for Microsoft Windows and the Apple Macintosh.

Bibus

Bibus is an open-source bibliographic and reference management software tool. As with other such tools, Bibus allows you to search, edit, and sort bibliographic records. In addition, Bibus has the ability to create custom styles for bibliographies. It works with most platforms and can be integrated with Microsoft word for displaying references. Version 1.5 was released back in October 2009. Further details at http://bibus-biblio.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

JabRef

JabRef is another, popular, open-source reference manager package which uses BibTex as its native file format that is the standard in LaTex bibliography formats. It runs on the Java virtual machine which means the program works equally well with Windows, Linux and Mac OS X. All the basic features of a reference software package are available and includes the ability to export as a specific pdf document. Further details from http://jabref.software.informer.com/.

MyReferences and Moodle

JISC, in partnership with the Open University and RefWorks (the CSA based reference software package) , has developed MyReferences. MyReferences integrates tools from RefWorks into Moodle the virtual learning environment used in many FE colleges and some Universities.

It is based on open source[1], making it free for any institution to download, tailor to their own needs and integrate into their own learning environment and is the result of the TELSTAR project. Its unique strength is the ability to integrate reference management with an online learning environment. A simple click through provides users with the ability to select appropriate sources, their preferred reference style and then cut and paste the results into their assignments. Institutions need to subscribe to RefWorks to adapt the added Moodle integration functionality using RefWorks API. However, as the software is available as Open Source, institutions or individuals could take what has been done as the basis for working with other reference management software. Further information from http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/telstar/telstar-quick-demonstration/

The software Is available at http://code.google.com/p/telstar/, and there is the obligatory discussion group at http://groups.google.com/group/TELSTAROU, open to anyone to join.

Reference Tracker

Reference Tracker creates documents that store all the citations and references and then automatically creates Harvard, APA, MLA or Chicago/Turabian formatted reference lists to insert into your word-processed document. Usefully, it allows you to add sticky notes to references and export in a number of formats. It is a Mac product, which is also useful, and has been developed in the UK. It is perhaps worth pointing out though that the *Reference Current Page in Firefox* feature is not compatible with Firefox version 3.

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[1] a topic covered by this year's UKeiG Annual Seminar.

http://www.malkinware.com/referencetracker/

InfoWorks

Part of the reference process is ensuring URLs are correct. A tool, Infoworks Line Checker, created by librarians, is designed to do just that, by working with flat MARC and non-MARC text files to check URLs. http://www.vyomlinks.com/download/infoworks-link-checker-2.0-125606.html

MarcXimiL is a free, standards-compliant bibliographic similarity analysis framework. It allows you to analyse at different levels, run in batch mode or through the API. Options include the order of comparisons between and within collections. or comparison amongst a wide selection such as vectorial, probabilistic, Levenshtein based or maybe just Authors and Date! The software enables you to detect plagiarism while supporting quality information management. http://marcximil.sourceforge.net/

Open-source reference tools in schools

A useful service relating to open-source referencing for schools is SchoolForge, which lists available software and additional support mechanisms (including a discussion area). It is kept very up to date making it invaluable for busy information professionals.

http://www.schoolforge.net

Apple now the market leader in reference software too?

You may have read recently that Apple has passed Microsoft in the market-value stakes. This upsurge may affect the reference software market as Apple release version 6 of Sente. Sente, as well as providing traditional reference software features as well as downloading and importing PDFs direct from publisher's Web pages, takes notes from PDFs, highlighting the text in the PDF itself, and adds references using ISBN or DOI's. There is also a powerful new tagging feature. Concentrating on how users can deal with the full text is definitely the next phase of managing references, and we await to see how Microsoft respond!

http://www.thirdstreetsoftware.com/site/introduction.html

And finally : Preserving references

Being able to find references long after they have been added to your reference software is essential. There is a useful bibliography available in this area which contains over 300 articles and books on understanding digital curation and preservation. The majority of the links are available on open access.

http://digital-scholarship.org/dcpb/dcpb.htm