zotero

What is Zotero?

Zotero is a free, open source citation tool developed by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for New Media at George Mason University. It's been funded by the Mellon and Sloan foundations, as well as the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

It's described as a "personal research assistant" since it does a lot more than just collect your citations. It's specifically geared toward web-based research and collaboration, and it has a lot of support within the digital humanities community.

Get it at www.zotero.org.

Why should you use Zotero?

More efficient and organized research. Save and organize citations, make bibliographies, cite sources within documents, and find your sources again easily.

Collaboration and teaching. Share resources with colleagues working on similar topics, with people teaching the same courses you are, with students, with reading groups, etc.

Versions

Firefox plugin. This is how Zotero began, and it's still the version that works best.

Standalone version. This one is a bit easier to organize your collections in because it has a full-screen mode. It's mainly useful for people who want to use Zotero with a browser other than Firefox. Currently "connectors" are available for Chrome and Safari.

Web interface. This is where you share resources with other Zotero users and access your library from computers where you don't have the other versions installed.

Mobile. There is currently no official mobile app, but the zotero.org mobile site works just like one. There's a popular third-party iPhone/iPad app for zotero called ZotPad: http://www.zotpad.com/.

All versions of Zotero sync with one another so your research stays with you.

Ways of importing data

Library catalogs. Zotero will sense when you are looking at a page that contains metadata about a book and a blue book icon will appear on the right-hand side of your browser's address bar.
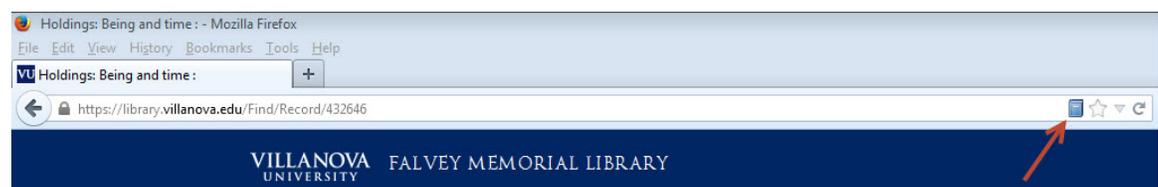
Amazon and Google Books. Zotero treats these the same was as library catalogs. Just click the icon in the address bar.
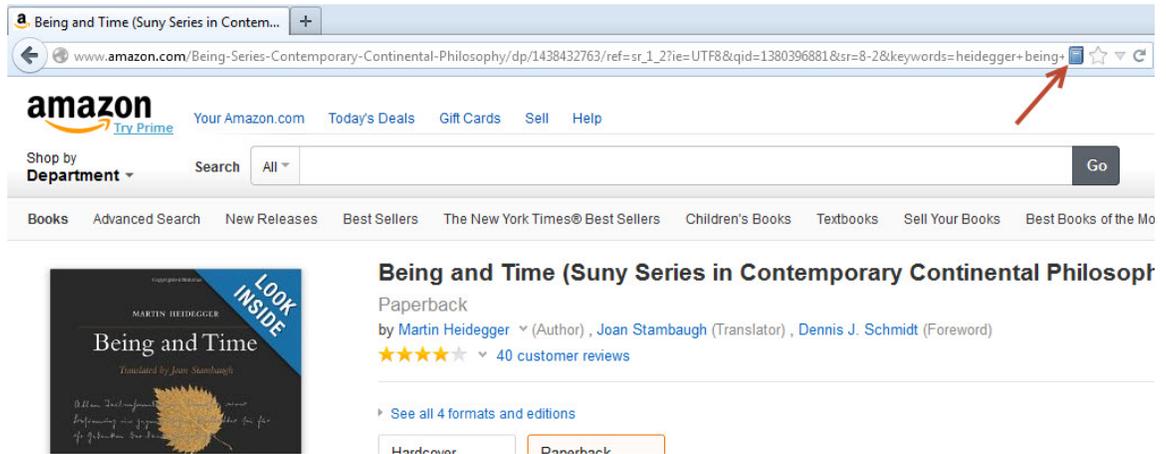
Databases. Zotero will sense article information on most database article records, and an article icon will appear in the address bar. You can also use the database citation export tools. If you are asked which file type you want, select RIS. In most cases it will be added to your library automatically, or after a prompt.

Zotero also automatically detects proxy settings and saves them for you.
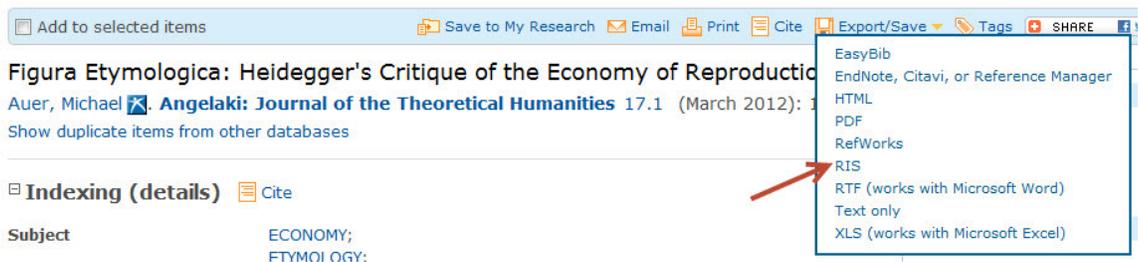
Websites. Online content (articles, blogs, etc.) can be added by clicking the "Create Web Page Item from Current Page" icon.

Manually. You can enter the citation data yourself, if need be, by clicking the "New Item" icon and selecting the material type (book, book chapter, journal article, etc.)

From article PDF's. Many journal article PDF's contain the metadata needed to create a citation. Drag the PDF into Zotero window, then right click and select "Retrieve metadata for PDF."

By identifier. If you have an identifying number for an item (ISBN for a book, DOI for an article), click the "Add item(s) by identifier" icon and Zotero will pull the citation from the online databases it searches.

From other citation management programs. You can export libraries from programs like Refworks and Endnote in multiple formats. Save the file to your hard drive, and select Actions -> Import in the Zotero. Most file types are supported, although Zotero may "flatten" the categorization structure you were using with your other software.
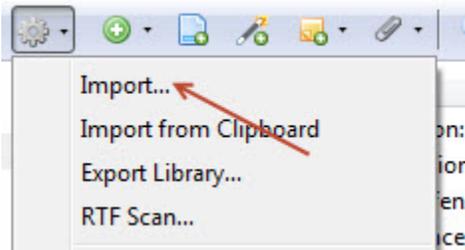
Attaching files and links

PDF's and other files can be attached to any item by right-clicking (Ctrl-click on a Mac) on the item and selecting Add Attachment -> Attach Stored Copy of File. The same menu can be accessed by clicking on the paperclip icon.

You can also attach links to files on your hard drive by selecting "Attach Link to File". The difference here is that these files won't be synced to your Zotero account, so you won't be able to access them from the website or from other machines where you have Zotero installed.

You get 300MB of storage for free, and then you need to buy more. Here are the pricing options:

Purchase Storage

	Amount	Annual Price
–	300 MB	Free
⦿	2 GB	$20 ($1.67/month)
○	6 GB	$60 ($5.00/month)
○	10 GB	$100 ($8.33/month)
○	25 GB	$240 ($20.00/month)

Organizing your library

Zotero features an iTunes-like library management interface, so you can sort collection by author, date, title, etc. You can add or remove columns by clicking on the columns icon at the top right corner of the collection pane.

Your library is keyword searchable from the main window. There is also an advanced search, which can be accessed by clicking on the magnifying glass icon. Advanced searches can be saved as new collections.

Underneath your library and collections in the left column, there's a Duplicate Items folder, which collects all of the items Zotero has identified as duplicates. Use this to choose which version of the citation to keep.

Tags provide a way of searching for a sorting items in your library. They're automatically created from catalog and database subject headings, but you can also add your own tags to personalize your library.

Timelines. Zotero includes a timeline feature for visualizing your collections. You can activate it within any collection by going to Actions -> Create Timeline.

Notes can be added to any item using the Notes tab in the right-hand column—this pulls up a basic text editor. Notes are synced along with the other metadata for each item.

Creating bibliographies

A bibliography can be generated from any collection by right-clicking (Ctrl-click on a Mac) on the collection and selecting "Create Bibliography From Collection". You can then select from a range of citation styles and output formats.

Bibliographies can also be generated within Word by using the Zotero Word plugin.

Word plugin

Install the Word plugin by going to Actions -> Preferences, and clicking on the Cite tab.

The plugin adds a Zotero toolbar to Word that can be used to add in-text citations while you type, and to create bibliographies.

You can also switch the citation style used in your document with a single click, which is helpful, for instance, if you write something in Chicago Style, but the journal you submit it to requires MLA.

Groups

Zotero Groups allow you to share your library and/or individual collections with others online. Groups can be public or private, as well as open or by invitation only.

New groups must be created via the Zotero website. The "New Group" icon within the Zotero Firefox plugin redirects there and will prompt you to log in.

Once your group is created, you can invite users to it by sending them invitation emails from the Zotero website.

Once you belong to a group, the group's library and collections will appear beneath your own library in the left-hand column of Zotero.

Items can be added to group collection using all of the same techniques for adding them to your own collections, and also by dragging items from your own collections to a group collection.

You can also browse or search for other groups to join that match your research interests.

Users can create profiles, send each other messages, and "follow" one another. There are currently 3,793 users "in philosophy."

Apps and add-ons

There are a growing number of plugins that extend the functionality of Zotero for the expert user. There's a list here: http://www.zotero.org/support/plugins

There are also apps that allow you to add books to your Zotero library by scanning their barcodes with your mobile device: BibUp (iPhone): http://elearning.unifr.ch/bibup/tuto/index.php) Scanner for Zotero (Android): https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.ale.scanner.zotero