

Managing Citations Using a Bibliography Database Manager

Cynthia L. Russell, PhD, RN, Research Committee Member

A problem that many of us face is how to organize the articles and citations that we want to save in a way that allows future access for development of evidence-based practice protocols, manuscripts, grants, and/or presentations. Many of us are overwhelmed with stacks and stacks of articles, each with a citation. The citation is the article details-author(s), year, article title, journal title, volume, issue, and pages numbers. We probably need to organize our articles in the traditional way-in files with topic labels. However, there are several exciting bibliography database manager software programs available to assist you in organizing the citations including EndNote8, Reference Manager 11, and ProCite. Nicoll (2003) states that these programs: (1) maintain a library of reference citations; (2) allow searching of remote databases from within the program; and (3) with a word processor, format in-text citations and the reference list according to a selected style.

Using this type of citation management software can save hours of time and will increase the accuracy of your reference lists since the citation manager takes care of all the small formatting details. This eliminates many of the editorial problems for you.

Once you've purchased the EndNote8 program, downloaded it onto the computer and completed all the steps for setting up your EndNote, you will need to set up your online filters. The filters help you extract data directly from a source like CINAHL. Once these are set up you can request your EndNote to import whatever references you selected in your search.

As you begin writing your manuscript, you will begin to understand the value of a product like EndNote. You will find as you build your library of articles that you intend to use as references that the citation manager will allow you to "plug" in your citations as you write. You can even chose to have the citation manager create your bibliography as you write. If at the end you decide that you want to change from APA 5th edition to AMA 9th edition, a click to the write format will automatically change your insertions as well as the reference list at the end. Very quickly you can see how much time these reference manager systems can save.

Current prices on the web indicate that for single users the price of Reference Manager 11 (www.refman.com) is \$239.95(downloadable) or \$299.95 (physical shipment). You can down load a trial version. Pro Cite (www.procite.com) was quoted for \$239.95 (downloadable) or \$299.95 (physical shipment). You can also down load a trial version of Pro Cite as well. EndNote8 was listed for \$239.95 for a downloadable version or \$299.95 for a physical shipment version. You can also down load a free trial version of EndNote. EndNote does have a student version that is about a third of the price.

Citation Managers do have a learning curve so don't be surprised that you may have to study the User's Manual. Your best option as you learn the software is to talk to someone who has experience with the software that you chose. You will find, as you overcome the intricacies of learning the software that writing becomes less troublesome with these types of management tools.

Reference

Nicoll, L.H. (2003). A practical way to create a library in a bibliography database manager: using electronic sources to make it easy. *Computers, Informatics, Nursing* 21(1), 48-54.