Managing Your Literature

Wolfgang Viechtbauer

March 29, 2018

Maastricht University

The Problem

- doing research involves reading a lot of literature
- often add highlighting / annotations while reading
- want to keep track of literature you have (read)
- maybe keep some notes about the literature
- be able to quickly retrieve the literature
- be able to quickly cite the literature

Some Solutions ...

The Harcopy Way

- print out articles
- read and annotate them
- file them in folders

- print out articles
- read and annotate them
- file them in folders
- forget what you have read / never find articles again

This system does not scale!

The Paperless Office Way

- do everything electronically
- use software for managing your literature
- link each entry to electronic copy of document
- add highlighting/annotations to electronic copy
- can add notes to each entry
- software provides search functionality and can automatically generate bibliography

- (could still print, but space will become an issue)

Reference Managers

- Wikipedia: Reference management software
- Comparison of reference management software
- as far as I can tell, most popular ones seem to be:
    - Endnote
    - Mendeley
    - Zotero

Some Tips/Ideas

- use a reference manager from day one
- invest time to keep it up to date
- do not scatter literature around (one location, electronic copy, can add 'project' note in database)
- keep track of what you have, what you have read, and what is high on the to-read list
- use your own labels/keywords (this is hard!)
- ideally use an open-source system with a non-proprietary database structure