Literature research – practical

Goal: this practical exercise demonstrates typical steps involved in searching and organizing literature.

First of all, before we start searching papers, let's start your Reference manager (as discussed in the lecture, you can use JabRef, Zotero, Citavi, help for Zotero and Citavio below), so that we can save our search results in a literature database.

- Open your reference manager

- Give your database a name and save it

- *Tutors will help with problems and demonstrate how to import a paper from ISI, google scholar, and directly from the journal website*
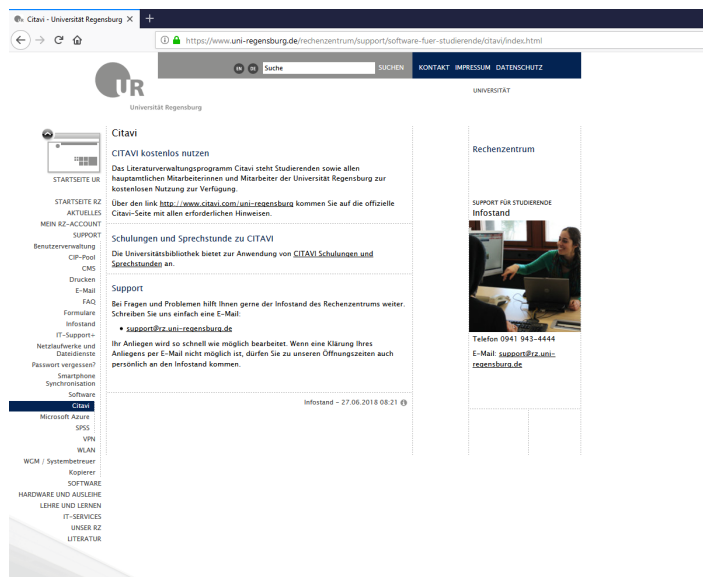
Imagine you want to find out about „Ecosystem Services". You want to find the most relevant (relevant = highly cited, important for the field), and the most recent papers on this topic.

- Use ISI Web of Knowledge to find

  - The 5 most cited papers ever on this topic

  - Browse titles to find what seems to you the most relevant papers of the last two years, judging from title, journal and citations so far

- Do the same in google scholar (all papers and the last 2 years), and add papers to your database if they are not in there yet

- Did you find the same papers? Which results seem more relevant to you?

At the end of the exercise, when using Zotero or Citavi, have a look at how you export your library to BibTex.

Citavi help

You can download Citavi from the university, follow instructions at https://www.uni-regensburg.de/rechenzentrum/support/software-fuer-studierende/citavi/index.html


Citavi is already installed in the CIP Pool laptops, just type CITAVI in the search (see figure right).
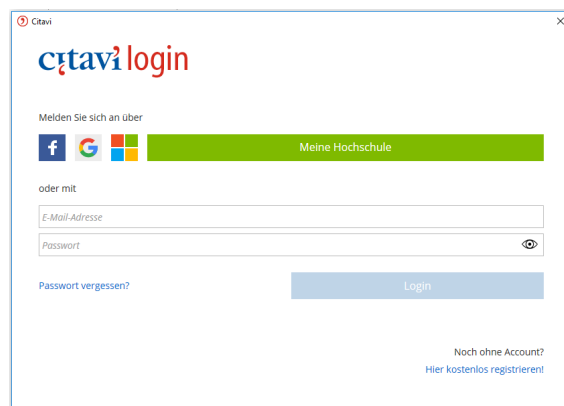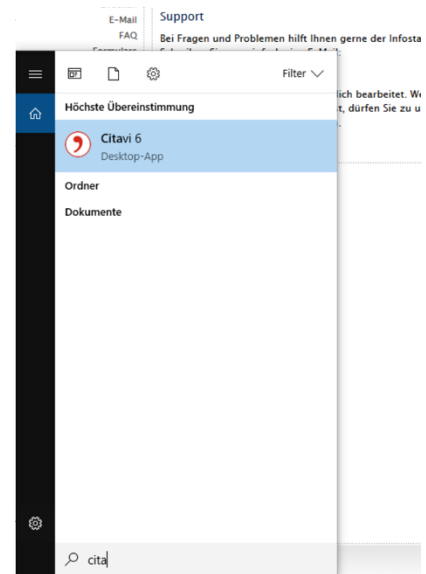

After startup, Citavi will ask you to create a Citavi account. If you are working with a CIP Pool laptop, you can just click this away. However, I think it is necessary to create a Citavi account to get the software for free. In this case, you might as well just log in with your account

Next thing you should do is create a new literature database. In Citavi, they call this a project. If you are logged in, you can create a cloud project, but for here, I would recommend starting a local project.
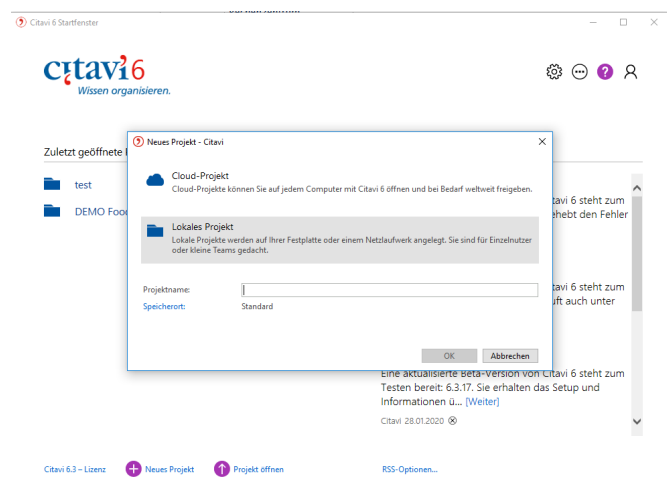
Now you can import reference in your database. You can create new idems by hand, but it is probably much easier to import them via their doi. I have marked the button on the top
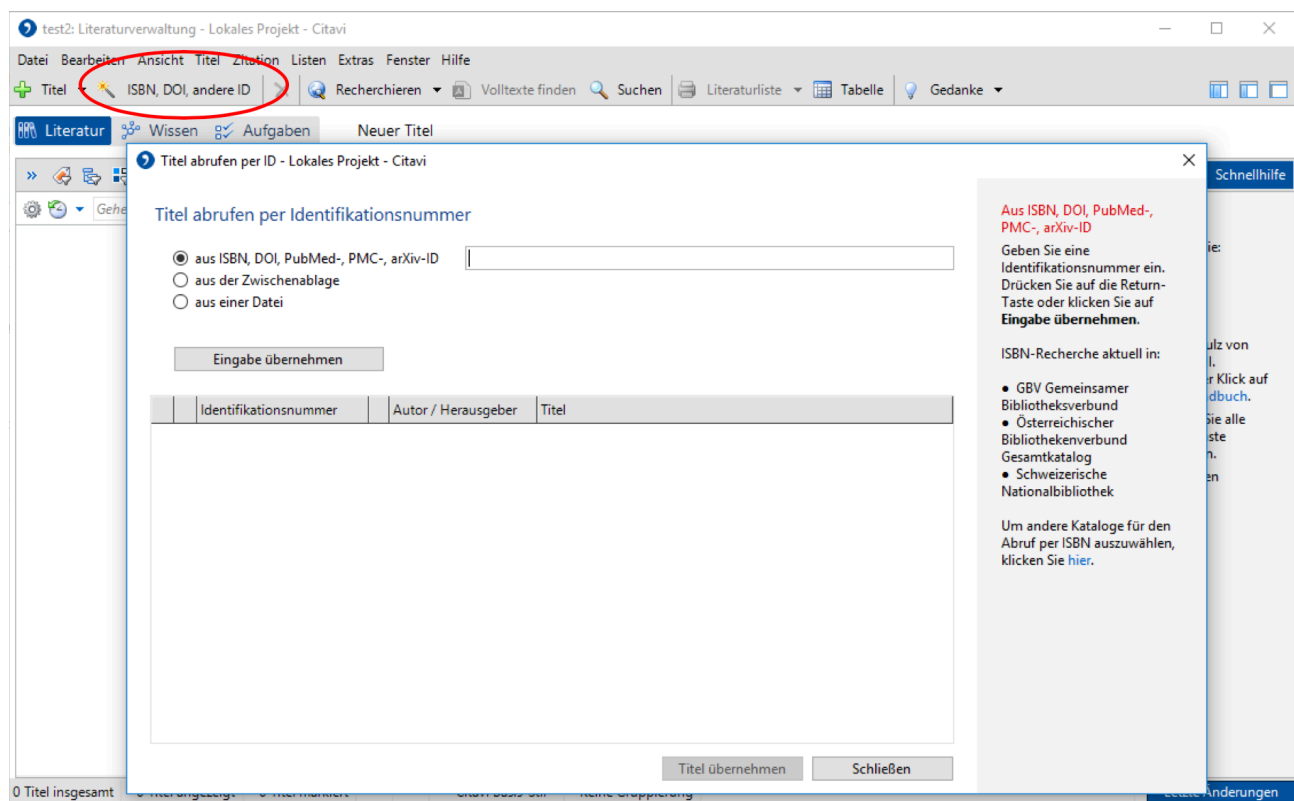
Save your database. Now, if you open up word, you should see a citavi tab, and there you should see the databases (projects) you have on your computer. Select your database, and you should be able to include your citavi references in a word text.
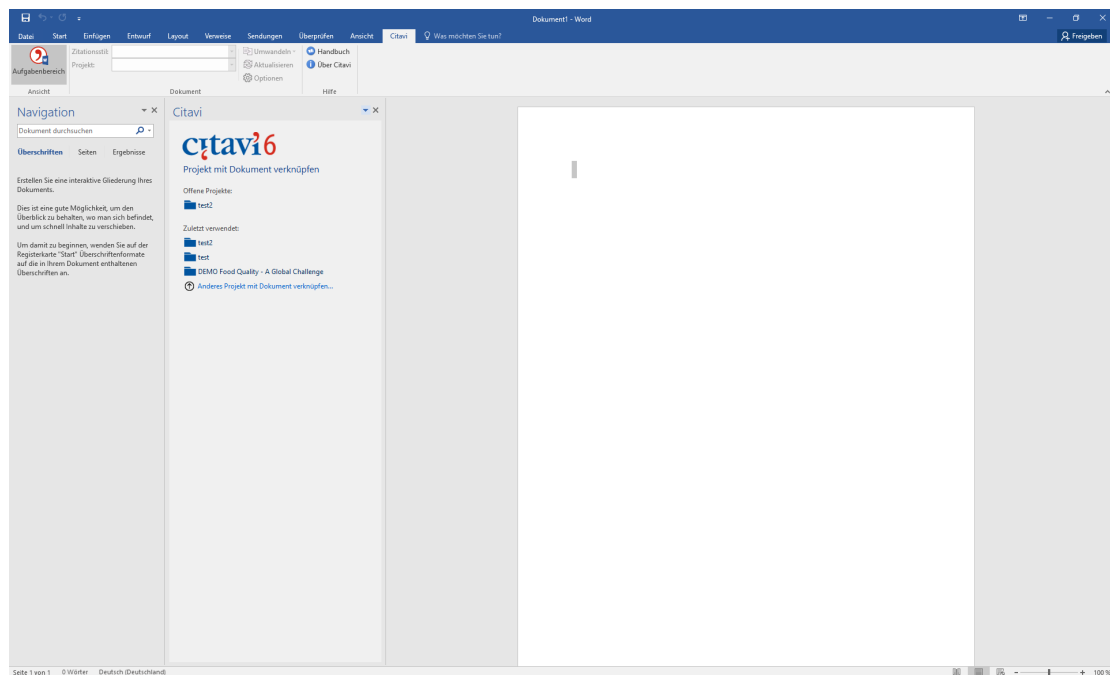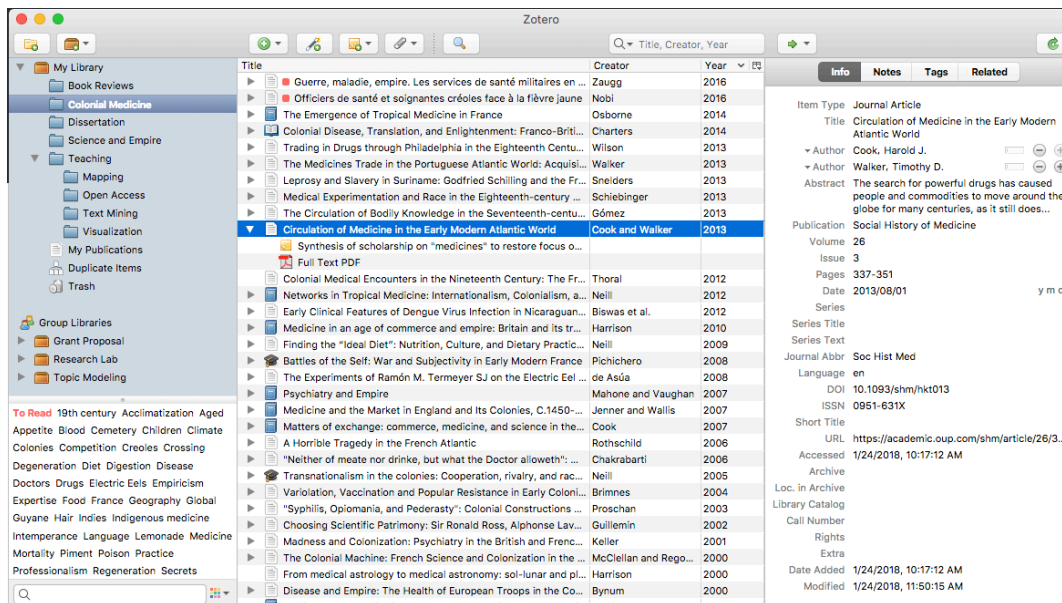

To export your database to bibtex, go to export

Zotero help

Install Zotero via https://www.zotero.org/. Zotero can be used without creating an account, but if you create an account, your data will be synchronized with the cloud, which is useful as a backup and if you use several devices (computer, tablet).

This is how the Zotero interface looks like.

In Zotero, you have exactly one personal database (it's called My Library) by default, and your items will be imported there. You can't have several personal libraries. However, you can make subfolders. In the picture, there are a lot of references, but of course, when you start up, there are no items in there.

Additionally to the personal library, you can have group libraries. Those libraries can be shared with other people. If all members of a group work with Zotero, you could use this to synchronize your references. Group libraries have to be created on the Zotero website.
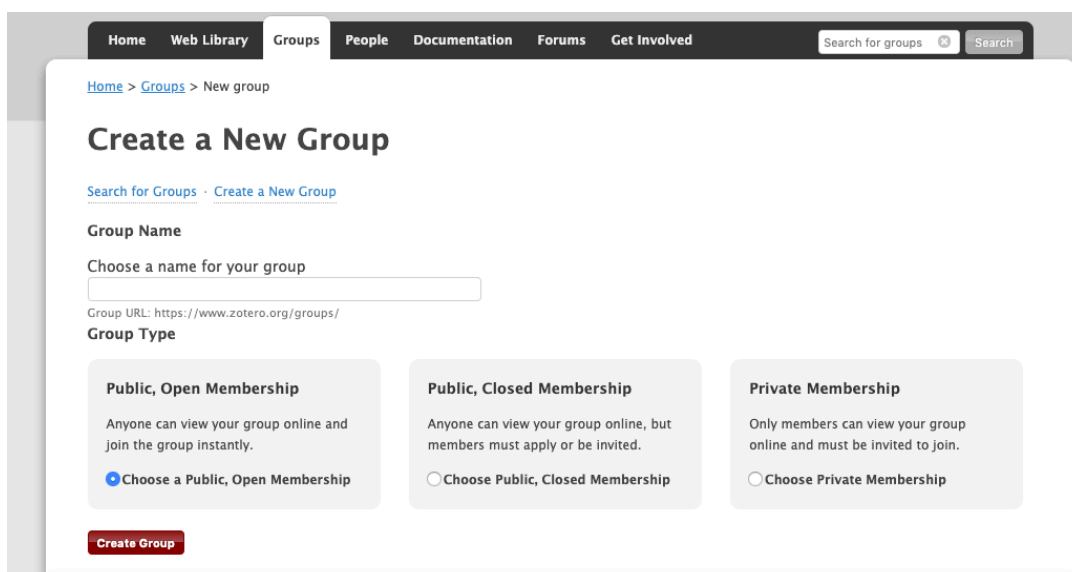
Import in Zotero is particularly easy if you install a browser plugin. In Chrome, this is called the Zotero connector
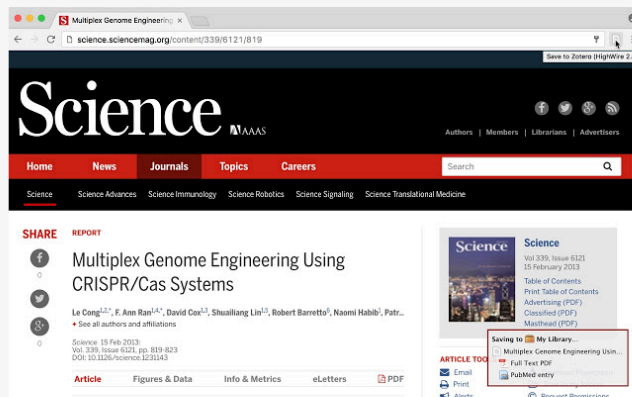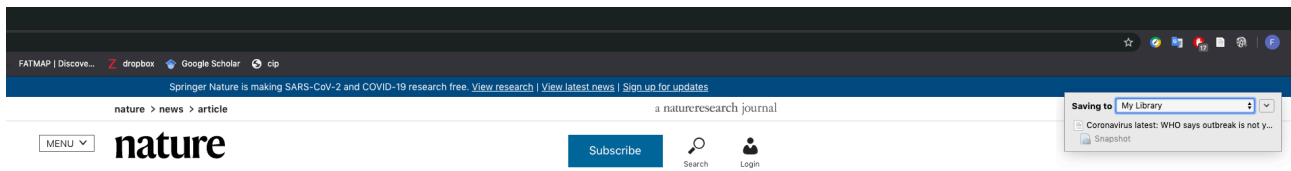

If this plugin is installed, you can import references directly from the browser via the script symbol in in the upper right corner of the browser.

Alternatively, you can also add items via identifier, as in Citavi
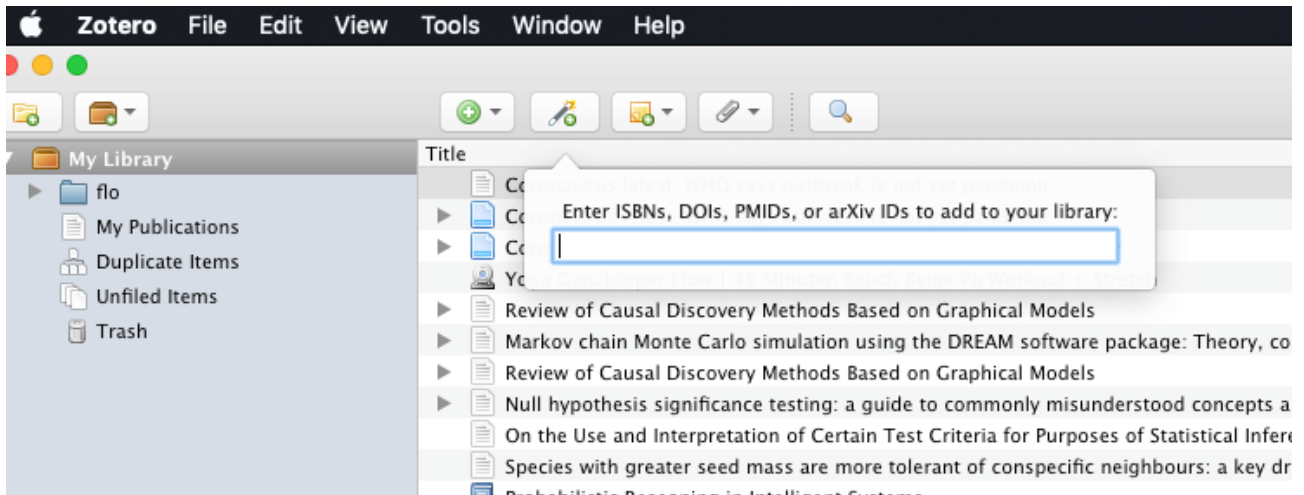
If you open Microsoft Word, while having Zotero open, you should see a Zotero tab (If not, check if you may be missing a word plugin for Zotero, which, however, should be installed by default).
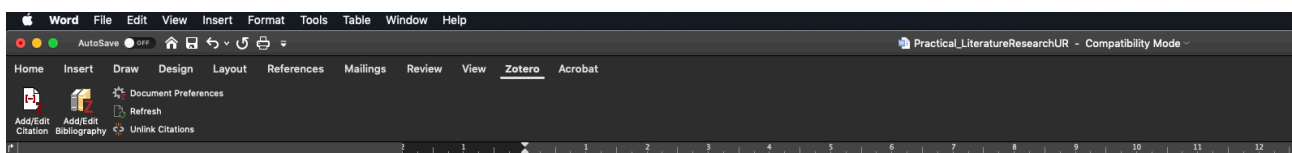
Clicking Add / Edit citation should eventually lead you to your Database, with the option to include a reference in the text.

Add/Edit Bibliography should create a Bibliography at the end of the text.

As before, you can export your database to bibtex via the export option. Alternative, there is also a bibtex plugin which continuously exports to bibtex (every time an item is changed).