

What is the right reference manager for you?

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Reference managers are essential tools to read and write scholarly papers. In the last few years we have seen both a number of new reference managers (most of them web-based), but also a trend for the established reference managers to gain social networking features. More choice is great, but it also creates confusion about the right tool to use. I have talked about reference managers before, but in this slideshow I look at the features that I find important.

And there are at least two features that I like, but haven't really seen implemented in a reference manager:

- Integration of an RSS reader for journal table of contents (TOC). Currently I use a standard RSS reader, and it requires too many steps to get interesting references from a TOC into my reference manager.
- Tracking the post-publication discussion. I want my reference manager to link to the papers that cite a particular reference (I currently use Scopus for that) and link to Faculty of 1000 or ResearchBlogging.org comments on that paper.

In the last slide I wonder whether there is a) one perfect reference manager, b) one perfect reference manager for my particular needs, or c) I will always need more than one reference manager and have to move references back and forth between them. Currently I'm at c), using mostly Papers, Endnote and Connotea. But Mendeley, Zotero, Refworks and Endnote are moving in a direction where they try to cover all requirements.