Reference Management with the iPad

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October 6, 2010

The iPad was released six months ago, and we already have several reference managers available for the platform. Reading the PDF of a scientific paper on an iPad is a positive experience, and to me very different from reading the PDF on a regular computer. While this could also be done with generic iPad PDF readers such as **iBooks** or **Goodreader**, reference managers make it much easier to organize a large collection of PDF files.

CiteULike

CiteULike is a browser-based reference manager and works on the iPad as expected – and this includes the bookmarklet. CiteULike is a good tool to collect references when browsing with the iPad. CiteULike doesn't allow offline reading of PDF files. While you can read the HTML versions of papers with the iPad web browser, this requires not only online access, but often also access through a paywall.
More Info

Papers for iPad

This was the first reference manager specifically designed for the iPad. Papers for Mac owners can synchronize all their references and fulltext PDF files. The functionality is similar to the Mac version and also includes a good PDF reader and searching for references in PubMed and other online databases. This makes Papers a good stand-alone solution that doesn't depend on syncing to another applications.
More Info – iTunes

Mendeley Lite

Mendeley Lite syncs with all references you store in your Mendeley web account. I personally prefer this approach as I don't particularly like syncing between iPad and desktop computer. Just like Papers, this application works both on iPad and iPhone. You can't directly add references to Mendeley Lite. Mendeley is currently the only application that has both a web-based and an iPad version. This increases the options, but probably also adds to user confusion. Add

reference with the web-based version, sync, then read PDF in Mendeley Lite?
iTunes

Sente Viewer for iPad

Last Friday **Sente Viewer for iPad** was released. Similar to Papers and Mendeley, Sente Viewer for iPad synchronizes with the desktop version of the application. The application allows browsing of all synchronized references and reading of the associated fulltext PDF papers. The **Sente for iPad** application will be released later and will also allow adding and editing of references. I'm looking forward to "targeted browsing" which will capture both reference information and fulltext PDF files using a built-in web browser – another variation of reference manager integration with the web browser.
More Info – iTunes

Further Reading

Roderic Page has done a lot of writing about reading scientific papers on the iPad, including reviews for Papers for iPad and Mendeley Lite. Wizfolio is another web-based reference manager that works on the iPad.