

York University Libraries

Zotero vs Mendeley Comparison

| CATEGORY | MENDELEY | ZOTERO |
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| Ease of Use & Basic Product Offerings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy to use ■ Includes a Desktop version and a web version compatible with all major web browsers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy to use ■ Work as a Firefox extension or as a standalone version with a connector to Chrome, Safari, Firefox and Opera |
| Installation Information | <p>Includes clear instructions & video tutorials for installing and using Mendeley.</p> <p>Basic Installation process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create an account ■ Download desktop client for your OS (Mac, Windows, Linux) ■ Install web importer | <p>Includes a comprehensive guide on how to install and use Zotero</p> <p>Basic Installation process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create your account ■ Download either Zotero for Firefox or Zotero Standalone |
| Cost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Basic software is free ■ Charges for adding additional cloud storage space ■ Charges for collaborating with larger groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Basic software is free ■ Charges for adding additional storage space |
| Storage capabilities of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2GB of cloud storage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 300MB of cloud storage |

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| free version | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have to use Mendeley's cloud storage in order to have a fully functioning account. However, 2GB should provide you with significant space for your collection. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By not syncing your Zotero account, you can maintain a library of citations and documents on ONE computer without having to use Zotero's cloud storage. However, once you sync your account with Zotero's servers, the cloud storage limitations will activate. |
| Does it create in-text citations, footnotes, and bibliographies? | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are free plugins for Word, LibreOffice, and BibTeX. Once you have downloaded Mendeley, you can install the plugins from within the program. | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The free plugin for Word and LibreOffice is included in the Zotero Standalone version Information for installing free Word (Mac & Windows) and LibreOffice Plugins for Zotero for Firefox version |
| How many citation styles does it support? | <p>Both Mendeley and Zotero use Citation Style Language, which offers over 7,000 free CSL citation styles.</p> <p>Mendeley comes with some of the most popular citation styles (APA, MLA, Chicago) and additional styles can be loaded. Additional styles can be installed from within the desktop client.</p> <p>Instructions on editing a citation style can be found here.</p> | <p>Both Mendeley and Zotero use Citation Style Language, which offers over 7,000 free CSL citation styles.</p> <p>Zotero comes with some of the most popular citation styles (APA, MLA, Chicago) and additional styles can be downloaded from the Zotero Style Repository.</p> |

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| | | Instructions on editing a citation style can be found here . |
| Can I save citations while I browse databases? | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After you have installed the web importer bookmarklet on your web browser, you can save citation information for major databases (Works with major web browsers). | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grab citations from databases with the Zotero icon |
| What kind of collaboration features does it offer? | <p>Free account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private groups or public invite-only groups: Users can only create 1 private group OR invite-only public group with 3 group members. Share documents and citations in private groups. Share citations in invite-only public groups. Public groups: No limit to the amount of public groups that can be created. Share references only. | <p>Users can create unlimited private or public groups and collaborate by sharing files and citations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private groups: can share documents and references with each other. Public, closed membership groups: can share documents and references with each other. Public, open membership groups: can share references, but not documents. |
| Can I save PDFs to my account? | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drag and drop PDF files or entire folders of PDF documents into Mendeley. Import from other citation management software. More info | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automatically grab PDFs and relevant citation information from websites. Drag and drop PDF files into the library. More info |

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| Extracts PDF metadata automatically? | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you drag and drop PDFs or folders of PDFs, Mendeley will extract metadata such as the authors, title of the paper, and publication year. More info | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you drag and drop PDFs or folders, Zotero will extract metadata such as authors, title of the paper, and publication year. More info |
| What type of organization features does it offer? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can create unlimited folders in Mendeley. You can add tags to items and search using tags. More info (click on “Organizing your library” video) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can create unlimited folders (called collections). You can add tags to items and search using tags. More info |
| Can I add snapshots of web pages to my account? | <p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This feature used to be available, but no longer exists in current Mendeley versions. <p>Workaround</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a PDF version of the webpage (either print to PDF or use other software). Store the PDF and make annotations to it. More info | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More info (scroll down to “Saving Web Pages” section) |
| Can I add notes to entries in my account? | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create notes and annotate PDFs. Mendeley desktop instructions | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More info |
| How well does it extract | York University catalogue records (Good) | York University catalogue records (Good) |

metadata from other types of resources automatically?

Ratings:

Very Good
Good
Adequate

- Mendeley's **Web Importer Bookmarklet** will import some metadata from York's catalogue records, but may leave out information such as edition and publication city. *

Webpages (Adequate)

- Mendeley will import some metadata from webpages, but you may have to go back and add in the author's name, publication year, and other information. *

YouTube videos (Adequate)

- Mendeley will import some metadata from YouTube videos, but you may have to go back and add in the author's name, date it was posted, and other information. *

* Always double-check your entries to ensure that complete details about the item have been imported. Mendeley is excellent at capturing metadata from PDFs, but not as thorough with other sources.

- Use the **Zotero capture icons** in your browser to import metadata from York's catalogue records. Zotero may leave out information such as the publication city and edition *

Webpages (Good)

- Zotero will import most of the metadata from webpages, but you may have to add or edit elements like publication date and author. *

YouTube videos (Very Good)

- Zotero will import almost all of the metadata from YouTube videos. You may need to edit the information depending on the citation style you use. *

* Always double-check your entries to ensure that complete details about the item have been imported. Zotero is excellent at capturing metadata from PDFs, but not as thorough with other sources.

What type of internal search capabilities does it offer?

- Allows quick searches of all content in your library, including metadata fields such as author, title, and your notes.
- The following **advanced search operators** can be used in the search bar.

- Allows quick searches of all content in your library, including all metadata fields such as author, title, and your item tags. **More info**
- Users can create advanced searches using multiple filters and can save

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mendeley offers the unique Literature Search feature, which allows you to search Mendeley's catalogue of saved papers and add them to your own library (You can only add full text articles from fully Open Access journals or in cases where author has retained article rights and made it available, otherwise the citation information is saved). | <p>advanced searches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enabling fulltext PDF indexing allows text within saved PDFs in your Zotero library to be searched with quick search and advanced search. |
| Is there online support, such as a user forum? | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mendeley is not open source, but it has comprehensive videos and tutorials for users. ■ It also has very active support forum | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Zotero is free/open source and has an active development community, as a well as a comprehensive getting started guide. ■ It also has very active support forum |
| Will I have access to my account after I leave York? | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ However, if you're a student, you may want to use a different email, as your @yorku.ca email is disabled when you're not registered in courses. | <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ However, if you're a student, you may want to use a different email, as your @yorku.ca email is disabled when you're not registered in courses. |
| Security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cloud storage is mandatory ■ Cloud data stored on US servers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cloud storage is optional, as you can use Zotero without having to sync (however, it's mandatory for collaboration) ■ Cloud data stored on US servers |
| Operating System | Macintosh, Windows, Linux | Macintosh, Windows, Linux and any others |

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| | | where Firefox runs. |
| Browser Compatibility | <p>Compatible with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Internet Explorer 8-11 ■ Firefox 6 and newer ■ Chrome 14 and newer ■ Safari 5 and newer <p>Need to have javascript and cookies enabled</p> | <p>Includes the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Zotero for Firefox (uses a Firefox extension) ■ Zotero Standalone is a separate, browser independent application and extensions for Chrome, Safari, Firefox, and Opera can be installed. |
| Mobile Device Applications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Free iPhone and iPad app, created by Mendeley ■ Mendeley is creating their own Android app ■ Pre-existing third party Android apps | <p>Third party apps for Apple and Android devices, with various prices</p> |

Adapted from the [University of Toronto Libraries](#), [Western Libraries](#), and [University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries](#)' citation manager comparison charts.