

MANAGING YOUR RESOURCES AT USF LIBRARY

TECHNOLOGIES TO KEEP YOUR LIFE IN ORDER

We have all been there, buried under piles of articles, notes and books that we need to finish our research. Highlighted below are some FREE resources to help you organize your research and their best uses.

ZOTERO

What it is: A free, browser based citation management system.

What it does: Allows you to capture citations, store articles and PDFs, add notes, tags and other information to each item stored and creates reference lists or bibliographies from selected items in its library.

Where to get it: www.zotero.org

How to use it: After downloading Zotero, install the application in your browser. To import citations and articles, open the Zotero window and click the "Create New Item from Current Page" or "New Item" icons to record a new citation.

Things to keep in mind: Zotero is desktop based, meaning you cannot access your account from any computer other than the one you downloaded the application on.

PBWORKS

What it is: A free, server based wiki application designed for collaborative use.

What it does: All wikis allow for collaboration on a single document, track changes and allow for multiple users to make changes to a single document. PBworks does this and adds more value with document sharing, such as PDFs and PowerPoints, RSS feeds of document changes and simple, customizable interface.

Where to get it: <http://plans.pbworks.com>

How to use it: Sign up for a free account and then add your citations and notes to the wiki pages. You can have multiple pages in one account, enabling you to organize your resources even more.

Things to keep in mind: PBworks also has a service that costs to use it, so some of the tools and applications which make it so appealing might not be part of the free service. And remember that changes you make are seen by everyone with access to the pages, so edit collaborative work carefully.

DELICIOUS

What it is: A free website bookmarking tool that is available wherever you are.

What it does: Allows users to bookmark any webpage that they would like to be able to quickly access later, create tags and categories for their bookmarked items, place notes on each item and share your bookmarks with the rest of the delicious community.

Where to get it: www.delicious.com

How to use it: Create an account and install the bookmarking tools on the computer you use most. You can bookmark from any computer, but the tools within your browser streamline the process. Then add, tag and share the things you find.

Things to keep in mind: Most of the articles available from library databases have been run through the proxy system and do not display with their permanent URL; be sure to bookmark the permanent URL of articles, usually available on the abstract page when using delicious.

WIZFOLIO

What it is: A server based citation management system, similar to the above mentioned Zotero.

What it does: Compiles, organizes and stores citation information and articles in a server based system, allowing you to access your files from any computer on any network.

Where to get it: www.wizfolio.com

How to use it: Import citations through their "Add Item File" icon or input the citation information yourself. Then organize your files into collections and add notes, tags and upload PDFs to keep all your information in one place.

Things to keep in mind: WizFolio is a clunky application and takes some getting used to. Some of its applications are still being tested for functionality so not everything is as seamless as one would like. Despite these flaws the ability to access your resources from anywhere is reason for some people to choose this over other similar free products.

MINDMEISTER

What it is: A free, online mind mapping tool.

What it does: Offers a visual method for plotting out any multi step project that you need to complete.

Where to get it: www.mindmeister.com

How to use it: After creating a free account, watch the short "Getting Started" video. Then create your mind maps to outline plans for research papers, presentations, weekend projects, anything!

Things to keep in mind: This is a tool designed to offer an alternative to the typical paper outline, so large quantities of content does not fit in the mind map. There is also a way to "publish" your maps to display for editing to other Mind Meister users, so if you want your maps to stay private, check your settings.

GOOGLE NOTEBOOK

What it is: A free online note taking application.

What it does: Allows you to copy portions of web pages, annotate them with your notes and then organize them into groups, drag and drop into new sections and even better, it's all searchable. Never ask... where was that note about ?.... again.

Where to get it: <http://google.com/notebook>

How to use it: Copy the URL for whatever page you are using into their bookmarking tool, or enable the Notebook bookmarklet in your browser. Add, annotate and organize your notes and streamline your web research for any project. Create individual notebooks for multiple projects and keep all your ideas where they belong.

Things to keep in mind: This is a Google product so it is exceedingly user friendly and testing has found few issues with it.

REMEMBER THE MILK

What it is: An online task manager or to-do list reminder.

What it does: You add things you need to complete and the deadlines and RTM updates you to make sure you remember to do everything via email, IM, text message or through an iPhone app.

Where to get it: www.rememberthemilk.com

How to use it: Just like you would a paper day planner, enter to-do lists and deadlines of things you need to complete into RTM and set your preferences on how and when you want to be reminded of each item.

Things to keep in mind: RTM only reminds you when deadlines are looming and doesn't take into consideration how long it will take you to complete a project. Be sure to set your reminders early enough to give ample time to complete each item.

