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Web Reviews

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Web Reviews

Reviews of web resources of interest to *SciTech News* readers.

Lisa R. Johnston



Let's Get Social, Cite me?

Bookmarks. Tagging. Folksonomies. The Web is being catalogued, and not just by special libraries! For example, it was recently reported that nearly 10 million people are organizing the Web at <http://delicious.com>*. StumbleUpon.com is not far behind with 6 million according to their Web site. These popular social bookmarking networks allow people to keep track of the Web sites they find useful and share those discoveries with others (sound familiar?). Yet as an information professional, you understand that a little social bookmarking can never compete with the features that personal bibliographic citation managers, such as EndNote, BibTex, and Refworks provide. Fortunately for both librarians and our patrons, there is a small but growing niche developing in the Web social software sphere: the social citation manager.

The following social citation tools are primarily designed with the science and technology researcher in mind. But these managers do not differ just in their ability to organize literature citations; rather they aim to help keep track of a user's entire web space in one integrated tool. Some do this better than others. As a sci-tech librarian, you can help users determine which one might work for their specific needs. Try to leave the tagging up to them.

Bibsonomy

<http://www.bibsonomy.org>

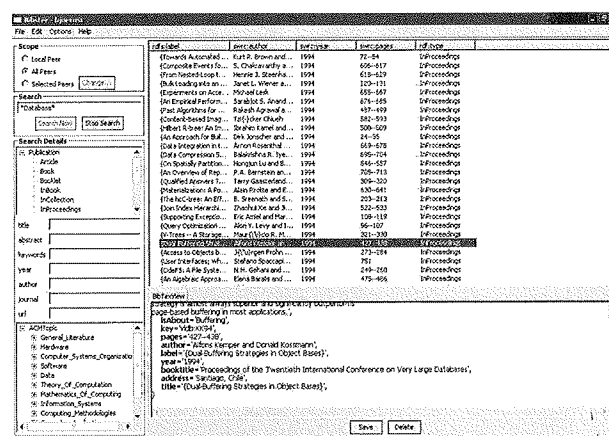
Created by the University of Kassel in Germany, this citation network is distinctly researcher driven, with onscreen BibTeX code in place of human-readable metadata (not that tags such as pages = {31--51}, are hard to understand). It is programmer-compatible, nicely classing Web sites as "bookmarks" separate from articles,

or "Publications". Unfortunately, with 4 users making a tag "popular," the site currently suffers from low-use; an ailment few sites recover from in the social network world. The existing traffic is decidedly more international. At the time of this review more non-English articles were posted here than on any of the other tools discussed.

Bibster

<http://bibster.semanticweb.org>

Bibster is a peer-to-peer network interface for bibliographic citations. This software is the bibliographic equivalent to Napster. But rather than illegal downloads of your favorite music, you're sharing the bibliographic data in the latest *Nature*. Many users might be underwhelmed given that mainstream journal citation information can be automatically retrieved from sci-tech literature databases. This network might work particularly well for users outside the traditional library systems, but only if the subject-fields diverse enough and the number of users were numerous enough to deliver the content.



Cite-U-Like

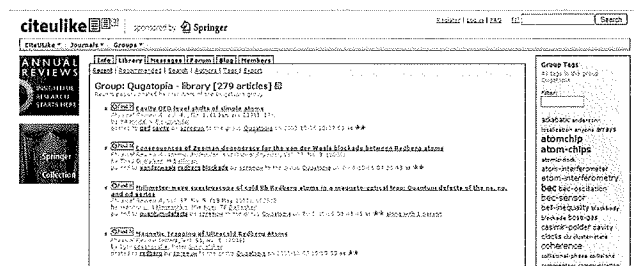
<http://www.citeulike.org>

Probably one of the first social citation managers on the Web, this Springer-sponsored tool is very popular in a multitude of science and technology disciplines. Users can not only store and share their favorite articles, but can also receive RSS feeds of over 11,000 journal's table of contents from many publishers. To control spam, Cite-U-Like restricts article postings from non-supported publishers (including non-peer-reviewed articles



and white papers) by filtering them from public view. Otherwise your entire library can be browsed by other users for discovery. Additional social features include article tagging, user profiles and blogs, and article reviews.

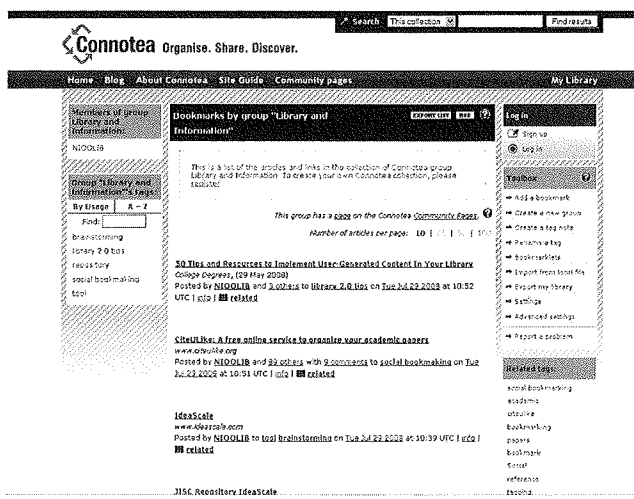
One of the best features is the *Groups* functionality. Users can create sub-networks to share and discuss knowledge, either publicly or privately, with messaging and forum tools. Additionally, a built-in Library archives Group users' posting history. Citeulike's circa-2004 interface is beginning to look dated, but the quality of the system is always improving as more and more journals link directly to it. Best of all, users have a wide-range of bibliographic style options. Citations can be directly formatted into one of 16 different citation styles (including MLA and APA format), plus BibTex and RIS files, which directly import to EndNote or RefWorks, are made available for download.



Connotea

<http://www.connotea.org>

The "free online reference management for all researchers, clinicians and scientists" doesn't try to hide its sci-tech focus. Connotea was created by Nature Publishing Group as an answer to the popularity of delicious. Connotea works much like delicious by linking directly to the articles that users submit rather than creating a citation



library which incorporates the various versions of the article available on the web (ex. a JSTOR link versus the publisher's link). Connotea was specifically designed with researchers in mind by seamlessly interfacing with major scientific journals and Web sites for quick and complete citation saves. It also has the ability to export and import in RIS format, and is compatible with BibTex and other desktop reference management software. The user-base is not entirely researcher focused, however. A quick scan of the Connotea Group pages proved very spam heavy. However, from a library standpoint, this might be a nice way to share information and connect with your users.

2Collab

<http://www.2collab.com>

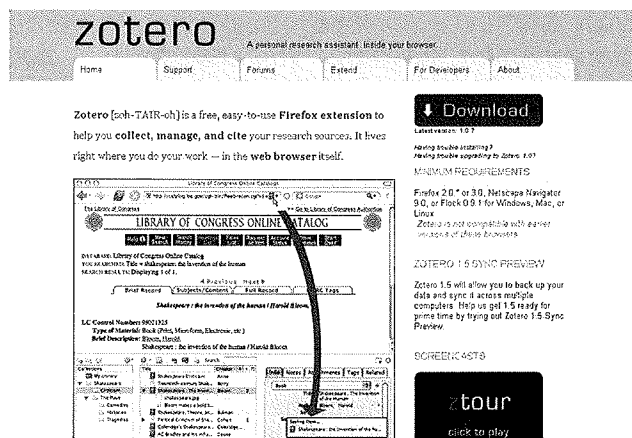
2Collab is probably the most eye-catching of the social citation managers shown here, and since it launched in 2007, one of the newest as well. The free Elsevier service has all the right features: bookmarking and reference management, group accounts for sharing resources, and a social networking component, but the overall experience is as clunky as the content is limited. First off, the site's membership is limited to registered users and it specifically attempts to encourage scientists, researchers, and librarians to collaborate and share information. Users accomplish this by creating profiles that include a semi-automated publication history generated from Scopus Author IDs, providing a validation of sorts. In the end, each cited article authored by a 2Collab user is hyperlinked to that author's user profile – this is theoretical, since I couldn't find another active user/author. The same goes for cited article records, but with a painful usability twist: some entries link to a citation record while others send you to, in the case of a non-subscriber, "a preview of Scopus" with grayed-out links that block use. Overall a particularly frustrating example of a social network that has not been fully realized.

Zotero

<http://www.zotero.org>

Since this article is all about citation managers, it would be amiss not to include Zotero, an incredibly intuitive Firefox browser add-on that downloads citation data magically from Web sites. The social aspects of Zotero unfortunately are limited, since it stores information directly to your harddrive, inaccessible from the Web. But this will not be the case for long. This free tool, made possible by sponsors such as the Institute of Museum and Library Services and

The Andrew Mellon Foundation, is testing out the beta version of their Zotero Web version that allows users to sync their citation library from anywhere, including their iPhone, and then share collections with other Zotero users. The beta version is currently available for user testing at <https://beta.zotero.org>.



of discoverability and Web 2.0 openness. My institution is not one of these, yet, but some factors that may sway the hesitant include the ability to limit shared citations to within a particular institution or department through a web accessible portal. This control might extend RefWork's capacity to include not only citations, but any document that might be of interest to a particular group such as research notes, class syllabus, or reading list. EndNote Web, currently owned by Thompson Reuters, similarly offers a "share" feature, though it is a bit hidden. Add colleague email addresses by hitting the Organize tab and clicking on "Manage My Groups" then the "Share Group" button.❖

* Buzz Gain (September 16, 2008). Social Media Statics: The million users mark. <http://news.buzzgain.com/?p=20> (Actual estimate is 9.54 Million users.)

RefShare

<http://www.refworks.com/refshare>

EndNote Web

<http://www.endnoteweb.com>

The proprietary "online research management" tool, RefWorks, offers this collaboration add-on that allows RefWorks users to share and view others' saved citations. RefShare was released in 2005, and more institutions are beginning to incorporate this feature into their subscriptions, as issues of privacy and intellectual freedom have subsided in favor

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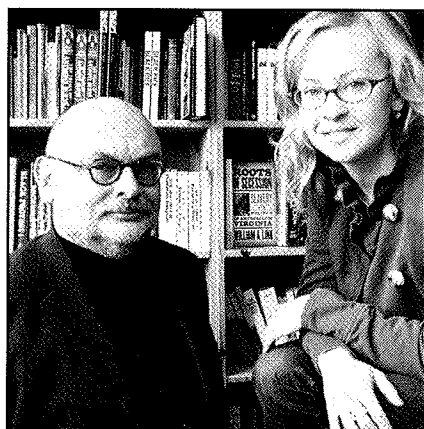
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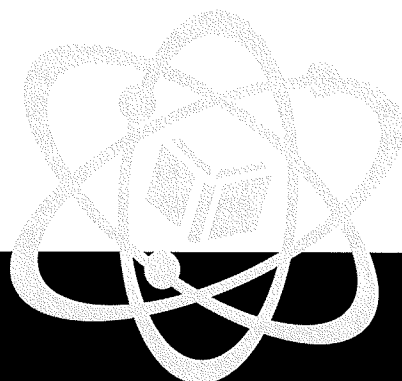
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