

Personal Information Management Tools to Made Your Research Easy

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Abstract: *The author described various online sources or tools and techniques to manage personal digital information in this paper. These tools help a researcher to manage his/her information in any format at any time and place. These tools and techniques help to preserve, retrieve and cite the information whenever the researcher requires information in their databases without time delay.*

Keywords: Information Management, Data Management, Reference management tools, citation styles, citation management, digital information management.

1. Introduction

The tremendous growth and heterogeneous collections of digital information, a researcher may have to depend on different types of information management tools to preserve, organize and access information needed to carry out their professional tasks. With the availability of new web applications, researchers provided with tools and platforms to undertaken their own collaborative content creation and distribution. However, it may also worsen the information retrieval problems, for more information resources means higher needs for proper management in order to find needed information in the right format at right time.

The term was first used in the 1980s in reference to office design systems and applied ergonomics, and it resurfaced within the framework of computer-generated content at a National Science Foundation (NSF)-sponsored workshop in Seattle in 2005. It's defined as "the practice and study of the activities people perform to acquire, organize, maintain, retrieve, use and control the distribution of information items such as documents (paper-based and digital), web pages and email messages for everyday use"

2. Need to manage information

- To save time
- To preserve information
- To maintain data integrity to understand and use information in future

3. Digital information management tools and techniques

There are lots of tools available on World Wide Web. The following are few online and offline tools are useful for researchers.

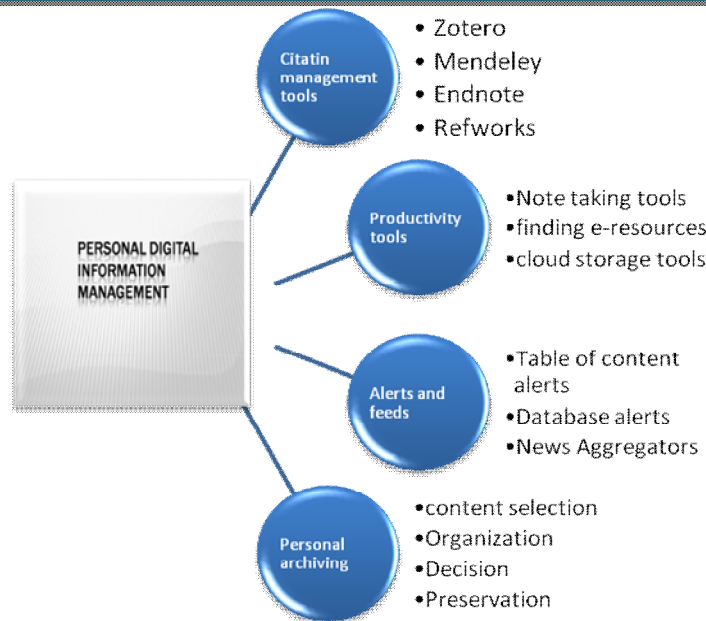


Fig.1. Personal Digital Information Management tools and techniques

3.1 Citation Management tools :

Citation managers are software packages used to create personalized databases of citation information and notes. They allow to:

- Import and organize citation information from article indexes and other sources
- Save links to pdfs and other documents, and in some cases save the document itself
- Format citations for your papers and bibliographies using APA and many other styles
- Include own notes

Some of the following Citation Management tools:

Zotero <https://www.zotero.org/>

- Zotero is a stand-alone app that easily integrates into your workflow and offers quick downloading of citations and PDFs, it also extracts citation information from many PDFs.
- It works well with a range of different media sources and websites to simplify the process of citing unusual source types.
- One can sync their citations and PDFs with their website, so any one can use their database on multiple computers and share citations with others, however there are a limited amount of free online storage. (300 MB)

Mendeley <http://www.mendeley.com/>

- Mendeley also resides as stand-alone piece of software on your computer.
- Mendeley automatically extracts citation information from most PDFs, which makes it a great choice for dealing with an existing collection of PDFs on your computer.

- Mendeley provides the option of automatically renaming PDFs based on your choice of categories. It can also watch and add any new PDFs to Mendeley into folders that you have designated.
- It has an online website that allows you to sync with multiple computers and work in groups. They offer 2 GB of online storage at no cost, but will charge for additional storage and larger group sharing.

EndNote <http://endnote.com/>

- EndNote is a software package that can be purchased and installed on your computer -- it can be used without an Internet connection.
- It also offers citation extraction from PDFs and has a batch upload feature.
- It offers the largest number of citation styles and also has good technical support for users.
- EndNote offers an iPad app (for an additional cost) and online account which allows you to work with your citations on your tablet and across multiple computers.

RefWorks <https://www.refworks.com/>

- RefWorks is mostly located on the web, so any one can use it anywhere you have internet access.
- It also offers citation extraction from PDFs and has a batch upload feature.
- It offers the largest number of citation styles and also has good technical support for users
- RefWorks has offered consistent, helpful technical support both to library staff and directly to the users.

BibTeX <http://www.bibtex.org/>

- BibTeX is a bibliographic software program that is used in conjunction with the LaTeX typesetting software. You can use BibTeX to organize your references and create a bibliography within a document created with LaTeX.
- BibTeX creates a bibliography file and each reference within the file is given a unique "key."
- References are added to LaTeX by pointing to those keys.
- References can be stored in any of the common citation managers and then output in a BibTeX format for addition to your BibTeX bibliography file.

3.3 Productivity Tools:

This online productivity tools for collaborative writing, electronic note-taking, syncing devices, sharing citations, and more.

Some of the following are:

Note taking tools:

- The Google Apps suite of tools offers one option for note-taking: Google Tasks is integrated with Gmail and Google Calendar and can be used as a quick note system.

- Citation management tools are commonly used in academic settings to organize citations and bibliographies. In addition to those purposes, RefWorks, EndNote, and Zotero all have some options for taking notes. Generally these notes are related to specific citations, however Zotero has a free standing note feature. These notes can then be integrated into folders or collections of citations related to a project.

Finding e-resources at Library and online

The University Libraries, public libraries, and digital repositories make thousands of e-books available at free of charge. For some sources are also available on subscription. Some open source sites are:

Google Books <http://books.google.com/>

Millions of public domain books (generally pre-1923) are freely available in Google Books. Discover other books by searching in Google Books and then checking in our library MNCAT/Books tab to see if we have the books available in print or online.

Hathi Trust Digital Library <http://www.hathitrust.org/>

U of M readers can download copies of public domain books in the Hathi Trust collections by clicking on "Full-View Only" and then "Download Full Book." Partner relationship (University of Minnesota affiliation) is necessary to download the full book.

Internet Archive E-Books and Texts <https://archive.org/details/texts>

Internet Archives contains 2,000,000+ items, page images and some transcriptions.

Project Gutenberg http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page

Project Gutenberg offers over 38,000 free e-books: choose among free e-books, free kindle books, download them or read them online.

The Online Books Page <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>

This site gives more than a million free books on the web.

Cloud computing tools

Multiple devices are a way of life for many researchers. There are many options for "cloud" computing, which uses the Internet to store and transfer files or deliver software. This means that various devices can be synchronized, or one can store their files in the cloud, and access them from any location with an Internet connection.

Some of the following are cloud tools:

Dropbox <https://www.dropbox.com/>

You can share, edit, and save documents, spreadsheets, photos and other files on any device. They are saved to the cloud and synchronized with your other devices. Dropbox offers some online storage for free, with more available for a small fee.

Google Drive <https://drive.google.com>

With Google Drive, you can create and share word processing documents, spreadsheets, and presentations online, and collaborate with others on group projects. Students and teachers can create documents using these state-of-the-art tools, then communicate and collaborate with each other in real time right inside a web browser window.

Firefox Sync <https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/sync/>

This browser extension allows you to access your browser history, bookmarks, open tabs as well as passwords across all your devices.

XMarks <http://www.xmarks.com/>

Sync your bookmarks across multiple browsers and have access where ever you are working.

Pocket or Instapaper <https://getpocket.com/> or <https://www.instapaper.com/>

Save a page to read later on multiple devices.

Windows Live Sync

Part of the Windows Live suite, this is a free option.

3.4. Content Alerts and RSS Feeds

Alerts and feeds provide an automated way to stay current on what's new in an area of a researcher's interest.

Content Alerts

Alerts are sent from publishers and indexes/databases. Common alerts are table of contents, search alerts, citation alerts and new publication alerts.

Table of Contents Alerts

One has to subscribe a journal's table of contents so it's sent to them when a new issue comes out. Most publishers will provide this service for free (so a library subscription to the publication is not needed, but often requires registration to the publisher's site and may charge a fee.

Database Alerts

Most databases have an alert feature. This feature allows you to set up a feed based on a search so that articles that fit the search criteria are sent to you when they are added to a database. An alert runs a saved search automatically every few days or weeks. If new items are found, you receive an email listing the results.

News aggregators

News aggregators, also called feed aggregators or RSS readers, are a great and easy way to stay informed by retrieving the latest content from publishers and other web sites. Instead of going to many websites to look for new content, you can set up a news aggregator to receive all the

content in one place. There are many aggregators available online like AOL Explorer, NewsBlur of MIT, Floc, etc.

Some mobile applications also available to get alerts different sources like BrowZine, etc.

3.5 Personal Archiving

Personal archiving best practices will help you identify your content, decide what to keep organize and keep track, and preserve then into the future.

Content selection: First a researcher needs to find out their content. Different files like own notes, books, hand written notes (need to scan to preserve), photos, videos, and any digital files to be selected.

Organization: Next, Gather your files together: Use an easy to navigate directory structure and consistent file names. Create a folder where you will keep all the files. Rename your files so they will have meaning to you in the future like including year, title, etc.

Decision: Now that the files are in one place, it's easy to decide what's important and choose which files to archive and what to throw away.

Preservation: Make sure that you can access and use your notes in the future.

- Use file formats that can be opened later. For example, save Microsoft files as easy-to-open PDFs.
- Use safe storage that will persist over time like external hard drives, and store them in a safe place. Don't use storage that might go bad after a few years, like CDs or flash drives. Remember to back up your archive somewhere else, like a separate hard drive or cloud storage such as Google Docs or Dropbox

4. Conclusion

The interest in personal information management (PIM) has growing steadily since decades. The development of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) provides an easy way to PIM that the people always have their own information at any place at any time at any format. Technologies and above mentioned tools help researchers to get their information at less time with error free. Only thing needs that the researchers/people to abreast their knowledge on new technologies and they have to learn and imbibe to use them in their daily life. Then only the researchers made their research easy in qualitatively.

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