

Irina had been working for more than a week on her latest research paper. She was using an effective search strategy so she found many good sources for her topic.

But now, she was beginning to feel overwhelmed with managing all those sources! She was keeping several lists in a Word document, but it was getting too long to manage effectively. And she needed to look up and remember the correct citation styles to use.

She was talking about this with her friend Malika who was also working on a scholarly paper. Malika recommended that she get Zotero, a free, easy-to-use tool for organizing, citing, and sharing her sources.

So Irina downloaded it on her laptop, and also on another computer that she used from time to time. She was happy to notice that it's free and available for Windows, Mac, and Linux.

Malika told her a few things about Zotero. First, Zotero makes it easy to save citations using a browser extension. You can also enter citations manually.

Next, Zotero lets you organize your citations into collections and tag them with keywords. Irina was glad to know that because she had citations for two different papers she was working on.

Another useful feature is that Zotero creates citations in the style you need, whether it's University of Chicago, MLA, APA, or some other format. Irina was glad to hear that because she had been painstakingly formatting each citation manually, while looking up the correct styles online. So she downloaded and installed the word processor plug-in to integrate this feature with her writing.

Irina was also happy to hear that she could keep her data in sync across multiple computers. She had a Windows laptop and also a Mac at home and she sometimes worked from different locations with the laptop. With Zotero synchronizing her data, she could start work on one computer, and finish it on another.

Malika also told her about another useful feature: groups. Groups allow you to share references with other Zotero users online. It's a great way to work on collaborative research projects. You can create your own groups or join an existing group. You can make your group public or private. Some groups share their reference lists publicly while keeping editing available only to group members.

Irina was curious about this, so she went to Zotero's groups page and searched with the keyword, "refugees."

One group was especially helpful to her: Neighborhood and Refugees. She browsed through the publicly viewable list and found a few more references for her paper.

Irina made a mental note to use this groups feature the next time she was collaborating on a paper.

Now that Irina had Zotero, she was feeling a bit overwhelmed by all of its features! So she decided to read the online instructions offered by CEU Library as a way to get started.

She also signed up for an online workshop offered by CEU library staff, who were super-helpful and answered all of her questions.

Irina thanked Malika for telling her about Zotero. It was already making her life as a student scholar easier.