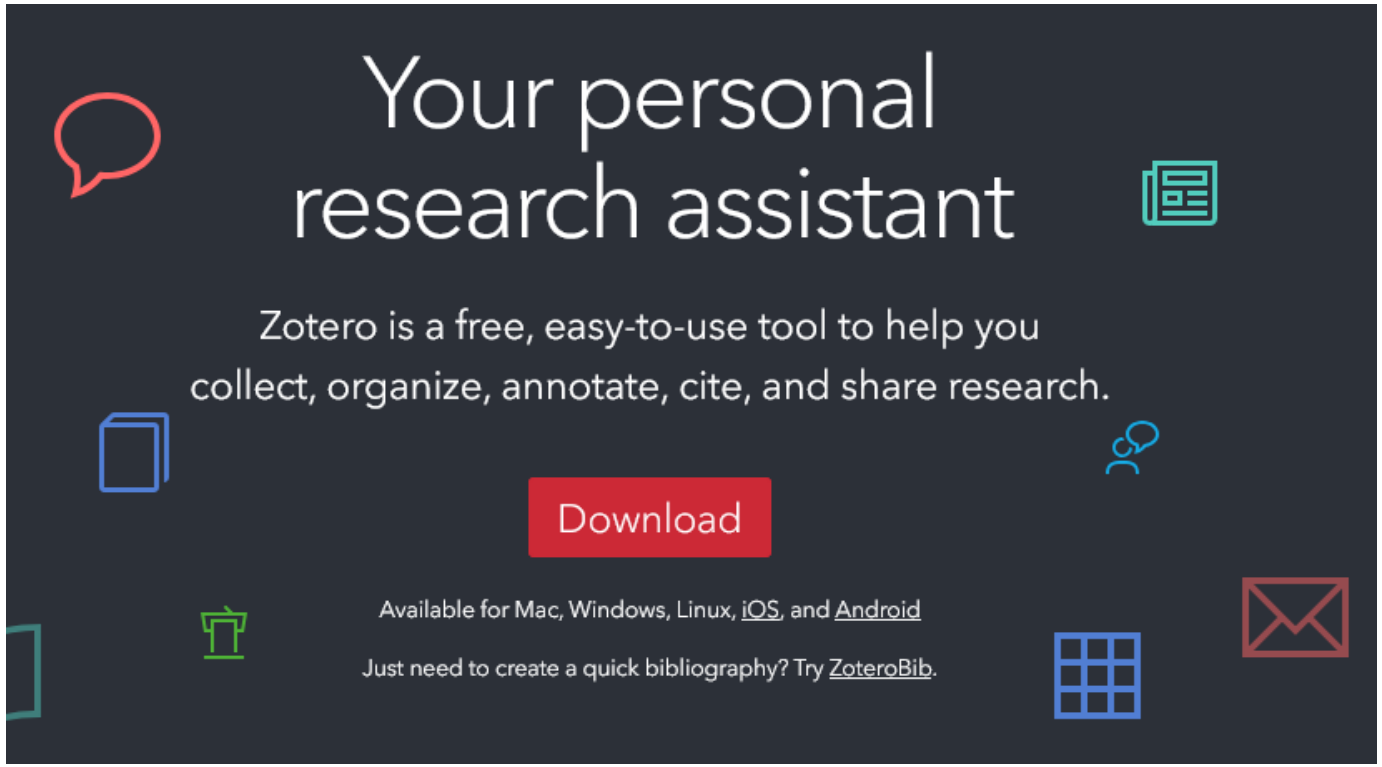
Zotero: your Personal Research Assistant

A Practical Guide to Key Features for Statistics PhD



05/02/2026

Anna Kershkovska

Michele Visentin

What is Zotero?

Free, open-source reference management software

- Developed by the Corporation for Digital Scholarship
- Available for Windows, Mac, Linux
- Works offline with optional cloud sync (300 MB free)
- Community-driven with 10,000+ citation styles

Why researchers choose it?

✓ Captures sources with one click
✓ Organizes research materials efficiently
✓ Generates citations automatically
✓ Collaborates seamlessly with teams

Collecting References: Three ways to add items to your library:

1. **Browser Connector** (most popular)
   - Automatically detects PDFs, articles, books, webpages
   - Saves metadata + full-text PDF when available
   - Works on: PubMed, JSTOR, Google Scholar, library catalogs
2. **Manual Entry**
   - Click green "+" button → select item type
   - Fill in metadata fields
3. **Import from File**
   - Drag & drop PDFs (Zotero retrieves metadata)
   - Import .RIS, .BibTeX, .EndNote files

Organizing Your Library: Smart organization tools

Collections (folders)

- Create unlimited nested collections
- Same item can appear in multiple collections
- Right-click → "New Collection«

Tags

- Automatic tags from databases
- Manual tags (color-code up to 9 tags)
- Filter library instantly

Related Items

- Link conceptually connected sources

Citing While You Write: Word processor integration

Microsoft Word / LibreOffice / Google Docs

1. Install the plugin from Zotero preferences
2. Write your document
3. Click "Add/Edit Citation" in Zotero toolbar
4. Search and insert citation
5. Click "Add/Edit Bibliography" → automatic formatting

Key features:

- Switch citation styles instantly (APA → MLA → Chicago)
- Updates automatically when you modify items
- Handles in-text citations + footnotes + endnotes

For LaTeX users: Export to BibTeX/BibLaTeX

Reading & Annotating: Built-in PDF reader

- **Highlight** text in multiple colors
- **Add notes** directly on PDFs
- **Extract annotations** to separate notes automatically
- **Search within PDFs** across your entire library

Notes feature:

- Standalone notes or child notes attached to items
- Rich text formatting
- Link notes to multiple sources
- Export notes to Markdown

Citation Styles: 10,000+ styles in the repository

Popular academic styles:

- APA 7th edition
- Chicago Manual of Style
- IEEE
- Nature
- Vancouver

Find & install:

1. Edit → Preferences → Cite → "Get additional styles"
2. Search by name or discipline
3. Click to install

Collaboration Features: Share research with your team

Group Libraries:

- Private groups (invitation only)
- Public groups (open or closed membership)
- Shared collections with editing permissions

Storage options:

- Free: 300 MB
- Unlimited: for a fee

Use cases:

- Research teams working on joint publications

Advanced Tips: Maximize your efficiency

🖇 Duplicate Detection

- Zotero → Duplicate Items → Merge automatically

🔗 DOI/ISBN/PMID Import

- Click magic wand icon → paste identifier → retrieve metadata

⚙ Plugins Ecosystem

- Better BibTeX (enhanced LaTeX workflow)
- Zotero Connector enhancements

Resources. Get started today!

🌐 **Official website:** zotero.org

📓 **Documentation:** zotero.org/support

💬 **Forums:** forums.zotero.org

📧 **University of Padova Library Support: https://biblio.unipd.it/en/helpline**

Quick start guide: zotero.org/support/quick_start_guide

Satisfaction survey

www.cab.unipd.it/Corsi-SBA-Questionario

Username: 35575
Password: (do not fill out this field)