'Endnote' – an end to all notes

Dear Editor,

The use of sophisticated computer aided devices and softwares have infiltrated all facets of life simplifying and performing daily tasks, which required a certain amount of effort and more importantly – time. With the inception of the Internet, access to a wealth of information is readily available right on our desks. Modern day researchers would undoubtedly agree to what a necessity the internet is and highlight the fact that 'the net' has made acquiring and checking research information quick and easier which would have normally taken days to find and cross check.[1]

As a postgraduate keen on research, I had always found the most time consuming, important and difficult task in a research study or scientific paper preparation is not the study itself, but the preparation of the manuscript and in particular, the procuring and arranging the related abstracts, articles, literature reviews, references and bibliographies; which have to be precise and flawless. These reference articles then have to be meticulously arranged in a standard format and traditionally, 'reference cards' are conventionally employed for this purpose. Few over enthusiasts would even painstakingly color code the reference cards subject wise or alphabetically or in the increasing or decreasing order of the publication year. The entire process on the whole is painstakingly cumbersome requiring a lot of valuable man-hours, allowing no margin for errors. In spite of all the meticulous efforts involved, occasionally related references may be left out during its citation in the manuscript or frequently, the common dilemma encountered is the addition of a new reference in between an already existing list and to have to correct the subsequent reference numbers in the rest of the manuscript. Many would have encountered this particular problem and would agree it's a huge task to edit and re structure a completed reference list and bibliography.

Having highlighted the intricacies involved in manuscript preparation, I would like to share with all researchers and students, my recent experience with this particular software, which I have had the privilege of learning to use and customizing to my needs. After my acquaintance with this software – manuscript preparation, reference search and collection has never been more comfortable. This may not be an unusually new find, and the software has been in the market for quite some time,[2] nevertheless it is worth introducing to those, yet have not discovered it.

The soft ware in question is suitably title 'Endnote', it is a good reference management program, which makes easy to record the elements of a reference: author's name, year of publication, title of article, etc.[3] It offers tools and lets you find and retrieve references quickly, produces the bibliography in the format required for a particular publication. There are many computer programs, but very few stand out as truly useful, time saving, and work enhancing.[3–5]

I wanted to report my experience with this particular reference database manager. The functions and the use of the software package Endnote are described. It functions by creating reference folders or 'Libraries' within the application. You can create as many Libraries of references as you like and title them conveniently. The references can be added manually into these created libraries or downloaded by batches from popular searching services (e.g. PubMed, MEDLINE, etc.).[3] The auto reference search however has a few limitations[6] but the ease of search can not be ignored. The software enables the search in a huge list of services to choose from. Once the search is completed the references can be selectively saved in your appropriate reference library and it saves all the details attached to the references including, abstracts, etc. These references can be added to the bibliography in any format desired. It has a preset list of bibliography formats; just select the type required for the specific journal and the bibliography list is stored accordingly. Otherwise, the required format can be set and stored as required.

The software is compatible with MS-Word and citation of the reference from the application into the word document is effortless.[7] The feature titled 'cite while your write' is amazing.[3] While you are writing your article you can insert the selected reference by just clicking on the endnote tool bar and the reference is cited in the manuscript while simultaneously adding it to the bibliography list as well.

To prepare the bibliography, endnote scans the article, replaces the placeholders with citations and prints the list of references at the end of the manuscript, in the document in accordance with the chosen style.

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It also serves as an image database. Images – including charts, tables, figures, and equations – can be organized and each image can be assigned its own caption and keywords. One of the most useful features it provides is the auto arrangement of the reference numbers and bibliography list. If by chance a new reference is included in the article in between, the program arranges the bibliography list accordingly and renumbers the references in the entire article automatically. Other features include the ability to arrange the bibliography list alphabetically or by year by a mere click and the entire list can be printed or exported as desired. The application can be recommended for scientists who are users of Palm, a special Palm edition of the application is also available.[8] Many might already be aware of endnote, and have been using it successfully. For those to yet discover it, it holds a multitude of practical advantage as a bibliography and manuscript maker.

Altogether endnote provides an excellent combination of features and its ease of use puts an end to all paper chases.[3] Its use is highly recommended to students and researchers preparing dissertations, manuscripts for publications or just assembling references for future use. The scope of this application is great and I sincerely hope that this piece of insight proves useful to many.

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