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🌐 Collecting Citations from Text V.2

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Protocol status: Other
Partial retraction: Problems with the ChatGPT addition have come up. It makes up first names if the input citation only contains initials.

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Disclaimer

Abstract

Basic steps and scripts used for translating text citations to bibtex files suitable for loading into citation management software or citation analysis scripts. 4 publically available webpage mounted scripts are suggested, that require no programming.

Updated in April 2023 to include a ChatGPT option

Materials

Computer with up-to-date web browser

Troubleshooting

Preparing text file

1   Copy citations from the source document(s) into a text (.txt) document.

> **Note**
>
> The Preparation steps are not required to use ChatGPT (step 3.4) to produce bibtex, but may produce cleaner output.

2   Edit the text document so that each citation is on a separate line with one blank line between each citation. Not all the scripts require a blank line between citations, but it does improve readability and importing.

> **Note**
>
> A text editor that includes line numbers (the type used by software programmers) makes this step easier.

Processing citations

3   I've found 4 web-mounted scripts that will do text file to bibtex file translation. Only one is needed to produce a bib file - different text citation formats may work better in different systems, however.

3.1   Anystyle.io can be used on the web, or as a Ruby script. This is the most flexible script and it allows detailed editing before the final file export. The website is privately hosted, so it's not always been available. **https://anystyle.io/**

> **Software**
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | **Anystyle.io** | NAME |
> | Sylvester Keil, inukshuk on github | DEVELOPER |
> | https://github.com/inukshuk/anystyle | SOURCE LINK |

Expected result
.bib file

3.2 This PERL script is mounted on a website and will do basic translation. No support, but it's quite good. http://www.snowelm.com/~t/doc/tips/makebib.perl.cgi

Software	
makebib.perl script	NAME
Makino Takaki	DEVELOPER

Expected result
.bib file

3.3 Hosted by the University of Toronto. Requires registration. Basic editing and checking in Google Scholar is available. Accurate and reliable.
https://text2bib.economics.utoronto.ca/

Software	
Text2Bib	NAME
J. O. Martin and Fabian Qifei Bai	DEVELOPER

Expected result
.bib file

3.4   ChatGPT can take text citations, even with errors or in non-standard formats, and format them as bibtex with high accuracy. While it is not required to process the text as much as for the other services, it may make it easier to be sure you are getting the correct number of fully formatted citations. The following prompt has worked well, but variations should work as well.

Command
ChatGPT prompt for producing bibtex formatting from text citations **ChatGPT Produce bibtex** `"Generate bibtex formatting for the following citations. Put all the bibtex in one place for easier copying." Paste the citations following the prompt.`

Software	
ChatGPT	NAME
OpenAI	DEVELOPER
https://chat.open.ai	SOURCE LINK

Note

Directing ChatGPT to put all the bibtex in "one place" stops it from producing individual entries that must be copied separately. This also seems to prevent it from stalling out partway through the citation list.

There are word/character limits in most versions of ChatGPT, so it's necessary to break up large lists into smaller numbers of citations.

Expected result

The output is in ChatGPT's code output. In the web version of ChatGPT (as opposed to the API), there is a Copy Code at the top of the code block. The copied text can be added to a text file for later importing into citation managers or imported into Zotero using the Import from Clipboard option.

Export

4   Once the script has exported a .bib file, load it into your citation manager of choice. Zotero has been the most reliable for importing. Zotero also has an option to "Import from Clipboard" if the output is available for copy & paste.

Software	
Zotero	NAME
Zotero	DEVELOPER

Note

Zotero also produces more standardized .bib and .ris files than the scripts, especially the older scripts. I have imported into Zotero, exported a bib file, and imported into other software if a direct import didn't work.