

*Connotea and Social Bookmarking

Connotea is a free online bibliographic tool developed by Nature. Inspired by 'social bookmarks managers' such as del.icio.us, Connotea is a resource allowing scientists to collate and share their references online. The site, begun in late 2004, describes itself as 'experimental', and its innovative use of the concepts of open source technology, direct linking between references, and recent developments such as geotagging have already won it many followers. It was recently announced that Connotea had been awarded the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP) Award for Publishing Innovation. A similar service is provided by Cite-U-Like, and the two services are working together to ensure compatibility.

Registration is quick and simple and does not require you to enter any personal details. Once you have registered, the entry page contains a link to your own site and a list of recent updates, links added by all visitors who have elected to make their choices visible. The abstracts of these can be viewed and the links copied into your own library, which is displayed as a link on the left of the screen.

To create your personal library, drag the appropriate (these vary slightly between Internet Explorer and Safari and FireFox) Connotea 'bookmarklet' into your bookmarks or favourites bar. This link can then be clicked when you are browsing the web to bring up a new window containing a form that should already be filled in which the address and name of the web page. It is compulsory here to add 'tags', unrestricted keywords that are used to retrieve references, and you have the option of also adding a personal description or note and specifying whether you are one of the authors of the piece. It is possible to bookmark most web pages in Connotea, but bibliographic information will as yet only be retrieved from Nature, PubMed, Amazon, and a few other sites.

An alternative method of adding an article is to retrieve the Connotea form and add the digital object identifier (doi) for the article. The information should then be retrieved automatically using CrossRef, the official doi registration point. This function means that it is possible to quickly retrieve the reference for a print article that has an electronic counterpart with a doi.

Once you have added several items to your library they are displayed as a list of links under 'my library': clicking on the title will

tags web design GTD google howto tags css firefox hacks security semantic wiki xml extensions gmail hacking linux mozilla tools ajax cms computers patterns privacy rfid ruby search 43folders applications blog books cool culture dhtml documentation getting gnome grease greasemonkey green interface internet introduction ipv6 javascript metadata monkey on photo productivity publishing rails self shaving system:unfiled TAP technology wikipedia 3x5 actions adaptive addiction Allen alpha apple asp.net atomic audio authoring automator awesome background background_channels based batman batmobile bbc biometrics blocking blogs bruce brush business calendars card cardster center cheat cheese china cisco coding coffee collaborative comics commands community contact conversions convert cream database David definition desktop desktops Directory done dr. dreamweaver dual DVD email energy engine ergonomics eric evolution extensions fact fake Fedora fingerprints firmware foaf Folksonomy free freedom future g gallery geek geeks generators globalization gmap gnowsis good gps groomin guadex GUI hardware hipster history html humor Hunter ideas im index injury instant involved IT john kuro5hin.org layout linksys main make marketing media meta metafilter meyers models monitors mouth movement mysql networking news nuclear o'reilly of egg oil open os papers passports passwords path pda pebble photography php ping productivity razor rdf reactors reference repetitive review rsi RSS S. schneier scripts Server sheet site source specs speeches sql strain strait student systems tag talks techniques technorati templates things Thompson tiger timeline tivo traceroute trends tv two unix updates URI usability usb user vi vim viral w3c wall wallpapers whiteboards who windows wired wireless word wrt54g x yahoo zeitgeist

options

- > view as cloud | list
- > sort by alpha | freq
- > show | hide bundles
- > edit bundles

A 'cloudview' of tags in Del.icio.us. Posted by Ford to Flickr, 24 June 2005:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ford/21338853/>

display the original window that you added to Connotea, the authors, PubMed ID, and doi are listed in abbreviated form beneath the title and clicking 'info' will give more in-depth information such as the names of all authors. Your tags are listed to the left of the screen where clicking any of them will display those links. When you select the same reference as someone else, that person's username will appear as a 'related user' towards the bottom left of the screen. You can then browse their library. The idea of sharing references provides an interesting alternative to sometimes endless literature searches and can channel your reading in unexpected ways, as other users will take different angles on the same areas.

One of the most useful features of Connotea is the capacity to export the references in ris format to a citation manager program, such as Endnote or Reference Manager. This means that you can save references when not working on a computer with such bibliographic software installed and import them for citing later. A possible future improvement would be to provide Connotea with similar functions to these bibliographic programs, allowing users to cite references directly from their libraries, perhaps hyper-linking back to the source or to Connotea.

Connotea is working on this question of integrating other bibliographic systems by offering Open URLs, through which users can access their institutions' library databases to view online availability or print holdings of references. Additional features include a geotagging function, which allows you to use special tags to associate latitude and longitude coordinates with your articles, and then view their geographical distribution using Google Earth (unfortunately this will not work on Apple Mac computers at present).

Critics of the open source movement should also be appeased by Connotea's policies, which combine freedom of information with the protection of intellectual property. Although the default option is to make links visible to all users, it is also possible to keep them private. The original source of all articles is acknowledged, and the use of the doi, a valuable means of identifying work on the Internet and protecting it from plagiarism, will hopefully encourage its use to become more widespread. As Connotea is a collection of links rather than hosting hard copies of papers, only references to papers are stored: the full text remaining in the original database and therefore information can only be viewed by an individual where they have access rights granted by the publisher or institution.

In the ever-proliferating world of the Internet, the greatest problem users have is not finding information, but sorting extracting and organising useful data from the mass of possible references. In doing this, the ability to communicate with peers is essential. Connotea provides a useful resource that fulfills both functions and combines new Internet technology with heightened protection of information.

For more information see:

Cite-U-Like: www.citeulike.org

Connotea: <http://www.connotea.org>

Del.icio.us: <http://del.icio.us/>

Social Bookmarking Tools (II): A

Case Study - Connotea (info). Ben Lund et al. D-Lib Magazine 11 (4), (Apr 2005)

doi:10.1045/april2005-lund. URL: <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/april05/lund/04lund.html> (6 Dec 2005)