**Some guiding questions for choosing “the right” software:**

1. *What functions do I need?*

* Research for full articles online, access to databases and catalogues, easy “picking” facilities?
* Simplistic user interface or advanced options for structuring, including organization of chapters, sections, etc.?
* Working with pdfs? Working in a team, shared projects?

1. *What are my technical preferences?*

* Do I generally use only one or more/changing PCs?
* What system is used by me and my colleagues? (Windows, Linux, etc.) Is the program compatible with my other programs?
* LaTeX interface?

1. *What else is important?*

* Are the user interface and functions self-explanatory for me? Does the program provide support or online tutorials?
* Are there “hidden” follow-up costs?
* Can I easily change to another program by exporting my data (e.g. pdf annotations)?

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| **Software** | **Mendeley** | **Citavi** | **Zotero** | **JabRef** |
| Price (ca.) | Up to 2 GB storage = free,  5 GB for 5 Euro/month for personal usage, plus team plans | < 101 titles per project = free, students = 120 Euro, some universities provide license | Up to 300 MB storage = free, 2 GB for 20$/year, 6 GB for 60$/year | Free |
| Installation | Web based and desktop, Windows, Mac, Linux | Desktop, only Windows | Web based and desktop,  Windows, Mac, Linux | Desktop, Windows, Mac, Linux, via Java |
| Access to databases of libraries, etc. | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Import | Yes, but mainly pdfs, no ISBN tracking | Yes, efficient “Citavi picker”, imports also books via ISBN | Yes, via icons in web based interface | Yes, via “JabFox” in Firefox |
| Structuring, research | Organization in folders and via tags, research in pdf documents | Detailed organization of chapters, etc. but no research in pdfs | Detailed organization of chapters, tags, notes. | Limited structuring facilities |
| Pdf annotations | Yes | Yes, to some extent | No | No |
| Teamwork | Yes, via private groups and networking platform | Yes, but only on one and the same device | Yes | Yes, via BibTeX files |
| **Advantages** | Enhanced pdf facilities, simplistic user interface | “Citavi picker”, detailed structuring facilities | Automatically reads online references, big style database/repository | Suitable for LaTeX users, freeware |
| **Disadvantages** | Import works mainly for pdfs, not for books, “hidden” costs if 2 GB storage is exceeded | Only desktop based, runs only with Windows, complicated user interface | Has to run simultaneously with WORD which may slow down the computer, no enhanced pdf facilities. | Very technical user interface |

NOTE: The guiding questions and comparisons are based on own experience and the detailed comparison of the TUM: “Softwarevergleich Literaturverwaltung - 6. Aktualisierung (Juni 2016), available in German at <https://mediatum.ub.tum.de/doc/1316333/1316333.pdf>