

Using Mendeley with BibTeX for LaTeX Document Preparation

Background

LaTeX is a document preparation system used primarily in the mathematical sciences. LaTeX is not a wysiwyg (what you see is what you get) word processor like MS Word - it is a document mark-up system. The author creates a text file containing instructions telling LaTeX how to create the document. This file is called the *tex-file* and must have file extension *.tex*, eg, *my_document.tex*.

LaTeX has a system for storing bibliographic details of references in a file, the *bib-file* with file extension *.bib*, eg *my_bibliography.bib*. Each document entry in the bib-file has a *label*, a unique text string to identify that entry. An example entry for a book in a bib-file is,

```
@book{Chapra2005,  
author      = {Chapra, Steven C. and Canale, Raymond P.},  
edition     = {5th},  
isbn       = {0071244298},  
month      = {sep},  
pages      = {960},  
publisher  = {McGraw-Hill Higher Education},  
title      = {{Numerical Methods for Engineers}},  
url        = {http://www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk/html/007126759X.html},  
year       = {2005},  
}
```

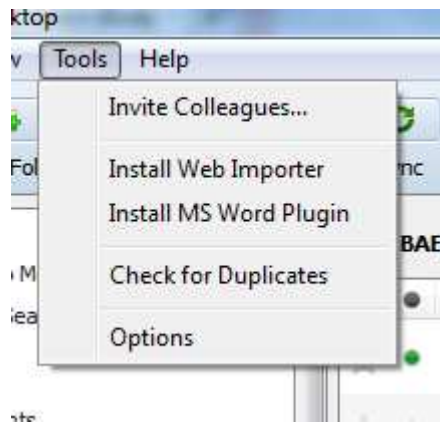
The label for this item is *Chapra2005*, the text that immediately follows the start of the entry after the `@book{`.

Within the text-file it is easy to cite, or cross-reference entries from the bib-file. First the author must specify the *style* to be used, eg, `\bibliographystyle{abbrv}` to include abbreviated author names in the citation, eg, [Chapra and Canale, 2005]. Then the b-b-file to be used must be specified, eg, `\bibliography{my_bibliography}`. Then the document author simply inserts a LaTeX `\cite` command using the label, eg, `\cite{Chapra2005}` at the location in the document text where the citation is required.

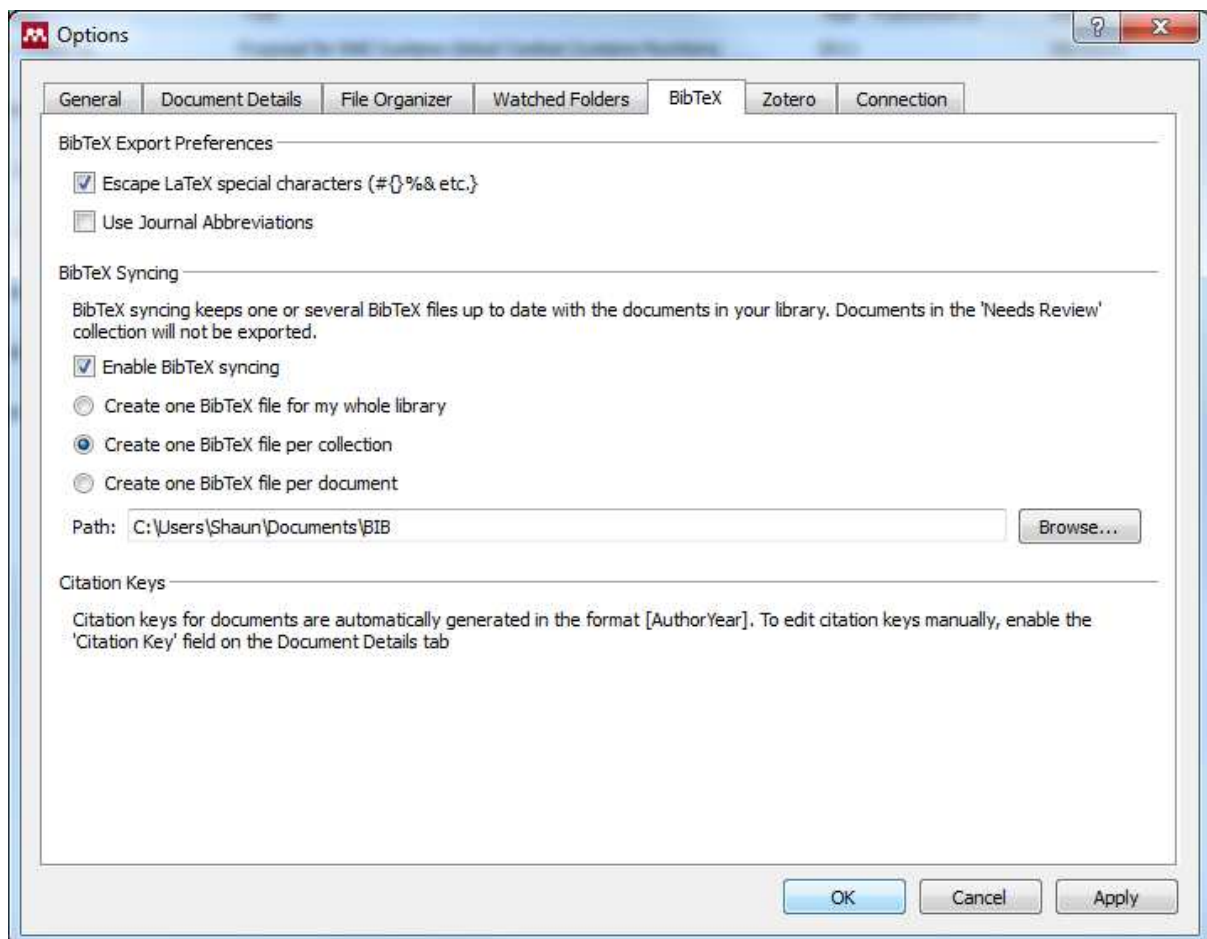
We give no further details on use of LaTeX here as this document concerns Mendeley.

Exporting a Bibliography from Mendeley

It is relatively straightforward for you to export your bibliography from Mendeley to a set of bib-files. First Mendeley must be configured to export bib-files. This is done from the Mendeley Desktop client by selecting Tools->Options



Now select the BibTeX tab and tick the box for Enable BibTeX syncing. It is also advisable to choose the option Create one BibTeX file per collection. Finally you must specify the *path* where Mendeley will store the generated bib-files. You see an example below; I have chosen to store in a folder called BIB.

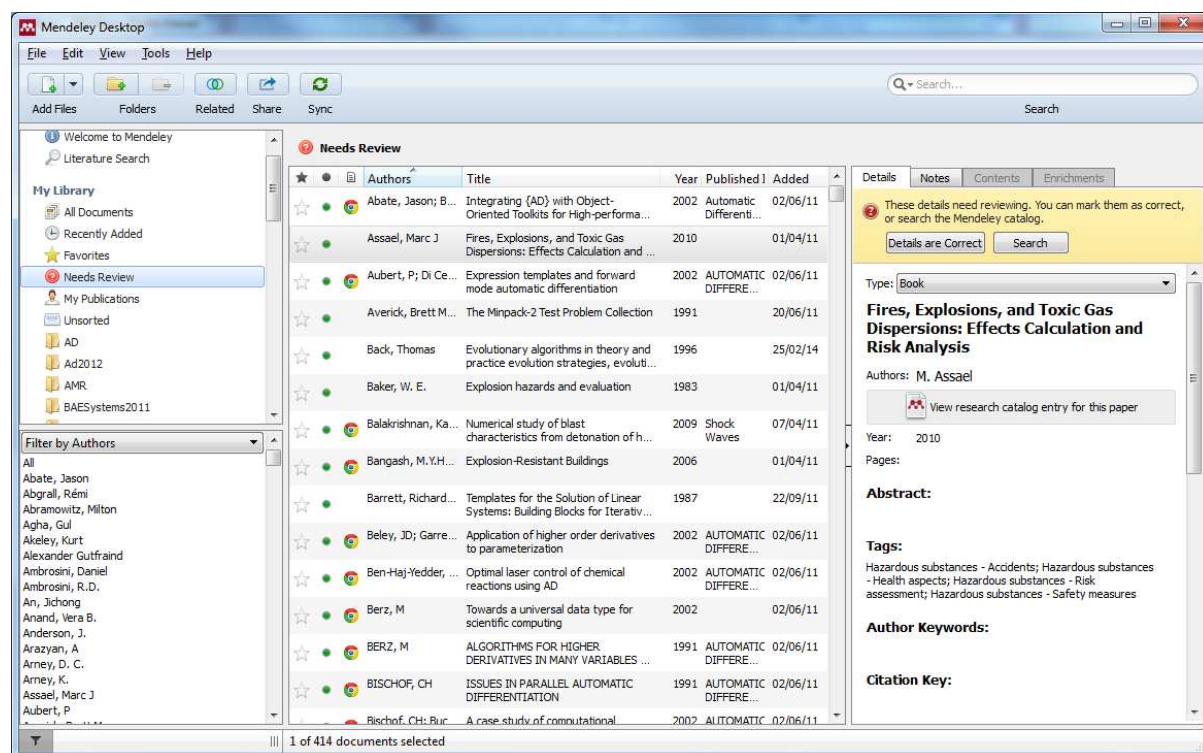


Once you select OK Mendeley will start creating the required bib-files in the folder you specified in Path above. These may now be used in LaTeX in the usual way, either copy the bib-file to the folder containing your LaTeX files, or specify the folder containing the bib-files using BIBINPUTS in your LaTeX implementation.

Trouble Shooting

My bib-files do not contain all the document entries

Mendeley will not export document entries if Mendeley has them in the state *Needs Review*. This frequently happens if you import document entries from say Zotero. You can see all the documents that need review by clicking on the *Needs Review* icon in *My Library* on the Mendeley Desktop as seen below.



Here Mendeley is flagging up that it has detected that there may be some inaccuracies in the document entry; I have no idea how Mendeley decides this. My advice here is

1. Click on the View research catalog entry for this paper which will open a web browser window in which Mendeley displays what it thinks are the definitive details for this entry in its database – you might wish to click through to the doi site to get the full details. Sometimes the Mendeley database entry is completely wrong, eg, if two books have the same name, or the entry might be for a book review and not the book itself.
2. If you are sure these database details are more accurate than those you currently have stored in Mendeley then click on the Search button in Mendeley and Mendeley will search for the entry in its database (the entry you just viewed) and update your entry with the Mendeley database one.
3. If you think your entry is more accurate then click on the Details are Correct button.
4. The entry is no longer in the *Needs Review* state and will be included in any bib-files you export.