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“Cite as U Write (CAUW)” an approach for efficient research writing and publication

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Abstract

Research writing is demanding, tiresome and time-consuming. Drafting, doing multiple revisions and saving new versions in different names makes it almost impossible to comprehend the revisions, often losing track of the original draft. Combining the literature search, incorporating citations, and accurately referencing them further adds to the problem.

This editorial on “Cite as U Write (CAUW)” summarises how researchers can efficiently implement literature search, build library and execute in-text citation in Microsoft Word review mode with track change enabled, utilising Google Scholar or other search, and Zotero (or other reference management software); all at once in a single, well-tracked document in CAUW process. The process helps in reducing errors, saving time, and ensuring academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism.

The CAUW is a cyclic workflow for an efficient writing approach, highly recommended for research writing and publication.

How to cite

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Cite as U Write (CAUW)

We have all come across the taxing task of drafting, revising, and saving new versions of revised files as v1 or v2 or simply giving different names, only to lose track of what revisions were done, making it almost impossible to comprehend what the original document looked like. This happens more so when starting to write research proposals, moving ahead with a thesis, requiring multiple revisions, and the need to incorporate changes advised by the supervisors and peers. This process is tiresome and extremely time-consuming. The burden is added further when we combine the literature search. Downloading them to read and cite later often leads to losing track of where we have saved and where to insert the citation in the document. The difficulty of accurately referencing the citation adds to the magnitude of the problem.

This editorial summarises how researchers can efficiently implement literature search, build library and execute in-text citation in the document, while the writing progresses further using Microsoft Word (MS-W) review mode-track change, Google Scholar (GS) or other search, and Zotero (or other reference management software, RMS); all maintained in a single, well-tracked document, Figure 1 and 2.¹⁻³

Writing a research proposal, manuscript or thesis is a complex task. It demands strong content and thorough in-text citation management and referencing of the cited source in a specific format. The "Cite as U Write" (CAUW, pronounced "KOW") is an approach which streamlines the process by integrating literature search, reference management, and in-text citations in real-time, reducing errors, saving time, and ensuring academic integrity, avoiding plagiarism, and improving the impact of an article.⁴⁻⁸

The CAUW is an efficient approach which ensures accuracy, consistency, and attribution to the source of information in a proper way to save, cite and write using the review mode-track change function of Microsoft Word throughout the writing process. The smart use of CAUW

combines searching literature, building a library (e.g. Zotero or Mendeley, RMS) and citing the appropriate references while writing in track changes to keep a record of all the revisions and editing made in a draft document from start to finish. This helps to keep a track starting from research proposal development to the final document, all in one file, eliminating many versions of the same document. For the ease of reading, only Zotero is used as an example here.

The CAUW is a cyclic workflow for an efficient writing process that incorporates search and citing of references simultaneously, Figure 3.

Write in MS Word with track change

Turn on review mode in the MS-W document, then enable track changes. Enabling track changes allows doing revisions and edits, keeping track of all the changes and monitoring with comments for later use. To start with, draft key points section-wise to expand writing, along with literature search (e.g. Google Scholar, PubMed, etc) for further information and content. Save the article in Zotero and proceed with in-text citations to insert it from Zotero (via Word plugin). This will embed citations and references in the correct style for the statements for which the literature was searched.

The process continues for the entire document, progressing with writing, citing, and referencing all in one go, keeping track of all changes made in the document with review mode and tracking enabled in MS-W. Save the document with the same name every time. For the draft document, it's helpful to have the document saved as, for example, 'antibiotic prophylaxis in cholecystectomy track on Zotero on'. Only at the final stage, disable the tracking by 'accept all changes and stop tracking' and unlink Zotero. Following this, if the final version of the document is confirmed, mirror copy and save as 'antibiotic prophylaxis in cholecystectomy track off Zotero off'. If further revision is required, use the 'track on Zotero on' version of the document and again save in the final mirror document with the name 'track off Zotero off'. This way, from start to finish, only two versions of the document will be created for writing. The beauty is you can

always go to the original document in the track on version. The MS-Word review mode-track changes helps avoid multiple duplicate file versions and subsequent errors.

Search and build a library in Zotero

While downloading Zotero, also install Zotero Connector (Chrome or other browser extension) to import references directly into your Zotero library while doing a literature search. During writing, turn on Zotero, enable MS Word track changes.

For literature search, the use of Google Scholar provides a wider range of scholarly publications available online. The reason for preference to conduct literature searches using GS is simple: unlike repository PubMed or Scopus, etc, which only search in their library, GS, being a search engine built on the Google browser itself, includes documents from other indexing repositories. Expanding the tab 'All xx versions' displayed below the article's name in GS helps to easily find the PubMed (or other version) of the same article.

Now, click open the appropriate article and save/import the references into a Zotero library. Organise the library with folders (named by manuscript section) for easy retrieval. While enabling Zotero, choose the appropriate document preference to insert citations in the document. Add the in-text citation by clicking on the tab 'Add/Edit Bibliography' in Zotero.

Automatically generate a dynamic bibliography that updates as we continue to add or remove citations and sources. This can be efficiently done by periodically verifying citations against the bibliography using the 'Refresh' feature in Zotero.

At the tail end of the document, build references by clicking on the tab 'Add/Edit Bibliography' in Zotero. The in-text citations during CAUW ensure appropriate match with source and Zotero's reference list, revising and repeating the cycle for search, cite, and write for new ideas and statements supported by appropriate literature as the writing progresses.

Revising, refining and cleaning

In the draft version of the document (track on, Zotero on) check for logical flow, consistency, and citation accuracy. Make final revision as desired and save in the mirror document (track off Zotero off).

The references should be cleaned and refined as per the journal requirements, e.g. even in Vancouver style there are modifications from specific journals, in use of et al. after 3 or 6 authors, the use of full-page number or only effecting digit (like 332-336. is modified as 332-6.) Adding URL/hyperlinks is another cleaning process as per journal requirements. The website of the Journal of Chitwan Medical College has detailed instructions ([author guidelines](#)) and files that can be downloaded to draft each section of the manuscript (article template), including formatting [references and hypelinks](#).⁹

Also, removing [internet] or [cited date] etc require attention as required by journals. The reference management software generated references may not always be in the correct format to meet the journal requirement and should be cleaned manually. To clean references and add hyperlinks, unlink Zotero or simply copy-paste the references in a separate file, otherwise when refreshing Zotero the cleaned hyperlinks will be removed by Zotero.

Advantages of CAUW

- Improves writing flow by building arguments with proper evidence cited from literature search in real-time.
- Maintains consistency and ensures uniformity of citation style from the beginning.
- Easier collaboration by tracking and incorporating changes in text and citations suggested by peers for a smooth revision.
- Avoids last-minute rush for revision and citation, prevents missing references and/or plagiarism.
- Finally, CAUW is very helpful in reducing errors of in-text citations and reference formatting.

While these benefits of CAUW are exemplary, there is a risk of getting carried away with over-citation and over-reliance on reference RMS.

Finally, the "Cite as U write" approach is highly recommended for research writing as it promotes academic integrity, reduces post-writing workload, and improves manuscript quality. However, balancing writing flow with citation insertion is key— iterative refinement ensures the best results.

The CAUW helps integrate citations during the drafting phase rather than leaving them for the

end. It fosters a disciplined, evidence-based writing habit.

Merging the research draft document and citation into one fluid process enhances productivity and academic rigour. This method is indispensable—it turns writing into a dynamic dialogue with existing literature while minimising errors.

This is beyond the scope of this brief editorial to provide a detailed step-by-step guide on how to use literature search, reference manager and MS-Word review mode track change.

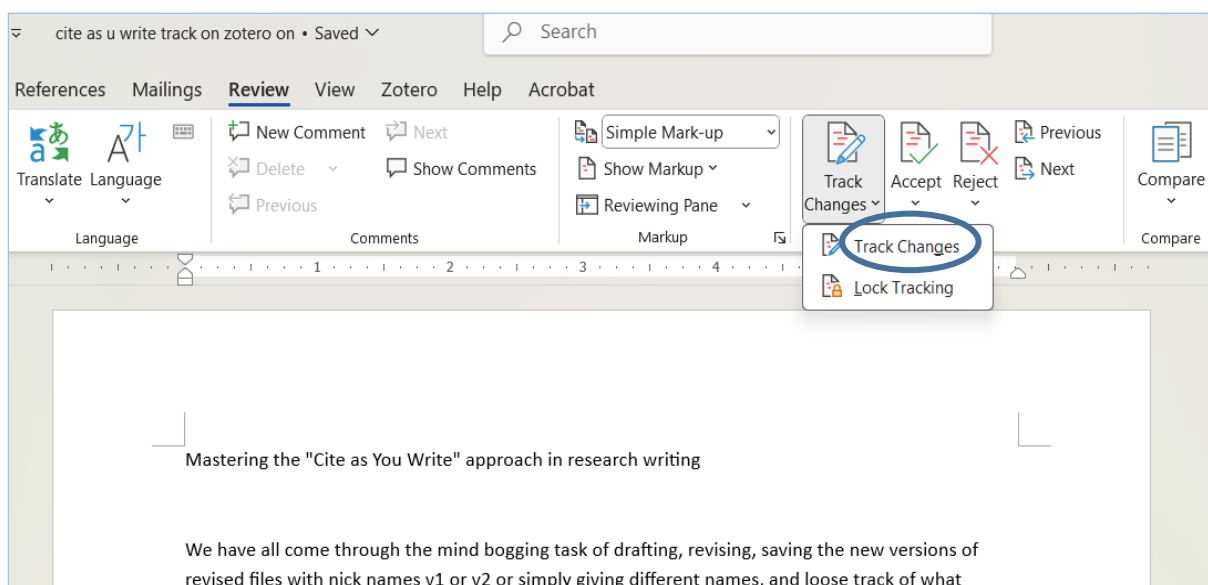


Figure 1. MS-Word review mode-track changes

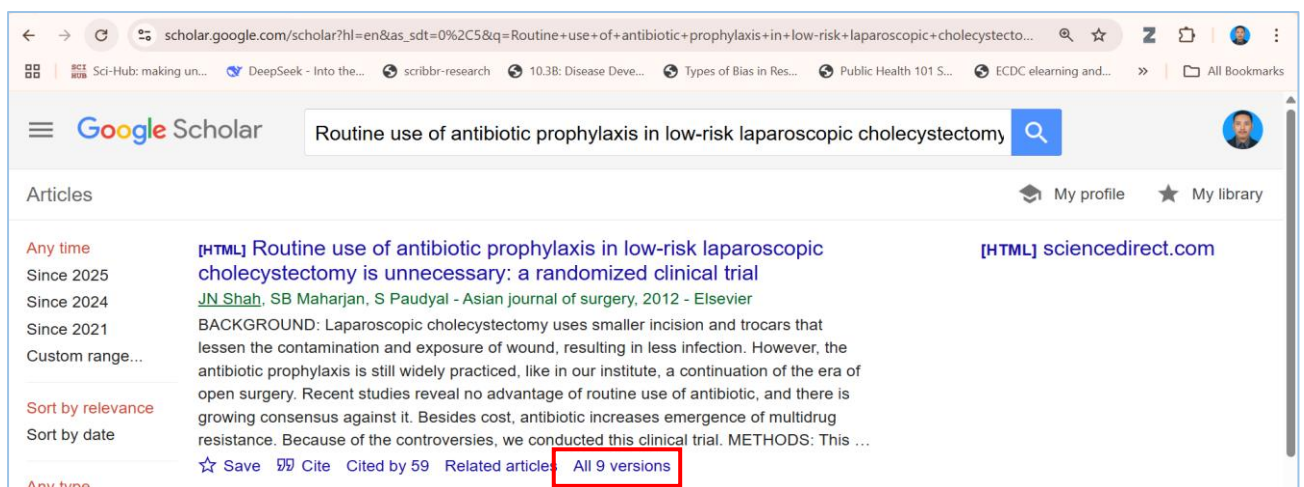


Figure 2. Literature search in Google Scholar

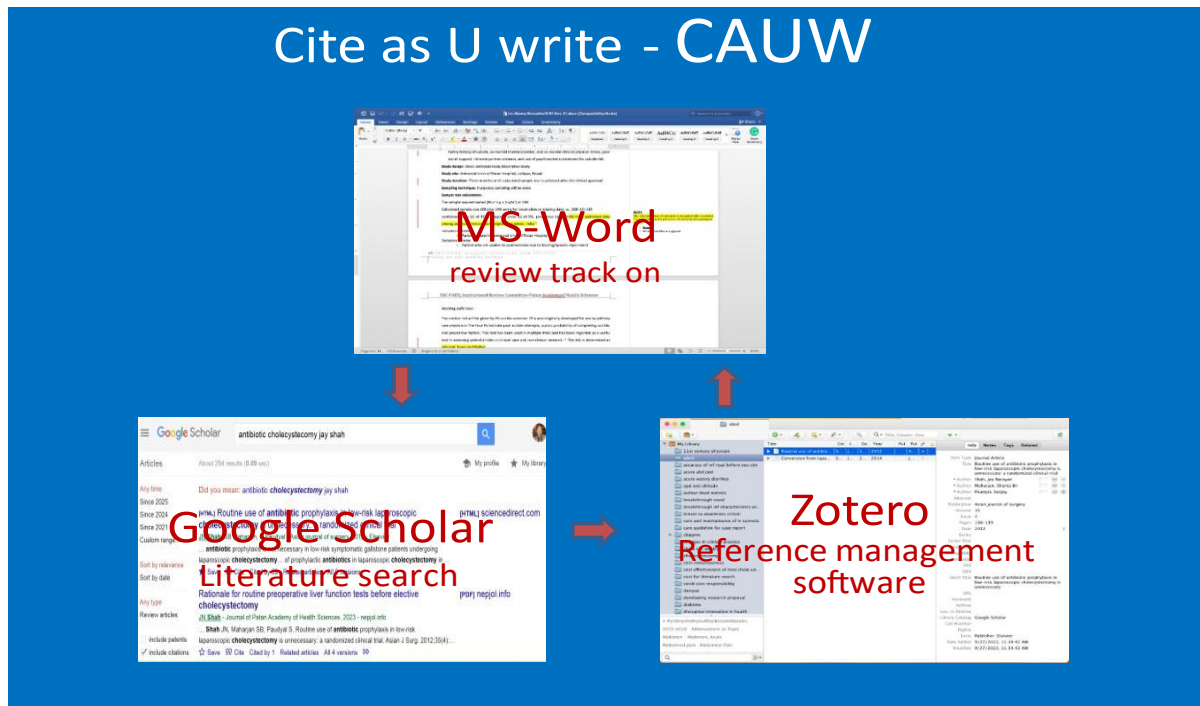


Figure 3. The use of “Cite as U Write” (CAUW) cyclic approach for efficient research, writing and publication

Conclusion

The “Cite as U write (CAUW)” process is an efficient, structured, error-minimising writing process. It utilises a word processor (MS-W) review mode-track changes to expand information by literature search (e.g. Google Scholar), cite and reference the source using reference management software (e.g. Zotero). The CAUW is a transformative process to manage clutter in research writing and publication from drafting to the completion of the research paper.

Author contribution

Concept and design: ALL; Literature review: JNS, JS; Review: All; Final approval and accountability: All.

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