

How to write the bibliography

Some useful rules that help to avoid getting your thesis supervisor upset

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#1 Use BibTeX (LaTeX)

Focus on compiling the bibliographic data and let the tools and style formats take care of indexing, composition and formatting of the references. For your thesis, the standard bibliography styles “plain” or “unsrt” are fine; for other publications, the publishers typically provide style formats.

#2 Provide complete bibliographic data for each reference

BibTeX distinguishes between required and optional entries for each reference type (books, articles, inproceedings etc.). The required fields are the absolute minimum for your BibTeX file, but aim for page numbers, volume, number and URL where appropriate.

#3 Use the correct reference type

Make sure the reference type for your BibTeX entry (e.g., @book, @article, @inproceedings, @bookchapter) matches with the reference.

#4 Use the proper names for journals, booktitles, proceedings etc. and use them consistently

Check the names with the publisher. Avoid acronyms, abbreviations and different order. Include “Proceedings of the...” for papers in conference proceedings

(Examples: “Proceedings of the IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation” and not “Proc. ICRA” or “Conf. on Robotics&Automation”;

“IEEE Transactions on Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence” and not “Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence, IEEE Transactions on” or just “PAMI”)

#5 Include all authors

Provide first and last name of all authors in the proper order in the BibTeX entry and let the tool/style format decide how the authors are printed in the reference section.

#6 Adhere to the case sensitivity of titles

To keep lower-case/upper-case writing of titles, you need to double bracket the title fields in BibTeX (i.e., title = {{This is the Title of my Paper}}),)

#7 Use descriptive names for the BibTeX entries

Define/use simple rules for labeling the BibTeX entries. This helps to ease the management of your BibTeX file(s) and to avoid double entries. For example, the labels “Rinner_Computer2015” or “Rinner_ICDSC2014” follow the simple composition rule <Firstauthor>_<Medium><Year>.

#7 Become a perfectionist

The bibliography is an important part of your thesis. You should therefore carefully prepare, check for completeness and timeliness and proofread the bibliography.