10 Days of RefWorks

Clare McCluskey Dean, Academic Liaison Librarian (Faculty of Education and Theology), Information Learning Services, York St John University

[c.mccluskey@yorksj.ac.uk](mailto:c.mccluskey@yorksj.ac.uk)

The 10 Days of RefWorks tool was developed in collaboration between the Academic Liaison Librarian from the department of Information Learning Services and an academic in the department of Children, Young People and Education (CYPE), in the Faculty of Education and Theology, at York St John University. York St John University is a Higher Education Institution in the UK, with student numbers of approximately 6500, and a specific remit to offer widening participation (York St John University 2014:10,26).

Both the librarian and academic had concerns that students on Foundation Degrees in CYPE were worrying too much about the mechanics of referencing; where to put a full stop or where a comma should go, as evidenced by questions being asked and also the reference lists in assignments. It was preferred that the focus should be on locating a good range of appropriate resources and giving due credit to those who had authored them. The students on this cohort generally work alongside their studies as the course is designed to offer academic and professional development for those already working in education or children’s and youth services. This means the two foundation courses are designed to be delivered with just one contact day per week, usually on an evening (York St John University 2015a; 2015b). It is also the case that many members of the cohort are mature students and embarking upon a Higher Education course for the first time, having had a substantial break from studying. Taking these conditions into consideration, the concerns had to be addressed in a way that incorporated remote delivery, but also offered support in getting to grips with researching at degree level.

A possible solution was developed after a discussion about whether promoting reference management tools would help (RefWorks in this instance). The academic had recently taken part in an online training package based on the 10 Days of Twitter initiative (Webster 2013) and suggested that a similar approach could be used in helping students get to grips with RefWorks at the beginning of their course, so that they were confident about the style of references they were producing and could concentrate instead on what they were putting in to the list and becoming part of the academic community.

The Academic Liaison Librarian therefore designed a blog-based package, covering the essentials of RefWorks, but also linking to why referencing is important. Using the institutional WordPress software, 10 separate ‘days’ were created, each with a focus on a different step in creating and beginning to use a RefWorks account. Contextual information was included, to build up knowledge about wider academic integrity issues and why avoiding plagiarism is important.

Each day’s content includes text-based instructions, which can be printed off, along with a short video (no longer than 60 seconds of content) of screen capture, to show the process in RefWorks itself. The videos were created using Captivate and are hosted on the University’s media library (<http://hml.yorksj.ac.uk/Browse/Tag/RefWorks>), which allows the embedding of outputs in other websites whilst being discoverable at source.

The 10 days are as follows

[Day 1: Introduction to RefWorks and creating your account](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-1-what-is-refworks-and-creating-your-account/)

Wider concepts: How referencing allows you to be part of the academic community by giving due credit to the author/creator of a work. What bibliographic referencing tools do.

RefWorks specific: Creating an account via institutional link.

[Day 2: Adding the YSJ referencing style](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-2-adding-the-ysj-referencing-style/)

Wider concepts: There are different referencing styles, adapted for the target audience of the work, but the key thing is to give due credit.

RefWorks specific: Locating the York St John Harvard referencing style in the software and setting it as a favourite.

[Day 3: Entering a reference manually](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-3-entering-a-reference-manually/)

Wider concepts: That information comes in different formats and that not everything on the Internet can be classed as a website. That each part of a reference links to a specific piece of information about the resource.

RefWorks specific: Adding a reference from scratch.

[Day 4: Importing references from Discover](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-4/)

Wider concepts: That the University has a central resource search tool (Discover, based on Ebsco Discovery System) and how this helps to find resources in the library’s print and online collections.

RefWorks specific: Locating the RefWorks export option in the York St John discovery tool and logging into RefWorks from using this option.

[Day 5: Altering a record](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-5-altering-a-record/)

Wider concepts: The importance of checking records for accuracy and reinforces the various parts of a reference.

RefWorks specific: Locating the ‘last imported’ folder in RefWorks. Editing a RefWorks record.

[Day 6: Creating folders](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-6-creating-folders/)

Wider concepts: That you can choose to organise your information and resources in a way which works for you and the importance of keeping records.

RefWorks specific: Creating folders within a RefWorks library.

[Day 7: Creating a bibliography](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-7-creating-a-bibliography/)

Wider concepts: How bibliographies help other researchers to find the information you have deemed to be worthy of using, as well as giving due credit to the creators.

RefWorks specific: Creating a stand-alone bibliography from a RefWorks library.

[Day 8: Linking to Word](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-8-linking-to-word/)

Wider concepts: Shows how different systems can interact with each other, but that you will often come across authentication barriers.

RefWorks specific: Installing the RefWorks tab into Word and linking it to your RefWorks account.

[Day 9: Citing and creating references in Word](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-9-citing-and-creating-references-in-word/)

Wider concepts: Reinforces importance of citing and referencing as a document is written.

RefWorks specific: Using the RefWorks tab in Word, to incorporate citations and a reference list/bibliography into a document.

[Day 10: More functions to explore](http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/2014/07/02/day-10-more-functions-to-explore/)

Wider concepts: Shows how tools can be adapted to individual needs, but that you do not need to use all of the functions if you prefer.

RefWorks specific: Point out functions such as RefGrabIt (to transfer website details into RefWorks library), sharing folders amongst RefWorks users, checking for duplicate records and adding personal notes to records.

The package can be used in teaching, embedded in the module and linked to Supported Open Learning activities, or as a stand-alone resource. The response was very favourable and not only is the package now in use in the Foundation Degrees, it has also been introduced as a core resource in each VLE module in every programme across the department, as well as in others in the University, up to research degree level. It is intended that research will take place into how it has been incorporated into different programmes, as it is believed it will most useful when given context by associated tasks in the academic curriculum of the degree.

Initial analysis of usage reveals that the package has been accessed over 1200 times in the period 1 November 2014-31 May 2015. Peak usage coincides with the first formative assessment period for new students (November-December) and with the hand-in dates for summative assessments at the end of the second term (April). The most popular week overall was that of 24 November, with 236 hits. Of the individual ‘days’, the most popular are Day 1 (creating an account), Day 2 (adding the YSJ referencing style), Day 8 (linking to Word) and Day 3 (entering a reference manually). This implies that users are starting to work sequentially through the programme for three steps, but then skipping to integrating with Word. Again, it is planned to investigate this further and re-evaluate the content as required.

In conclusion, the 10 Days Of RefWorks package has proven valuable in a number of ways during its initial phase. Considering it was designed to help just one group of approx. 30 students, it has taken on a life of its own and is now being taken up across a number of programmes and study levels. It will now be marketed more widely, beyond the Faculty of Education and Theology, with other faculties and with central, library-based promotion (e.g. with bookmarks in welcome week and the first few weeks of the autumn term, posters and with promotion on the library website).

Webster, H. (2013) *#10DoT: Ten Days of Twitter* [Online]. Available from: <http://10daysoftwitter.wordpress.com/> [Accessed 21 October 2014].

York St John University (2014) *Annual report and financial statements 2013-14* [Online]. York, York St John University. Available from <http://www.yorksj.ac.uk/pdf/Annual%20Report%20&%20Financial%20Statements%202013-2014.pdf> [Accessed 10 June 2015].

York St John University (2015a) *Supporting learning foundation degree* [Online]. Available from <http://www.yorksj.ac.uk/undergraduate/undergraduate-study/our-courses/foundation-degrees/supporting-learning.aspx> [Accessed 10 June 2015].

York St John University (2015b) *Working with children and young people foundation degree* [Online]. Available from <http://www.yorksj.ac.uk/undergraduate/undergraduate-study/our-courses/foundation-degrees/wcyp.aspx> [Accessed 10 June 2015].

10 Days of RefWorks: <http://blog.yorksj.ac.uk/10daysrefworks/>