

Using a BibTeX reference list with LyX: Incredibly Easy!

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The newest version of this document should always be available at
<http://pj.freefaculty.org/guides/Computing-HOWTO/LatexAndLyx/LyX-Bibliography>.

Basic Question: What the Heck Are You Talking about? A Bibliography File?

People who prepare papers the “old fashioned say” type citations into their text, like Jones (1980). Later, when the paper is done, they go to the end and start typing in a reference list. That’s how we all did it, back in the day. What’s wrong with that?

1. The citations might not be typed correctly
2. Some citations in the text might not be included in the reference list
3. Some items in the reference list may not be cited in the document.

What is the solution? Keep a bibliography file, refer to it in the L^AT_EX document, and let the L^AT_EX system merge the 2 sets together to make a great looking document. The appearance of the final report is governed by a bibliography style file, “*.bst.” At one time, we had a lot of tricks to create and revise bst files. The Internet has relieved some pressure to be good at making a style file because, as soon as one person has a good style for a journal, then they, or the journal editors, will make the style file available.

What is BibTeX?

BibTeX is

1. A text format for bibliographic items
2. A suite of programs that work together with L^AT_EX to produce papers.

A BibTeX file is an ordinary text file, such as

```
@ARTICLE{JonesRadclifTabor1995,  
author = {Bradford Jones and Benjamin Radcliffe and Charles Taber and Richard Timpone},  
title = {Condorcet Winners and the Paradox of Voting},  
journal = {American Political Science Review},  
year = {1995},  
volume = {89},  
number = {1},  
pages = {137-144},  
owner = {pauljohn},  
}
```

It can be tricky to maintain all of that. If it is typed incorrectly, the document will not compile.

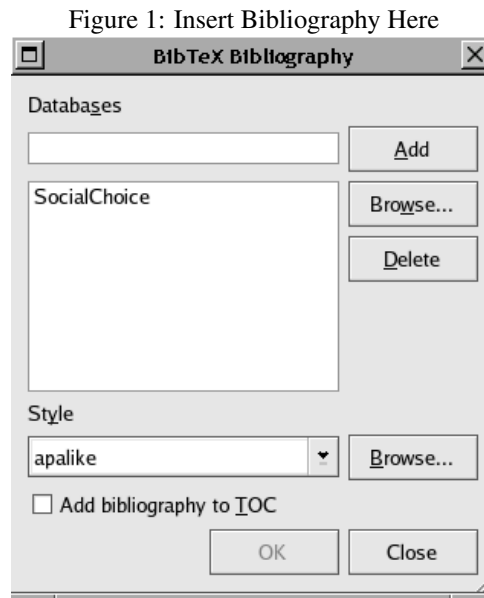
There are many bibliographic programs that can help. Lately I use “jabref” or “pybliographic”.

After the *.bib file is created, then the “tag” (such as JonesRadclifTabor1995) is used to refer to the publication inside the L^AT_EX document.

What to do in LyX?

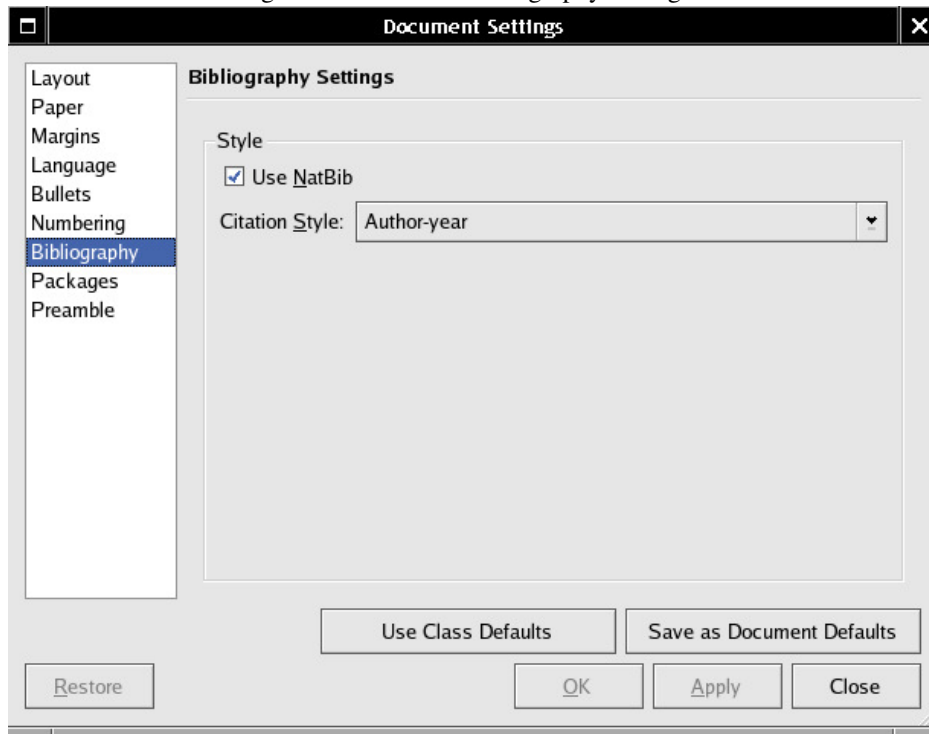
1. Go to the place in your document where you want the references to be presented (presumably, the end). Click Insert/ Lists & TOC/ BibT_EX Bibliography. LyX opens a menu, and in there you tell it
 - (a) the name of your bib database, the things discussed in the previous section.
 - (b) a bibliographic style selected for your target journal/publisher. I have a separate instruction about using citations in the style of the *American Political Science Review*. Until you get my apsr biblio style, you should choose a style such as “apalike” (American Psychological Association) because it will be familiar to you.

Close that dialogue menu, you are finished.



2. Click LyX’s Layout/Document setting, choose Bibliography. Here you specify the style of citations you want. In social science, we prefer the author-year citation format, so click the “Use NatBib” button. And save your settings. Warning: NatBib will not work with all bibliography styles, but it does work with apalike and it will work with any of the ones I recommend, such as my apsa.

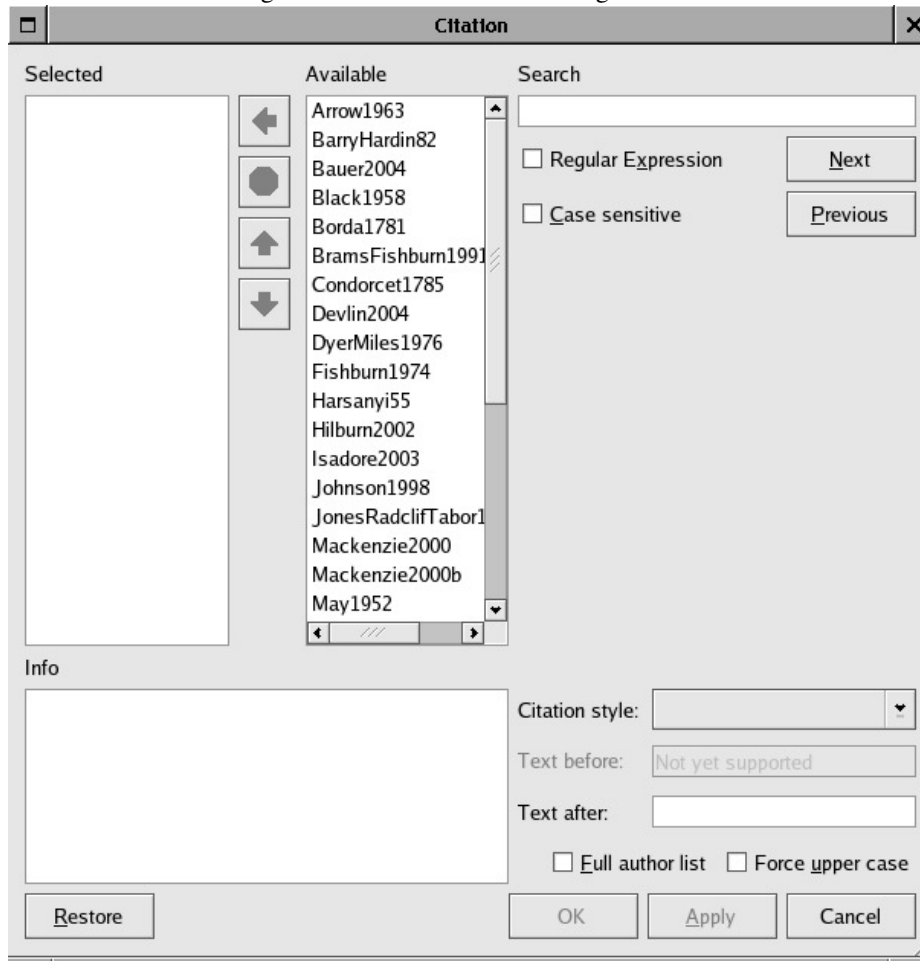
Figure 2: Document/Bibliography Dialogue



3. Now, suppose you are writing a document and you want to cite something. Click LyX's "Insert/ Citation button. A menu should open and you should see the list of reference "keys" in the column on the right. LyX should have read your bib file and found all of the items.

I'll go ahead and cite (Arrow, 1963), so you can see that $\text{L}^{\text{A}}\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$ and $\text{BibT}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$ work together to build a reference list at the end.

Figure 3: Citation Insertion Dialogue Menu



Changes Coming

The original program “bibtex” has limitations and it will very soon now, if it is not yet, be replaced by a more capable alternative. When that happens, the new program will have to filter out to the users and L^AT_EX itself will need adjustments.

The primary limitations of bibtex are caused by its age. It was not written for the Unicode character set, making it difficult to include some names in international character sets. Also, it is not designed for the footnote style of citations. It is definitely geared to the “reference list at the end of the document” style.

Old bibliography files will still work, I believe, even in this brave new future. I don’t think the BibT_EX format for typing out citations will be altered much by transition, except some new document types will be inserted.

References

Arrow, K. (1963). *Social Choice and Individual Values*, 2ed. Wiley.