Transcript: "Tracking Sources with Evernote and Zotero"

[0:00] Tracking Sources with Evernote and Zotero. A digital writing tutorial from Bedford/St. Martin's.

[0:07] Every writing project that requires research involves finding reliable sources, reading critically and taking notes, using your sources to support your points in your writing, and citing them correctly. It's a lot to do, right? And there's an important part of the whole process that can be easily overlooked: keeping track of your sources in an organized way. This step affects everything else you do in the research process. The good news is that keeping track of sources effectively helps make all the other steps easier.

[0:36] By staying organized, you'll find it easier to access your sources when you need them, make connections among sources, and avoid plagiarism. And when the time comes to make your works cited list or bibliography, having all of the necessary information together in one place will save you lots of time.

[0:52] Many digital tools are available to help you save and organize sources that you find on the Web, in online databases, and elsewhere. In this tutorial, we'll look at two free tools: Evernote and Zotero.

[1:04] Evernote is a free program that you can download from Evernote.com. It has two components that work together: a Web clipper for your browser and a desktop version. You can also get a mobile version for your iOS or Android devices.

[1:18] Let's see how it works. I'm writing an academic paper about cyberbullying among teens, and I'm looking for sources to help me answer one of my questions, "What types of bullying prevention programs are most effective?" To begin, I want to get a better sense of existing programs by looking for some examples of resources offered by government agencies. As I search the Web, I can use Evernote to save the full text of the sources I find, as well as all the information about those sources that I'll need for my works cited list. When I find sources that seem useful, I click the Evernote button in my Web browser. The Web clipper dialog box appears, and I click "Clip article." This Web page is now saved in Evernote.

[2:02] After I've collected several sources, I open Evernote on my desktop. When I click the sync button, the sources I've recently saved appear as notes in the middle pane. I create a notebook for my writing project by clicking "New Notebook" and giving it a descriptive name. I'm going to call this notebook ENG210 Bullying Paper. Next I'll move my sources into this Notebook by selecting them and then clicking "Move to Notebook." I select my ENG210 notebook, and now all my sources will be visible there. I can also upload PDFs, videos, images, and other files for my project to the same Notebook.

[2:43] As I read my sources, I can update the information about them in the right-hand pane and add any missing information. For instance, Evernote didn't record an author for this website, so I'll add that information in the author field. I'm also going to tag this source with the label "bullying policies." Tags will help me keep my sources organized and make searching them easier. As I read my sources and begin to make connections among ideas, I can highlight information and make notes directly in the text, using the editing features. Or I can add a separate note by clicking "New Note" at the top of the screen. I can brainstorm ideas for my paper here.

[3:21] A great feature of Evernote is that it lets you search the full text of the sources you add. I cut and pasted this quote into my paper, but now I can't remember which source it came from. I type a portion of the text into the search field, and Evernote finds the passage in one of my sources. Now I can add an in-text citation. I can also check other phrases in my paper to be sure I haven't accidentally plagiarized.

[3:47] Now that you're familiar with a few of Evernote's basic features, let's look at another free and useful tool for managing your sources: Zotero. Like Evernote, Zotero displays information in three panes: "Collections" that you create on the left, your sources in the center, and information about your sources on the right.

[4:05] One great feature of Zotero is its ability to work with your word processor to create in-text citations and your Works Cited list. To add an in-text citation, I go to the Add-Ins tab in Word and click the "Insert Citation" button; then choose my citation style. I search a keyword to find the source I want and then click Enter to insert the citation. I have to make a small correction to make sure the citation is inside the period, as MLA style requires. When I'm ready to create my Works Cited list, I go back to the Add-Ins tab and click the "Insert Bibliography" button. Zotero creates the citations for me.

[4:48] But remember, software can't *really* do your work for you. There might be mistakes or formatting errors that it doesn't catch. Always proofread! You're still responsible for making sure everything is correct!

[5:01] So, if Evernote and Zotero are both useful, which one should you use? That's a question you'll have to answer. There is no single best program for managing your sources—it depends on your preferences and the needs of your project. Some researchers even like to use more than one program. Try a few different ones to see what works best for you.

[5:20] Also, ask the reference or research librarian on your campus for advice. Librarians are research experts, and he or she might have a specific tool to recommend, perhaps one that your school subscribes to. A librarian can also help you find the best sources that might not be available freely on the Web. And many libraries offer workshops to help you develop research skills and strategies. Find out what help is available on your campus.

[5:44] Now you know the basics of tracking sources with Evernote and Zotero. For more help, check out the tutorials and user guides at Evernote.com and Zotero.org. Good luck with your research!