

ACADEMIC CHALLENGE USING WRITING VIRTUAL TOOLS

El desafío de la escritura académica utilizando herramientas virtuales

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Resumen

Las tecnologías se insertan en la innovación educativa, dando la posibilidad de incorporar herramientas digitales en los abordajes investigativos. En este escenario Scrivener y Evernote son herramientas digitales para la escritura académica, permiten insertar notas escritas, notas de voz, resúmenes, documentos, imágenes, citas de autores, audios, *links*, entre otros. La formulación del problema parte de la necesidad de incrementar investigaciones en todos los niveles educativos de forma fácil y automatizada. El objetivo de este estudio es reflexionar sobre el aporte significativo que poseen las herramientas virtuales en la escritura académica. La metodología empleada está enmarcada dentro del paradigma cualitativo de tipo no experimental y documental, posee un muestreo probabilístico intencional de 57 fuentes documentales primarias que reúnen artículos científicos, libros, fuentes oficiales, informes técnicos, autores y organizaciones que respaldan las teorías de las herramientas digitales para sustentar de forma científica el artículo. La conclusión radica en que las herramientas Scrivener y Evernote generan un aporte significativo al desarrollo de la escritura académica, logrando contribuir al impulso de la publicación de artículos académicos y científicos que, asociados a las tecnologías de la información y comunicación, promueven el desarrollo de este tipo de comunidades investigativas, para lograr una mayor optimización de recursos intelectuales como un desafío para potenciar la cultura académica.

Palabras clave

Escritura académica, Evernote, herramientas de escritura, Scrivener, tecnologías.

Abstract

Technologies are inserted in educational innovation, giving the possibility of incorporating digital tools in research approaches. In this scenario, Scrivener and Evernote are digital tools for academic writing; they allow to insert written notes, voice notes, abstracts, documents, images, quotes from authors, audios, links, among others. The formulation of the problem is based on the need to increase research at all educational levels in an easy and automated way. The objective of this study is to reflect on the significant contribution that virtual tools have in academic writing. The methodology used is framed within the qualitative paradigm of a non-experimental and documentary type; it has an intentional probabilistic sampling of 57 primary documentary sources that consist of scientific articles, books, official sources, technical reports, authors and organizations that support the theories of the digital tools to scientifically support the article. The conclusion is that the Scrivener and Evernote tools generate a significant contribution to the development of academic writing, contributing to the promotion of the publication of academic and scientific articles, which associated with information and communication technologies promote the development of this type of research to achieve greater optimization of intellectual resources as a challenge to enhance academic culture.

Keywords

Academic Writing, Evernote, Writing Tools, Scrivener, Technologies.

Introduction

The challenge of academic writing using virtual tools makes it essential to incorporate virtual scenarios in the production of knowledge through writing. In this sense, this research wants to reflect on the significant contribution that virtual tools have to academic writing, since there is little generation of knowledge of teachers and students at the high school level



and higher education. In this sense, new information and communication technologies (ICTs) provide numerous ways to strengthen writing processes. Valverde (2018), states that “digital spaces serve to involve students in tasks such as articles, research projects, essays, etc., in short, any academic work where students have to locate scientific-academic knowledge, analyze it and express it in writing” (pp. 5-6). It is therefore appropriate to harmonize technological tools for the production of new knowledge in a scientific way.

Academic writing is an important part in the generation of knowledge from the university and therefore:

It is a dimension of the epistemic work and is part of the work of production and teaching of knowledge in university community spaces [...] It includes a variety of textual classes with different cognitive-communicative function: essays, research projects, research reports, research articles, academic articles, academic reviews, presentations, thesis (Coronado López, 2021, p. 71).

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In that sense, “tools like Scrivener and Evernote make writing easier” (Schcolnik, 2018, p. 30), which favors academic and professional environments for writing. Trigo (2013) highlights that Scrivener “tries to combine the efficiency and speed of the digital world with the flexibility and comfort that pencils and notebooks provide throughout life, something that until now had not achieved any text editor” (p. 2). In this perspective, “Scrivener is much more than most writing programs or a traditional word processor” (p. 25). Thus, with the use of the tools indicated, both teachers and students will be able to write taking advantage of the benefits of ICT, since, with the automation of quotes, abstracts, draft texts, etc., one can work from anywhere in the world and on any device: smartphones, Tablets, smart watches, computers, *laptops*, etc.

“Evernote is a notepad, which allows all kinds of information to be stored as personal annotations, [...] it is an excellent resource for collecting, storing, categorizing, labeling, retrieving and sharing information with students and other researchers” (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso 2018, p. 23). In other words, it is a virtual tool that serves to organize information, so it is very versatile for writing texts through notes. In fact, Gaspar (2013) points out some important functions of the tool:

Create notes from text, audio, voice and images, organize notes. On the other hand, it has other uses such as: searches with quick access to information, information sharing, creation and synchronization of notes on all devices, among others (p. 12).

Therefore, it is a current and important topic, since digital tools for writing are increasing in terms of their use and serve to optimize written notes in a digital and automated way; they contribute to academic writing from virtual platforms that are easily accessible; they promote the creativity of writers, whether they are students or teachers; they enhance writing as a contribution to research from various scenarios such as the publication of texts, articles and essays, a perspective that modern education demands in the production of knowledge.

The work methodology used is a research framed within the qualitative paradigm, with non-experimental and documentary design, which uses documents to obtain the information. Sampling was intentional probabilistic of 57 primary documentary sources, consisting of scientific articles, books, official sources, technical reports, authors and organizations that support theories on the use of virtual tools in writing, collected from high-impact databases such as Scopus, Elsevier, Dialnet, Google Scholar.

The structure of the article begins with an explanation of what academic writing is. Next, what is academic writing in higher education is pointed out, highlighting the scientific benefits of publishing articles by teachers and students in scientific journals. Then, approaches to academic writing are presented with virtual tools such as Scrivener and Evernote, which constitute automated methodological processes for more effective and interactive writing. The following sub-topic tries to be framed in the use of technological tools that are found on the Internet such as: *blogs*, videos, websites, high impact research sites, digital books, virtual documents, etc., with the purpose of developing skills for writing in a digital way, mainly when saving notes related to bibliographic references in an agile and secure way. The article concludes with reflections on the academic benefits that the Scrivener and Evernote tools have for researchers; likewise, it reflects on the teacher's vision regarding the use of technology in terms of creativity and automation, and the consequent publication of research in scientific journals in an easy and motivating way.

Academic Writing

Writing allows knowledge to be generated through research, socializing ideas and thoughts to produce science. The writing process consists of a set of steps including pre-writing, writing, reviewing, editing and publishing to write an essay, a short story, a poem, a letter, etc. Writing is a complex and recursive process where different views converge on a com-



mon idea. In this order of ideas, Marinkovich (2002) states that writing is conceived as “non-prescriptive, focused on the process, which in the light of the contributions derived from psychological, social and linguistic theories, allows us to approach what really happens when we learn to write” (p. 226). Therefore, to structure academic texts it is necessary to consider several aspects, such as: identifying the subject, proposing variables, determining chapters, citing bibliographic references, paraphrasing, writing, and concluding, all this will allow forming research scenarios with scientific approaches without problem.

On the other hand, Neira and Ferreira (2011) point out that in the “writing process, the author must carry out different activities of higher thought in which several factors interact in the development of the text” (p. 47). Therefore, writers must consider ideas and concepts to organize thinking correctly. Likewise, Porter (2002) points out that “inter-connected writing between networks strengthens the process by taking advantage of the Internet and virtual tools, whose interconnection will revolutionize new practices of production, interaction and publication of written texts” (p. 39). Today there are new pedagogical forms such as virtual education, where writers connect *online* with other authors with the purpose of exchanging ideas, i.e., working collaboratively and obtaining rapid, automated results, framed in the production of scientific texts and improving scientific relations.

Calle (2014), meanwhile, states that writers at the time of writing:

They can combine different ways in their process of constructing meanings using images, sounds, graphics, in a complementary way, achieving that they act as a unit with complete sense and if one of them is deleted from the text, its meaning changes or disappears (p. 43).

In this sense, writers should enable the exchange of ideas, graphics, previous publications, etc. to feed back research and enable indexing in scientific journals.

Finally, academic writing is also called academic literacy, understood as the ability that teachers and students must have to produce scientific and academic texts. Carrasco (2016) considers that to train in the environments of academic and scientific writing “we must rethink the approach we have regarding writing in general, reconsider the process of writing and overcome some fears we may have for writing” (p. 158). Finally, make a good statement of what really is wanted to communicate and how would be the most effective and clear way to transmit knowledge,



without forgetting that the dissemination of academic writing contributes to the trajectory of scientific communities in the production of science.

Academic writing in higher education

Academic writing allows researchers the opportunity to discover ideas and concepts for the generation of new knowledge, therefore, the development of skills for writing texts is a challenge in the production of science. In this reality, Ganga Contreras *et al.* (2015) state that:

One of the primary tasks that the university must assume is the one related to the generation of new knowledge, which must be at the service of the society, because these entities must assume the responsibility of generating and radiating the intellectual life of their academic community (p. 2).

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Hence, for Cassany (2006) “writing is a process of elaborating ideas, in addition to a linguistic task of writing. It is much more than a means of communication, it is a learning instrument” (p. 18). Consequently, writing involves reviewing and reorganizing ideas to generate new knowledge, through the continuous adjustment of the written communicative situation, and being a significant contribution in the construction and production of research in a scientific way.

It should be noted that the reading materials and the usual writings in the university belong to the so-called academic genres. According to Cassany (2006), the interest in studying each gender lies in the fact that by knowing how it is and how it works, its teaching and learning can be improved, since “learning to use a gender is learning to develop the professional practices that develop in it” (p. 23). In other words, to write new academic texts, one must consider research and publications by faculty and students of the academy, and continue with new research for the benefit of the university scientific community.

For his part, Castelló (2009) argues that the writing skills acquired by university students should be:

- To conceive and use writing as a tool for learning and thinking.
- To know and regulate the activities involved in the process of composition of academic texts.
- To be part of the scientific community and discuss other academic texts.
- To write from and for a reference discursive community (p. 28).

Consequently, higher education takes on a challenge in university students to enable them to write tasks in all areas of knowledge such as: research, publications, presentations, reports, essays, questionnaires, etc., with the purpose of producing science. Hence, it will allow developing capacities and skills to generate new knowledge in all research scenarios.

Academic writing with virtual tools

Currently, “the construction of scientific knowledge originated by research activities is one of the main tasks of the professors-researchers” (Márquez & Gómez, 2018, p. 32). Thus, it is necessary that in current times academic writing becomes the main product of the university, which will allow to contribute significantly to the production of science to align with the modern and technological world. However, to strengthen academic writing, technologies exist today. Fidalgo (2021) states “the role of technology is crucial within the field of academic writing, as students turn to online tools to write their academic works, especially when writing their texts” (p. 2). Thus, in the practice of academic writing, several types of tools have appeared that help in the digital production of written texts, among which stand out office packages such as: “WPS Office, Libre Office, Open Office, Google Docs, Draft, Shaxpir 4, Think Free Online Editor. Also in programs like Microsoft Word, Apple Pages, WordPerfect” (Fuentes Huerta, 2019, p. 1).

There are also online word processors, such as the cloud services offered by Microsoft and Google, which “are collaboration platforms [...] based on the cloud, they allow access to a set of computer programs (word processing, instant messaging, professional email, file sharing, etc.) from a computer” (Mozzaik, 2023, p. 2). Hence, they allow academic writing to be done collaboratively, these tools have advanced features such as allowing the construction of knowledge together, recording the modifications that are being made to the text, accounting for the time invested, registering online comments, sending notifications to email, among others.

In addition to digital tools for word processing, there are others that complement each other to improve academic writing. As pointed out by Valverde (2018), some examples of university initiatives in the management of multifunctional digital platforms are indicated:

The RedacText 2.0 interactive platform, created by the Complutense University of Madrid, specializes in the study of teaching and learning processes in academic texts. Also, LEA (Laboratorio de Enseñanza



Aprendizaje), is a platform of the University of Chile that has different virtual courses on academic writing for students to improve their writing with autonomy. Another example is the Javerian Writing Center of the Pontifical Javerian University of Cali in Colombia, which allows access to resources for teachers and students of academic writing and has free tutoring services (p. 45).

There are several universities that have implemented high-reach virtual platforms to promote writing in students. The latter are known as social tools and serve to process texts, as they promote the development of autonomous and collaborative skills, turning academic writing into healthy recreational scenarios for the production of scientific texts.

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Writing and digital technology

The concept of “digital writing” is related to the use of information and communication technologies. The evolution of these implies giving it the level of importance that currently predominates in technological resources. Porter (2002) speaks of “interconnected or internetworked writing to integrate the writing process into Internet-based communication, and the interconnection that revolutionizes new production, interaction, and publishing practices” (p. 43). So, ICTs allow access to information instantaneously, of which it will be the writers who take advantage of publications, PDF articles, virtual books, to serve as an input in academic writing, without forgetting to cite the sources or bibliographic references, so that the written document has the respective relevance and seriousness.

New technologies have created a more interactive world of communication and as Slotnisky (2015) points out:

Much of this communication between people is done through a digital medium such as Twitter, Facebook, Messenger, e-mail or chat platforms. Independent of the rules imposed by these platforms, there are two characteristics that are common when communicating, and they are the abbreviations and the immediacy in the act of writing and reading that allows the typed text to be shared instantly (p. 15).

According to this author, perhaps it is the fast-paced moment that society is currently experiencing that leads to faster communication and the demand for an immediate response. For this reason, abbreviations and symbols are used to indicate something that wants to be expressed. Thus, ICTs are an alternative for faster and more effective communica-

tion, at the same time to awaken the interest of writing in young people and adults.

Therefore, digital spaces have managed to attract people's attention to the point that social networks, search sites and web pages are the first scenarios that captivate the attention of thousands of people every day, and lead them not only to read large amounts of information, but also to write about them (Escofet, 2020).

For its part, Frescura (2016) proposes to analyze the tensions between the renewal and the permanence of educational practices, within the framework of a pedagogical experience of teaching writing with ICT through an academic writing workshop in a teacher training institute. The case study consisted of the production of a reading report by the students. The situation was raised as a writing proposal. A fundamental aspect was the use of ICT, and concluding that although the hybridization of practices and knowledge presents a series of obstacles, it also enables a series of learning.



Virtual tools for writing

Currently there are a lot of digital tools that help us with writing, whether for a beginner or an expert. According to Singh and Mayer (2014), these tools make “writing a creative, effective and manageable activity and not a cumbersome and boring process. They also help to speed up writing, improve the quality of the text and are adaptable to the habits, attitudes and interests of the writer” (p. 24). The most important are summarized below:

Table 1
Applications and digital platforms for academic writing

Top applications and digital platforms	Description
Scrivener	Text processing and layout software for writers. Operating System: Windows, macOS, iOS.
iA Writer	Program for text editing; it allows organization. Operating System: Windows, macOS, iOS.
Ulysses	Digital application for writing; it has a text management system and several functions. Operating System: macOS, iOS.

Top applications and digital platforms	Description
Literauts	Online program for writing; it has several applications for writing. Operating System: iOS and Android.
yWriter	Text processor that allows organizing the ideas. Operating System: Windows.
Evernote	Program to create and organize notes. Operating System: Windows, macOS, iOS, Android.
OneNote	Program for taking notes, digital notebook to organize thoughts. With Microsoft OneNote, you take notes from your mobile phone and sync to other devices.
Writers Cafe	Tool that allows organizer all the elements that are part of a script. Operating System: Windows.
Plume creator	Program for writers with a powerful word processor and has several functions. Operating System: Windows, Linux.
Final Draft	Writing program for writing and formatting scripts. Operating System: Windows, macOS.
Storyist	Creative writing application with a powerful word processor and several features. Operating System: macOS.
Manuskript	Open source digital tool for writers, character management, plot development, distraction-free editor, etc. Operating System: Windows, macOS, Linux
Mendeley, JabRef, CiteULike EndNote Papers, Zotero	Web tools to manage bibliography of academic writing. Operating System: Windows, MacOS, Linux, Android, iOS.

Source: Own elaboration from Torres *et al.* (2020).

All these tools allow teachers and students a series of technological benefits to choose the platform or application according to what they want to write. In this regard, writing academic texts is one of the most frequent activities carried out in the university; therefore, the need to continue promoting these writings in order to respond to the needs of the production of science in an autonomous and collaborative creative way. Finally, it is important for teachers to use these tools and virtual environments according to their students' learning needs.

Additionally, a systematic review was carried out on the main research related to technological pedagogical strategies, consulting a series

of research articles with respect to the subject. After analyzing pedagogical strategies such as collaborative work, autonomous learning and competency-based learning, it was observed that the most used tools by teachers were virtual environments such as blogs, word processors and virtual platforms.

For the purposes of this research, the digital tools Scrivener and Evernote were specifically studied and analyzed (Jara, 2021).

Scrivener Tool

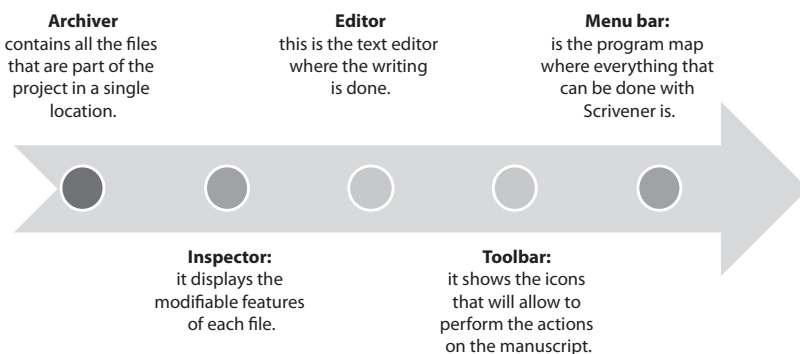
In the words of McLean (2017) *Scrivener* is a writing tool that is characterized by including:

Project management and organization modules, but it is best known for its contributions in organizing complicated projects. It is a word processor and project management tool that remains with the writer from the first idea to the final draft (p. 1).

Scrivener is a program used for text processing and for layout, which allows to organize documents more efficiently, annotations to have the writings better organized. Scrivener is much more than most writing programs or a traditional word processor, since traditional word processors conceive of text as a large extension of words, while Scrivener poses it as a set of scenes that are related to each other, but at the same time independent, i.e., this program focuses on the parts that make up the entire text (Wheat, 2013).

Scrivener consists of five basic parts:

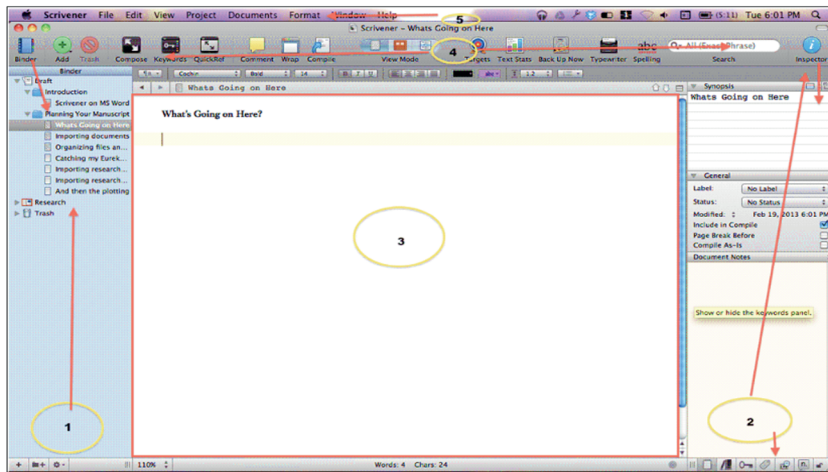
Figure 1
Scrivener Basic Parts



Source: taken from Trigo (2013, p. 4).

However, it should be noted that the five basic parts are located within the interface, a situation that allows to organize the writings without difficulty.

Figure 2
Scrivener interface

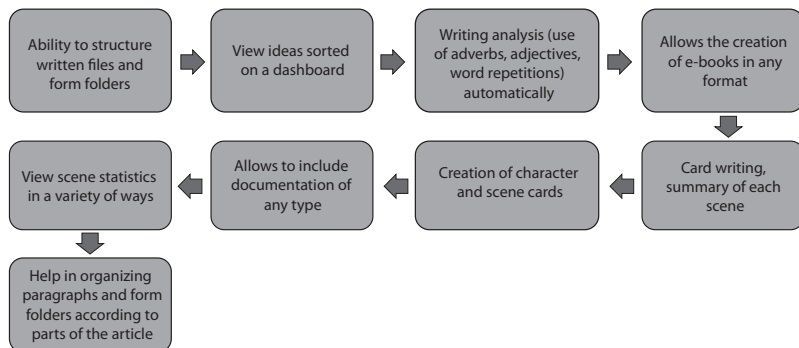


Source: Taken from Trigo (2013).

Features of Scrivener

The features incorporated in the Scrivener program allow writers to achieve real productivity in the writing of texts of all kinds. According to Olier (2019), Scrivener's most outstanding features are the following:

Figure 3
Scrivener Features



Source: taken from Olier (2019).

Scrivener is a writing software designed for writers. It is easily downloaded from the internet, it can be opted for free or paid, without forgetting that this virtual tool contributes significantly mainly in organizing information in a simple way, scenario that will allow academic and all kinds of writings to be made easily, scientifically and creatively. The screen is then displayed:

Figure 4
Scrivener display



Source: taken from Olier (2019).

Finally:

Scrivener provides a friendly environment for the collection and organization of research material. With the possibility of importing and viewing documents, images and notes [...] it is a digital repository that stores all the elements necessary for a coherent academic document (Scrivener, 2023).

Finally, it has advanced functions for effective writing, as it adapts easily to the processes of scientific writing.

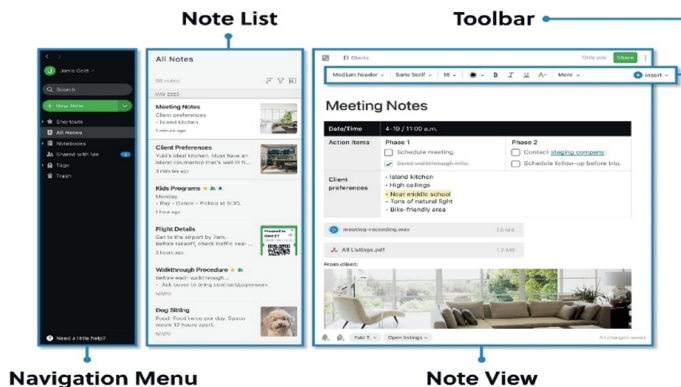
Evernote Tool

Evernote “is a tool that serves to make annotations and reminders of all kinds, sharing your notes on your computer, phone and tablet in a synchronized way. It is possible to include screenshots, files and images to complete the information” (Gaitán, 2024, p. 2). In this sense, it is a tool with several academic benefits that strengthen academic writing, helps to make annotations in the form of text, include images, place documents in the text easily to organize the information to structure academic essays efficiently.

Evernote can be used by paying for a license or by a paid web service. This app is available for Android, iOS and natively on Microsoft Windows and Mac. Additionally, there is a web version that can be used from any browser and works through a subscription service that allows synchronization with local applications. According to Evernote (2021), the interface consists of the following basic elements:

- *Navigation menu*: it contains items search, notebooks, new notes, shortcuts.
- *Notes list*: is the central panel of the application and contains elements such as sorting and filters options.
- *Notes view*: Also known as the Notes panel, which contains elements for note magnification, note moving, sharing, and other note editing actions.
- *Toolbar*: it allows to edit notes and contains elements to configure the type of text, style, color, format and font size.

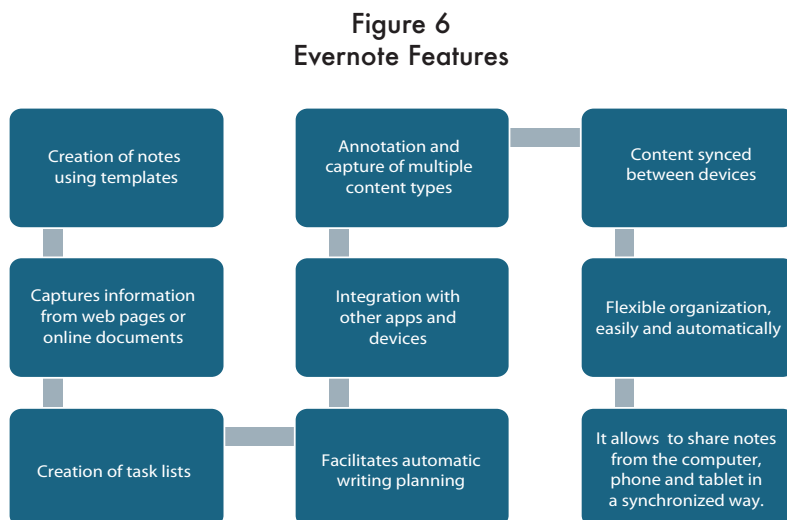
Figure 5
Evernote Interface



Source: taken from Evernote (2021).

Evernote Features

Among the main features of the Evernote tool, the following are described:

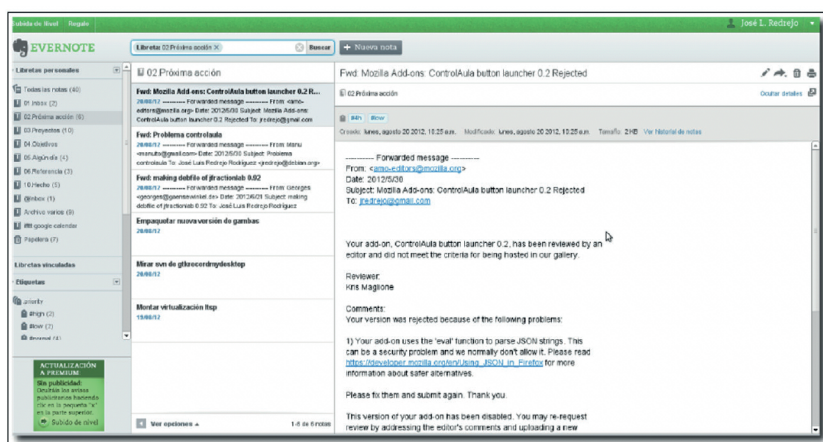


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Source: Taken from Castro (2022).

Figure 7 Evernote Display



Source: taken from Evernote (2021).

Evernote is therefore a tool that greatly assists in the process of research of all kinds, since it allows to collect information and keep everything organized, for which people can use several of the functions offered by the tool, such as: grouping the research into several notebooks, screenshots of online journal articles, screenshots of images, scanning of documents, annotations in images and PDF files, recording of interviews and conversations, sharing notes and notebooks with the participants of the research group.

Also, Evernote is an excellent tool that allows to improve the task of the teacher inside and outside the classroom, so Rodríguez (2019) points out five reasons for a teacher to start using Evernote:

- *Sort the ideas*: the teacher's ideas can be saved and classified by means of labels.
- *Building digital archive*: people can store internet pages, images, magazine articles, and all kinds of files.
- *Class planning and registration*: Template formats can be created in Evernote to plan classes and record the activities that are carried out.
- *Sharing with students and teachers*: the available material can be shared and permissions can be given for reading or editing.
- *Access from anywhere*: information can be accessed through the web, from any type of device.

Evernote is an application that facilitates students to investigate autonomously and collect new complementary information, according to the questions, motivations or interest generated by the specific topics of a course.

Evernote Benefits

The benefits offered by this application are diverse, since students can organize notes, take photographs of brochures on paper; capture photos of activities in the classroom or drawings on blackboards, organize schedules, task lists, contacts, among others. In the meantime, the teacher will likely use Evernote to organize course design and establish communication with their students, as well as record a discussion or lecture and make it available in a shared notebook, and provide oral or written feedback to students (Korzaan & Lawrence, 2016). This application can replace the previous common method of classical reading and note-taking on paper.



Based on the study by Korzaan and Lawrence (2016), when students begin to learn and take advantage of technology, they can know the power of it in the transformation of organizations. In addition, they motivate students to employ powerful technology in real life with the prospect that they can see better possibilities for themselves or for the organizations they can lead later.

Evernote's role as a graphical organizer also offers many facilities. The schema or graphical organizer will look more orderly with the help of the table template. This may be because some students sometimes cannot write clearly, which can confuse them or their readers.

For their part, DiCecco and Gleason (2002) state that the use of a computerized graphic organizer for persuasive writing by Hispanic students with specific learning disabilities shows that the group of students who receive a graphic organizer may show more rational thinking than students who do not use it.

In turn, Vendityaningtyas *et al.* (2020) mention that graphic organizers can improve student writing. The teacher can also perform well in guiding students to use the outline when writing a counting text. These results show that it is significant to outline and organize the writing.



Conclusions

Writing is an academic challenge for teachers and students, i.e., translating ideas into written texts according to the knowledge learned. But this reality has not been reflected in a good percentage, given that writing becomes complex due to the lack of knowledge of virtual platforms, which facilitate the writing process quickly, automatically and creatively. Therefore, the Scrivener tool was created, which is a virtual software to make the life of the writer easier, people just have to download it easily from the Internet, it has more flexible options to organize and write a text, whether it is a script, a scientific book, a novel or a research article.

Scrivener offers a different way to approach a work with respect to other writing programs; while others conceive the text as a large extension of words, Scrivener poses as a set of related scenes, but at the same time independent, and it motivates writers to create their own ideas from any field.

Among the challenges for Evernote can be highlighted, requiring a constant connection to the internet. It must also be provided by suitable hardware. It is designed to be used on computer, laptop or smartphone.

It is suggested that the institution could provide sufficient means to meet this need, such as constant internet connection. This is because, despite its challenges, this app is beneficial for students and teachers to become more tech-literate in the learning process to face the digital age.

Finally, the indicated virtual applications are important for academic writing, as they generate a significant contribution to their development, taking advantage of technologies. This is what Aguilar Gordón (2011) says: "Identifying the appropriate technology and making proper use of it is a fundamental task of every human being today" (p. 132), so we must take advantage of virtual scenarios, in this case it is the use of technological applications for writing and achieve the impulse for the publication of academic articles in an agile, automated and creative way, which associated with information and communication technologies contribute to the generation of scientific communities.

In other words, Scrivener and Evernote are digital tools for academic writing that allow to insert written notes, voice notes, abstracts, documents, images, quotes from authors, audios, links, etc. Also, they generate a significant contribution to the development of academic writing, managing to contribute to the impulse of the publication of academic and scientific articles with creativity and achieve a greater optimization of intellectual resources, time and effort when writing. All this will allow to score learning achievements from the academy.

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Verónica Patricia Simbaña Gallardo	Conceptualization. Review of primary sources and data processing. Drafting of the first draft
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Artificial Intelligence Use Statement

Verónica Patricia Simbaña Gallardo, Lilian Mercedes Jaramillo Naranjo and Santiago Fernando Vinueza Vinueza, DECLARE that the elaboration of the article ***The challenge of academic writing using virtual tools***, did not have the support of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

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