Tools for AI assisted landscape review

A practical selection guide for doctoral researchers

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Start with the research question and the decision you need to make. Use this grid to choose tools for discovery, reading, mapping and subsequent review. The suggested uses are teaching guidance; they are not comparative performance ratings.

Start with your UA access

This reference complements SD's session, Scientific information research: strategies and tips, on research resources, search strategies and UA services. Use that session and the UA Library's guidance for institutional access and discipline-specific searching.

Resource	Access and use at UA
Microsoft Copilot	Available to everyone at UA. Sign in through your UA login. Use it for framing, explanation and synthesis; the features available depend on the UA account configuration.
IAedu	Available to everyone at UA. A shared portal for several AI models. Model availability and usage allowances are set by the service; this does not imply a separate commercial subscription to each product.
b-on	Available to everyone at UA. Use it to discover and access subscribed scholarly content. Full-text availability depends on the collection and the article.
Scopus	Use the Scopus services available through UA, and access through UA has only limited access to Scopus AI tools.

UA access statements confirmed by Neil Jacobson on 4 November 2026. Use UA Library instructions for sign-in and off-campus access.

A useful starting combination is one discovery route, one tool for reading selected sources, and a reference manager. Add another tool when it contributes something your current workflow needs.

Discover papers and explore connections

Choose a route that fits your question and subject area. Try different keywords, seed papers and perspectives before treating the resulting collection as representative.

Tool and official source	Useful contribution	Access and researcher check
Google Scholar	Broad scholarly discovery, cited-by searching, alerts and full-text links.	Free search. Check publication type, version and relevance; coverage and ranking influence what you see.
Semantic Scholar	Paper discovery, short AI summaries, citation links and research feeds.	Free. Read the paper before relying on a summary or an influence indicator.
Consensus	Research questions with linked papers and multi-paper summaries.	Free and paid tiers. Inspect study context and the papers selected; a summary is not a field-wide consensus assessment.
ResearchRabbit	Explore related papers, citations and references from a seed collection.	Free core search and collections; paid RR+. Seed selection and indexed connections shape the map.
Connected Papers	Explore a paper's intellectual neighbourhood using similarity graphs.	Free: 5 graphs per month; paid unlimited graphs. Similarity is not the same as a direct citation relationship.
Litmaps	Build and monitor maps of connected literature.	Free and paid plans. Check current map limits in your account; inspect the papers behind apparent clusters.
Undermind	Iterative literature searching and reports for focused questions.	Free with rate limits; paid plans. Test whether the results represent your field; retain the search question and check cited papers.
R Discovery	Personalised reading feeds and ongoing literature monitoring.	Free discovery; Prime adds features. Revisit your interests and search elsewhere to reduce dependence on one feed.

Tool names link to official product or help pages. Checked 4 November 2026. Search coverage is distinct from access to full text; use institutional subscriptions or open repositories where appropriate.

Read compare and develop ideas

General AI assistants can help frame questions, develop searches, compare sources and test interpretations. When searching is enabled, inspect what was actually retrieved. When working with supplied documents, check which sources and passages support the answer.

Tool and official source	Useful contribution	Access and researcher check
ChatGPT	Framing, document analysis and synthesis; web search and deeper research across sources.	Free and paid access. Research allowances vary by plan. Check retrieval, source quality and whether each citation supports the claim.
Claude	Analyse uploaded material, compare arguments and develop written interpretations.	Free and paid plans; Research is offered on paid plans. Check omissions and distinguish source content from inference.
Gemini	Document analysis, exploratory research and reports with linked sources.	Deep Research is available with limits, including without a paid AI plan. Check the research scope and source selection.
Perplexity	Search with cited answers for initial orientation and follow-up investigation.	Free and paid tiers. Advanced search and research limits vary. Open citations and assess the underlying evidence.
NotebookLM	Ask questions across a selected source collection; compare and summarise material. Can also discover sources.	Free and paid options. Source grounding can reduce hallucination risk; summaries and citations still need checking. Check imported text and missing context.
SciSpace	Read and question papers; discover literature and compare information across papers.	Limited free use and paid plans. For this workshop, emphasise reading papers you have selected. Check publication quality and provenance before using discovery results.
Scite	Inspect citation contexts and classifications; investigate how claims are discussed.	Paid platform with trial. Read the citing passage and relevant papers; citation labels are evidence to examine, not a reliability verdict.

The SciSpace emphasis reflects the workshop discussion of SD's advice, as reported by Neil. Source grounding describes how a tool works; it is not a measured guarantee of lower error for every task.

Organise map and prepare for review

Tool and official source	Useful contribution	Access and researcher check
Zotero	Collect references, annotate sources, organise collections and produce citations.	Free software; optional paid storage. Check imported metadata, duplicates and source versions.
VOSviewer	Create bibliometric networks using citations, co-authorship or term co-occurrence.	Freely available. Supports database exports and routes such as OpenAlex. Record data source, cleaning and settings; interpret clusters against the literature.
Elicit	Discover papers, compare structured information and support extraction and review workflows.	Free Basic; paid tiers add capabilities. Validate extracted fields against the paper and assess retrieval coverage for your question.
Rayyan	Manage records, screening decisions and collaboration in a formal review.	Free and paid plans. Define criteria, check duplicate handling, and retain reasons for decisions. AI assistance does not establish methodological validity.
Covidence	Support screening, extraction and review team workflows.	Paid review packages or institutional access; trial available. Agree the protocol and reviewer responsibilities before starting.

Use tools within the landscape method

Define landscape questions → Explore collections → Compile domain learnings → Visualise topics → Conduct focus-area analysis and hand off to subsequent review. Return to earlier steps as your understanding changes.

Use Frame → Select → Apply → Evaluate → Adapt alongside these activities. Record your starting question and assumptions, why you selected a tool, what AI contributed, what you checked, what you revised, and what remains unresolved.

Keep provisional themes, gaps and interpretations traceable to sources. For a subsequent systematic review, develop the search and screening approach with your supervisor or librarian and document its coverage, validation and reporting requirements.

This grid includes AI assistants, search services, reference managers and analytical software. Their functions overlap, and their outputs need checks appropriate to the task.

Access and pricing snapshot

Selected details checked on official pages on 4 November 2026. Dollar amounts are listed USD prices, not a Portugal checkout quotation. Billing period, tax, regional offers and account configuration can affect the amount and features shown. Product names above link to the sources.

Product	Current detail useful for planning
Consensus	Free: 10 Pro messages, 3 Deep reviews and 10 Study Snapshots per month. Pro: $20 monthly or $144 annually.
Elicit	Basic includes unlimited paper search and summaries. Plus: $11 per month billed annually ($132/year); Pro: $39 per month billed annually ($468/year).
ResearchRabbit	Free: unlimited searches and collections, up to 50 seed articles. RR+ lists $10/month on annual billing or $12.50 monthly; country discounts may apply.
Connected Papers	Free: 5 graphs per month. Academic and Business plans provide unlimited graphs; price was not exposed in the retrieved page.
Litmaps	Free and Pro plans confirmed. Education Pro lists $10/month on annual billing. The page shows conflicting free map counts; confirm the account allowance.
SciSpace	Premium lists $20 monthly or $12/month billed annually, with 1,200 monthly credits. The page also displays an expired promotion; confirm the checkout terms.
Scite	Basic lists $12/month billed annually; Pro $40/month billed annually. A 7-day trial is offered. Monthly billing and offers can differ.
Claude	Free plan; Pro $20 monthly or $200 annually. Usage remains limited and depends on the work requested.
Rayyan	Free plan; Essential lists $8.33/month billed quarterly. Official pages differ on some review allowances; check the selected plan before committing.
Covidence	Single review: $339/year. Three-review package: $907/year. Trial: 500 records. Check for institutional access first.

For ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, NotebookLM, Undermind and R Discovery, use the linked official pages and your account to check current allowances. Exact model names and corpus counts are omitted because they change and are not sufficient measures of suitability.

About this edition. Revised from the 28 October 2026 workshop table. Official product and help pages were checked for current descriptions and access; this was not a comparative performance test. UA access was confirmed by Neil. Prepared with AI assistance; researchers remain responsible for selection, interpretation and verification.