

Friday PhD Talks 2025-2026
#22
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My Journey toward a Sustainable Digital Research Workflow: Integrating Zotero, Obsidian and Word

Abstract:

When I started my PhD, I often found myself lost in a maze of PDFs, unstructured notes, and scattered citations. Like many doctoral students, I was constantly oscillating between the excitement of discovery and the frustration of disorganisation. Over time—and after several failed attempts to “find the perfect system”—I built a research workflow that completely changed the way I read, annotate, and write.

In this talk, I will share how I designed an integrated workflow that really worked for me using Zotero, Obsidian, and Word, from managing and tagging my readings to exporting annotations and highlights automatically, color-coded and neatly organised. I will also show how setting up visual “reading boards” in Obsidian helped me keep track of relevant literature for current and future projects, making my research not only more efficient but also more enjoyable.

Beyond the technical details, this presentation reflects on how finding a system of organisation that works for you can reduce cognitive overload, increase focus, and foster creativity—transforming what once felt like administrative chaos into a space of clarity and motivation. Ultimately, finding the right workflow is not just about efficiency—it is about building a sustainable research practice that supports both the progress of the thesis and the researcher’s well-being along the way.

Bionote:

Natalia Jiménez-Pérez is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Zaragoza (Spain), a position she obtained in 2024, after being granted a competitive research fellowship financed by the Diputación General de Aragón (DGA). In 2021 she obtained a BA in English Studies at the University of Zaragoza, later to be completed by an MA in Literary Studies in 2022 and an MA in Teacher Training for Compulsory Secondary Education in 2023. Natalia is writing her PhD thesis on Sally Rooney’s fiction as a response to a context of global and national crisis (Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland), analysing the ways in which her fiction interacts, both thematically and formally, with the Irish Literary tradition, as well as the author’s proposed relational and affective approach as an antidote to universal precarity. Her main research interests include Irish literature, vulnerability studies, feminism, fantasy and Tolkien studies.