Qualitative Searching Skills for the More Experienced

Angie Rees, Information Specialist,
ScHARR,
University of Sheffield

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Controversies

- Model from Quantitative Systematic Reviews? Or Primary Qualitative Research?
- Aggregative versus Interpretative
- Comprehensive versus Purposive Sampling
- Exhaustion versus Theoretical Saturation

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Advanced Methods for Identifying Qualitative Research

Filters and Citations

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What is a methodological filter?

- “A hedge or filter is a standardised search strategy that is designed to be used in conjunction with a subject search to retrieve valid studies from the (primary) medical literature”.
- Filters work in one of two ways:
  - by identifying particular **publication types** or **study designs** most likely to answer a question
  - by isolating **subject or free-text terms** most likely to be associated with high-quality studies

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How do they work?

- Filters come from 3 different sources:-
  - Subject heading
  - Keyword
  - Publication type

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Identifying Qualitative Research - Terminology

- Generic terms: e.g. “qualitative” plus

- **E**xploratory Methods: Focus group, Grounded theory, Action Research, Content analysis, Thematic analysis
- **S**oftware: Nudist or NVivo
- **C**itations: Glaser & Strauss
- **A**pplication: Ethnology, Psychology
- **P**henomenon: Perceptions, Attitudes, User Views, Standpoint, Viewpoint
- **A**pproaches: Ethnographic
- **D**ata: Stories, Narratives, Descriptions, Themes, Findings
- **E**xperiences: Encounters, Experiences

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How do I use a methodological filter?

Step One: Carry out a subject search as usual using MeSH terms and/or free text

Step Two: Apply methodological filter appropriate to question you are asking

- One-line filter
- Maximum sensitivity filter
- Maximum specificity filter
- Mid-range filter

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For today, some one-liners ...

- MeSH Heading
  - eg Qualitative Research [Medline 2003-]
- Keyword
  - “Findings”
- Publication Type
  - Research [CINAHL only]

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Methodologic filters 1

MEDLINE

1. Nursing-Methodology-Research.DE.
2. qualitative ADJ research
3. grounded ADJ theory
4. ethnograph$
5. 1 or 2 or 3 or 4

Marks S. “Qualitative Studies”. In **McKibbon** A, editor. *PDQ Evidence-Based Principles and Practice*. 1st ed. Hamilton: B.C. Decker, Inc.; 1999. pp 187-204

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Methodologic filters 2

1. qualitative$
2. findings
3. interview$
4. interviews.DE.
5. 1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4

Grant MJ. “How does your searching grow? A survey of search preferences and the use of optimal search strategies in the identification of qualitative research.” *Health Info Libr J*. 2004 Mar; 21(1):21-32.

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Methodologic filters 3

Sensitivity-maximising filter
interview$ or px.fs. or health-services-administration.DE.

Specificity-maximising filter
qualitative or themes

Optimised filter
interview$.TI. or interview$.AB. or interview$.DE. or experience$.TI. or experience$.AB. or experience$.DE. or qualitative

Adapted from **Wong** SS, **Wilczynski** NL, **Haynes** RB. "Developing Optimal Search Strategies for Detecting Clinically Relevant Qualitative Studies in MEDLINE". *Medinfo*. 2004; 2004:311-6.

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Methodologic filters 4 – Ovid MEDLINE

Best Sensitivity

- interview:.tw. OR px.fs. OR exp health services administration

Best Sensitivity – Small decrease in Sensitivity with large increase in Specificity

- interview:.mp. OR px.fs. OR qualitative.tw.

Best Specificity

- qualitative.tw. OR themes.tw.

Best Specificity – Small decrease in Specificity with large increase in Sensitivity

- interviews.mp,pt. OR qualitative.mp. OR experiences.tw.

Best Optimization of Sensitivity and Specificity

- interview:.mp. OR experience:.mp. OR qualitative.tw.

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Methodologic filters - 5

- Don’t forget MeSH heading **Qualitative Research**
  - Introduced in 2003, so coverage is limited
  - But you can combine it with one of the previous filters by using the “OR” operator

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Methodologic filters - 5

- Best sensitivity: exp interviews
- Best specificity: audiorecording.sh.
- Best optimization of sensitivity and specificity: exp study design

- Wilczynski NL, Marks S, Haynes RB. Search strategies for identifying qualitative studies in CINAHL. *Qual Health Res*. 2007 May;17(5):705-10.

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Methodological Filters – 6 EMBASE

Best Sensitivity (Single term)

- interview:.mp.

Best Sensitivity (Combination)

- interview:.mp. OR qualitative.tw. OR exp health care organization

Best Specificity (Single term)

- qualitative.tw.

Best Specificity (Combination)

- **qualitative.tw. Or qualitative study.tw.**

Best Optimization of Sensitivity and Specificity (Single)

- exp health care facilities and services

Best Optimization of Sensitivity and Specificity (Combination)

- interview.tw. OR exp health care organization OR experiences.tw.

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So how does this work in practice?

You are conducting a systematic review to examine the lack of support available for the husbands of women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

The review commissioners want to answer “what counselling and support services should be offered in response to the husbands’ needs?”

You start by searching Medline for published accounts of the husbands’ attitudes to their wives’ disease.

Example 1

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SPICE breakdown

- You break search down into following components:

Setting:	**Primary and Community Care**
Perspective:	**Husbands**
Intervention/ Exposure:	**Wife with breast cancer**
Comparison:	**[Perhaps] the needs of the wives themselves**
Evaluation:	**Attitudes**

Example 1 continued

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Mapping to MeSH

- Match SPICE components to relevant MeSH headings (if any):

Setting:	[***Primary-Health-Care***]
Perspective:	**Spouses**
Exposure:	**Breast-Neoplasms**
Comparison:	???
Evaluation:	**Attitude-To-Health**

Example 1 continued

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Search strategy

1. husband$ OR Spouses.W..DE.
2. 1 AND Breast-Neoplasms#.DE.
3. 2 AND (qualitative OR interview$ OR findings OR Interviews.W..DE. OR Attitude-To-Health#.DE.)

Note that in line 3 we have used Grant's filter

Example 1 continued

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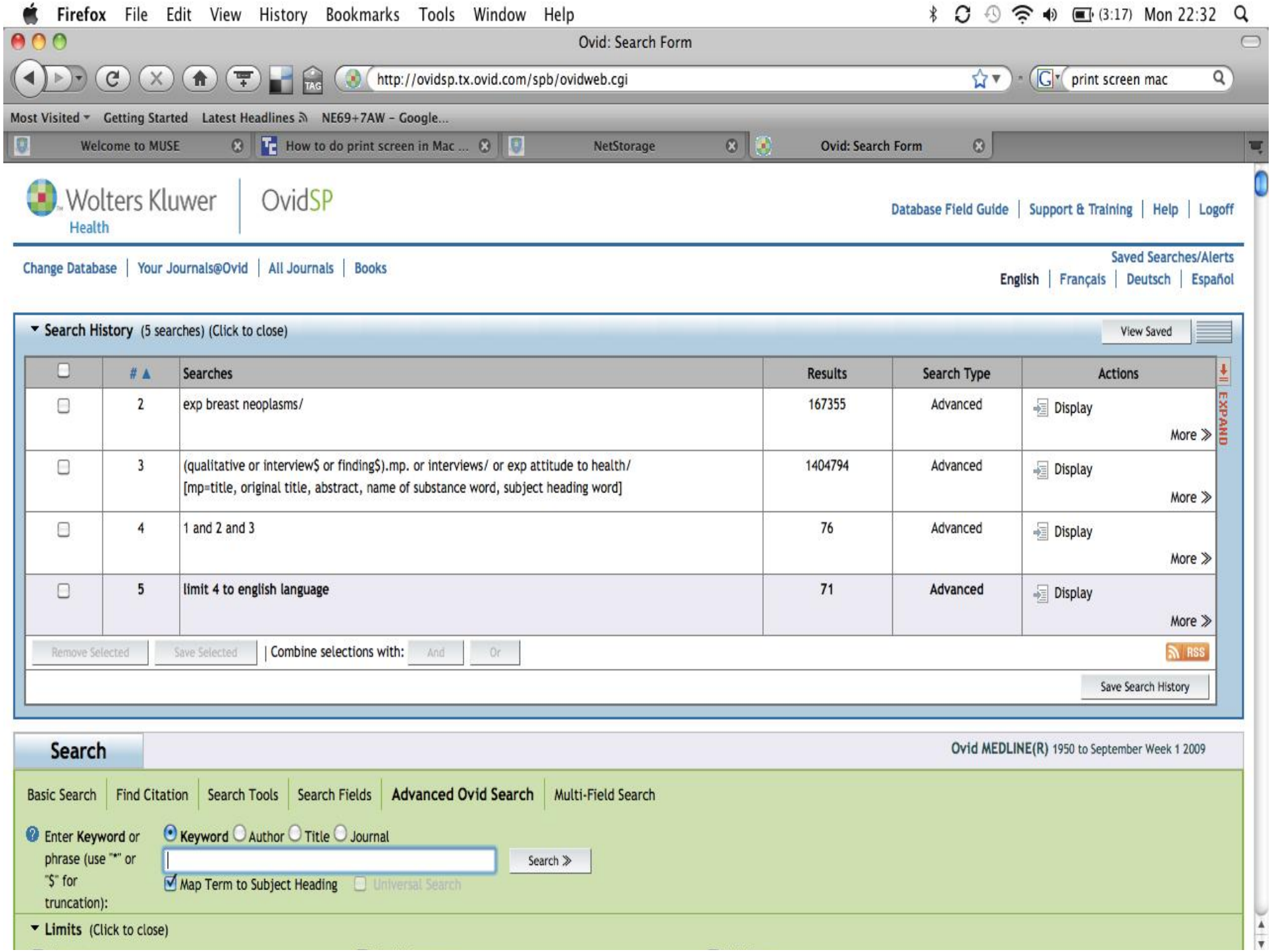

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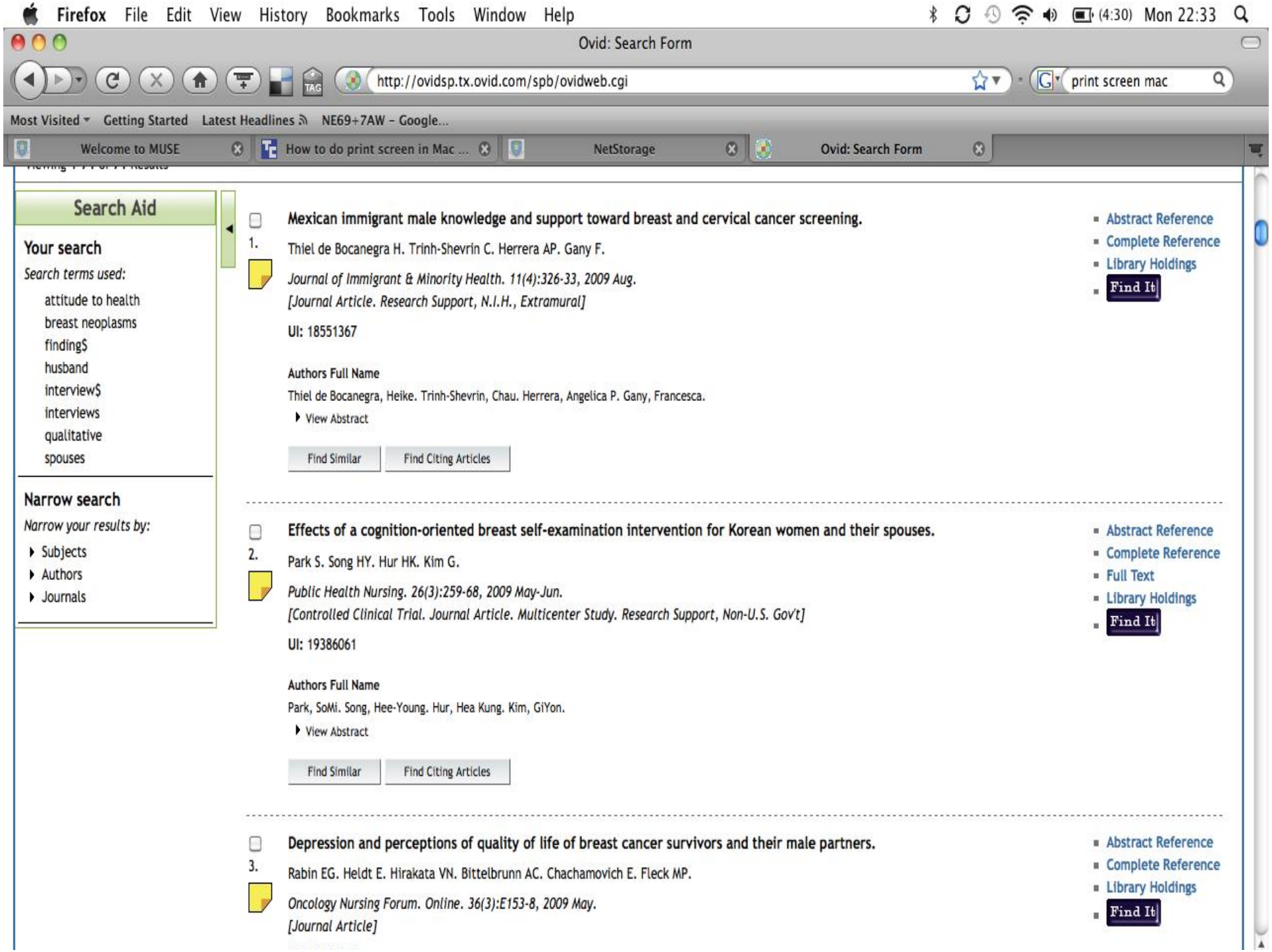

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Example 2 – User Views

Strategy One

Exp Attitude/
Attitude$ OR
(user$ adj view$) OR
opinion$

Strategy Two

- Client$ or Consumer$ or Patient$ or User$

And

- Empower$ or involve$ or participa$ or represent$

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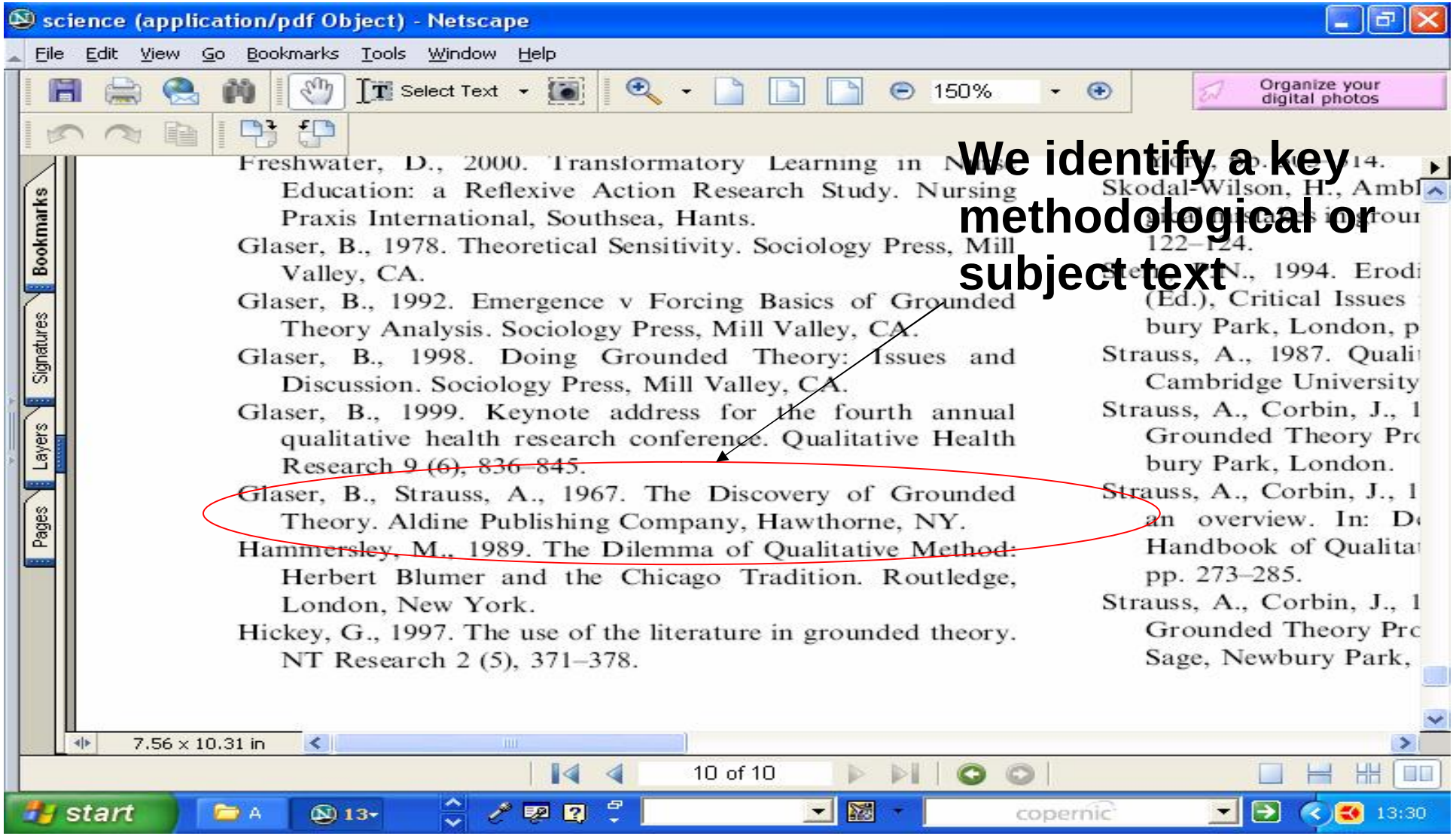
Citation Searching



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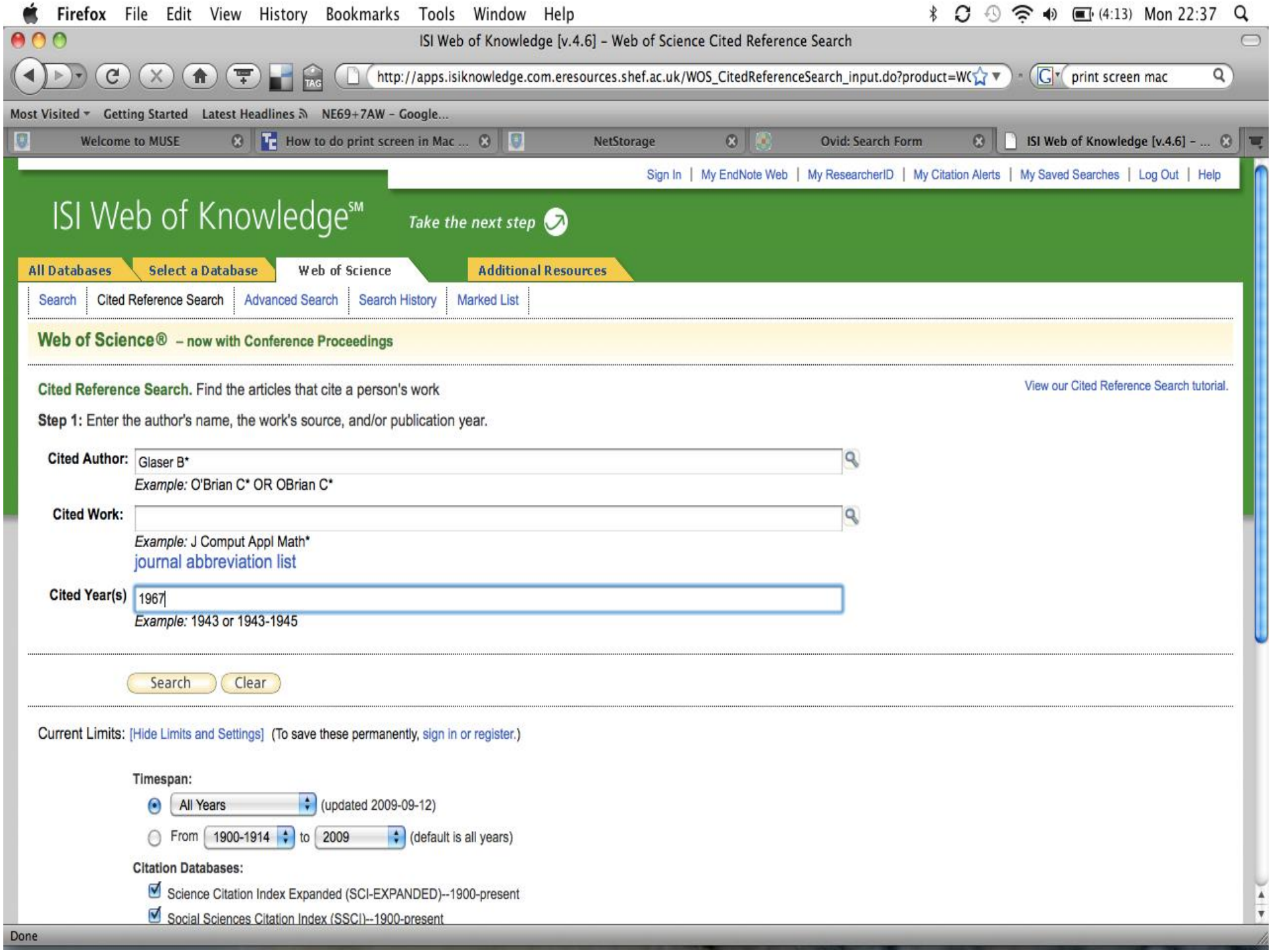

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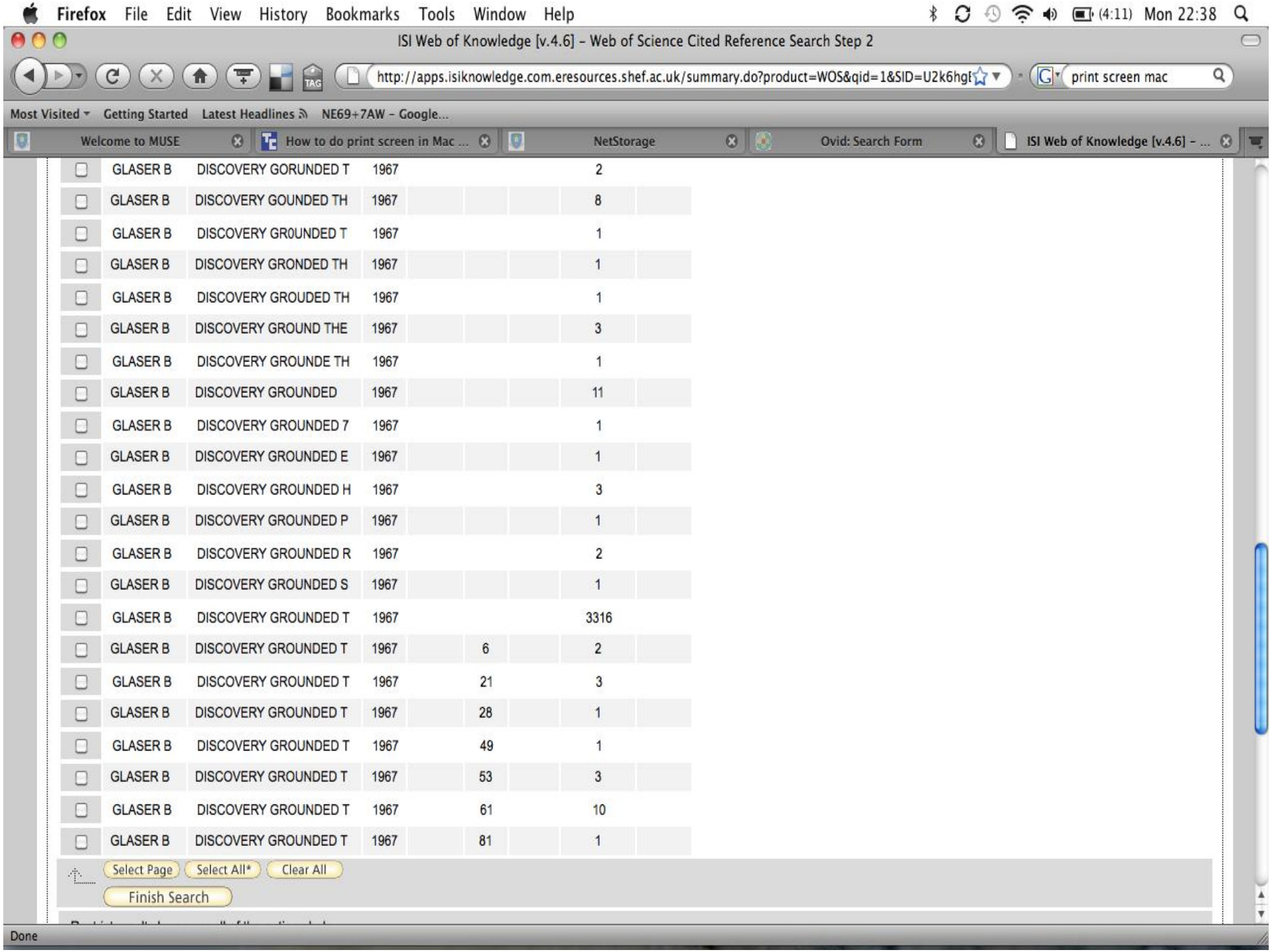

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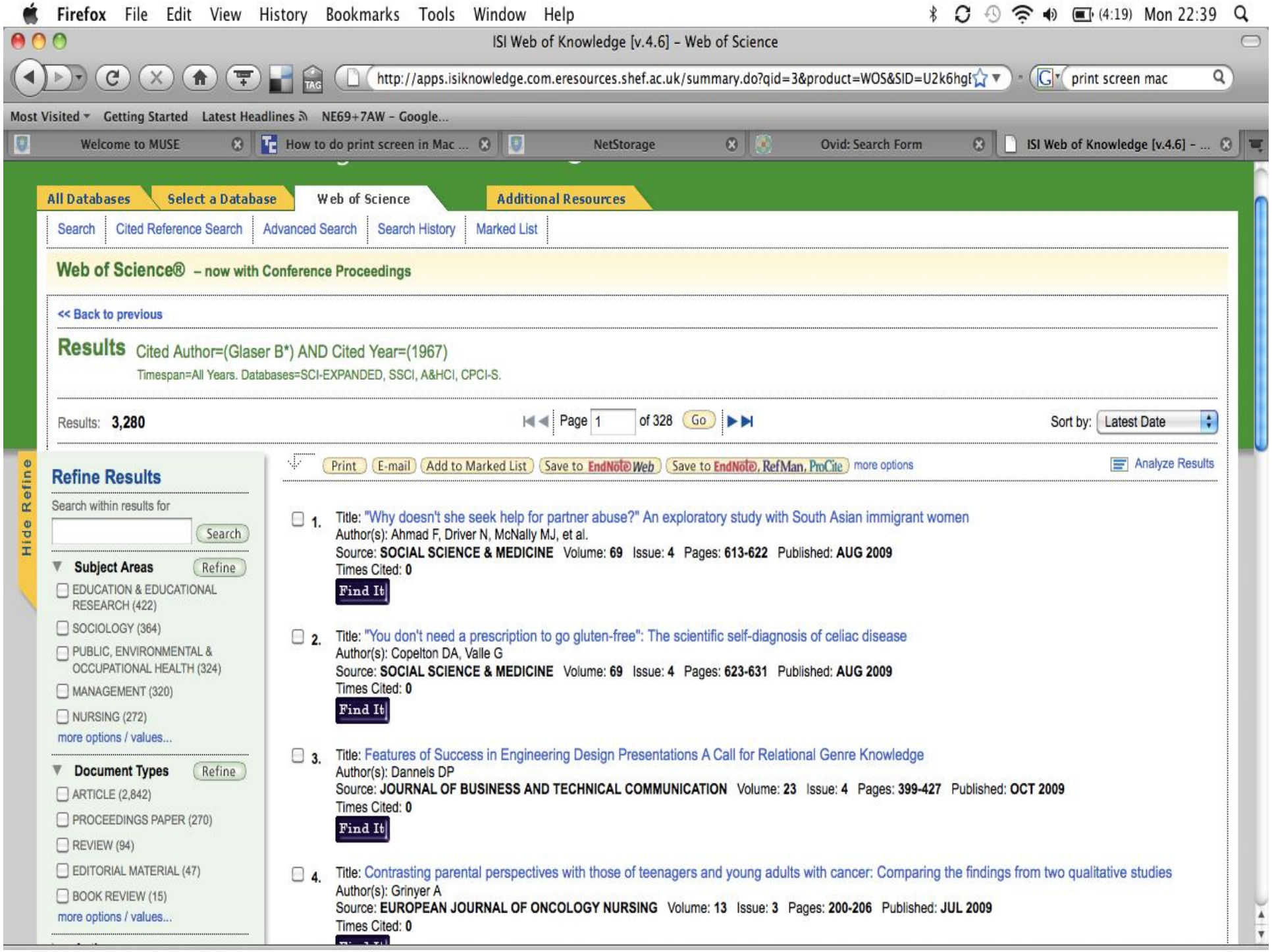

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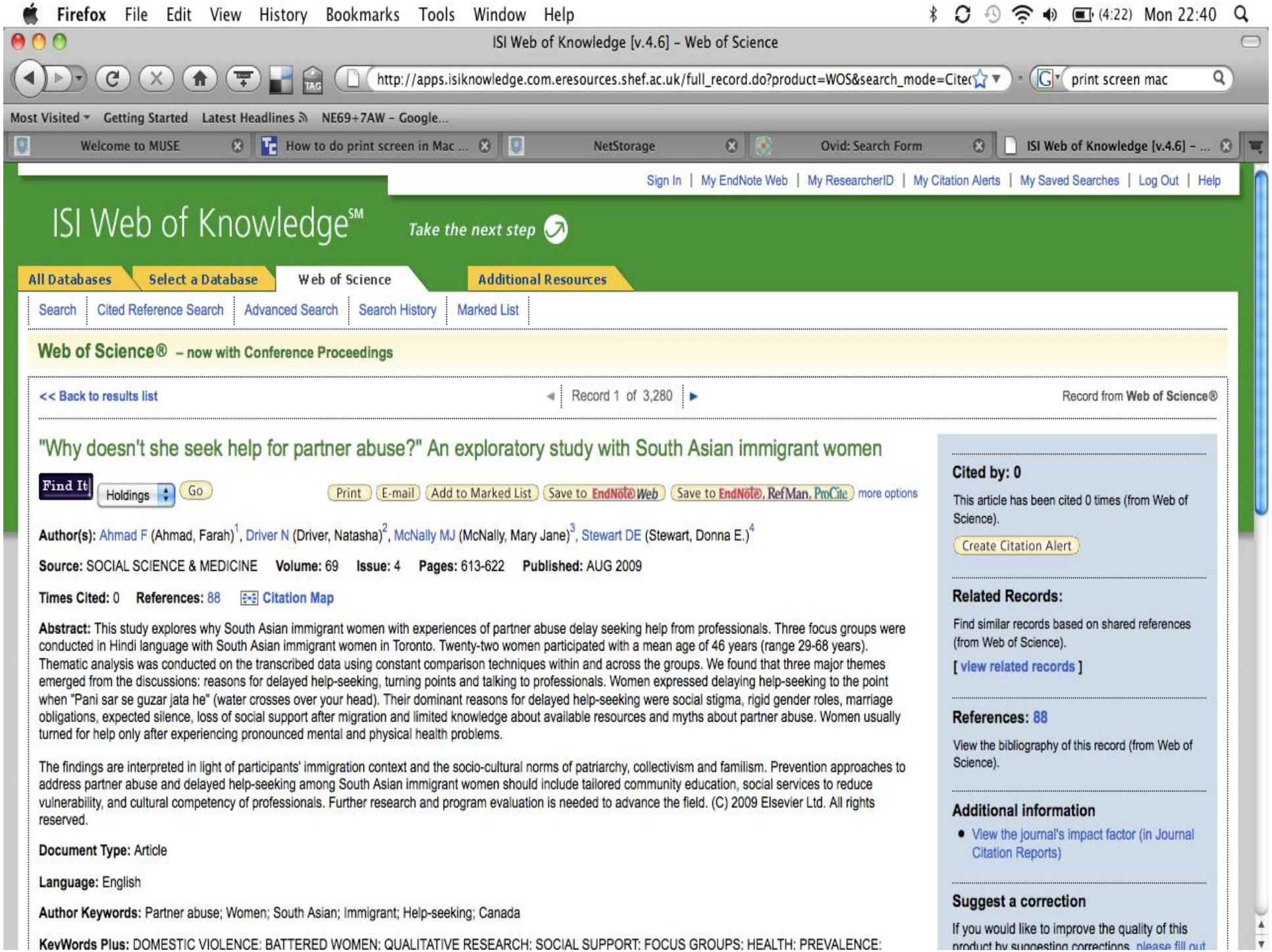

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New research from Flemming & Briggs (2007)

- Findings showed that a simple search strategy (broad-based terms - 3 search terms) was as effective as a complex one (free text - 48 search terms) in locating qualitative research on patients' experiences of living with a leg ulcer.
- It may be feasible to restrict searches with a clear nursing focus to the CINAHL bibliographic database.
- Replication of findings with other nursing topics is required.

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Using the Internet to Identify Qualitative Research

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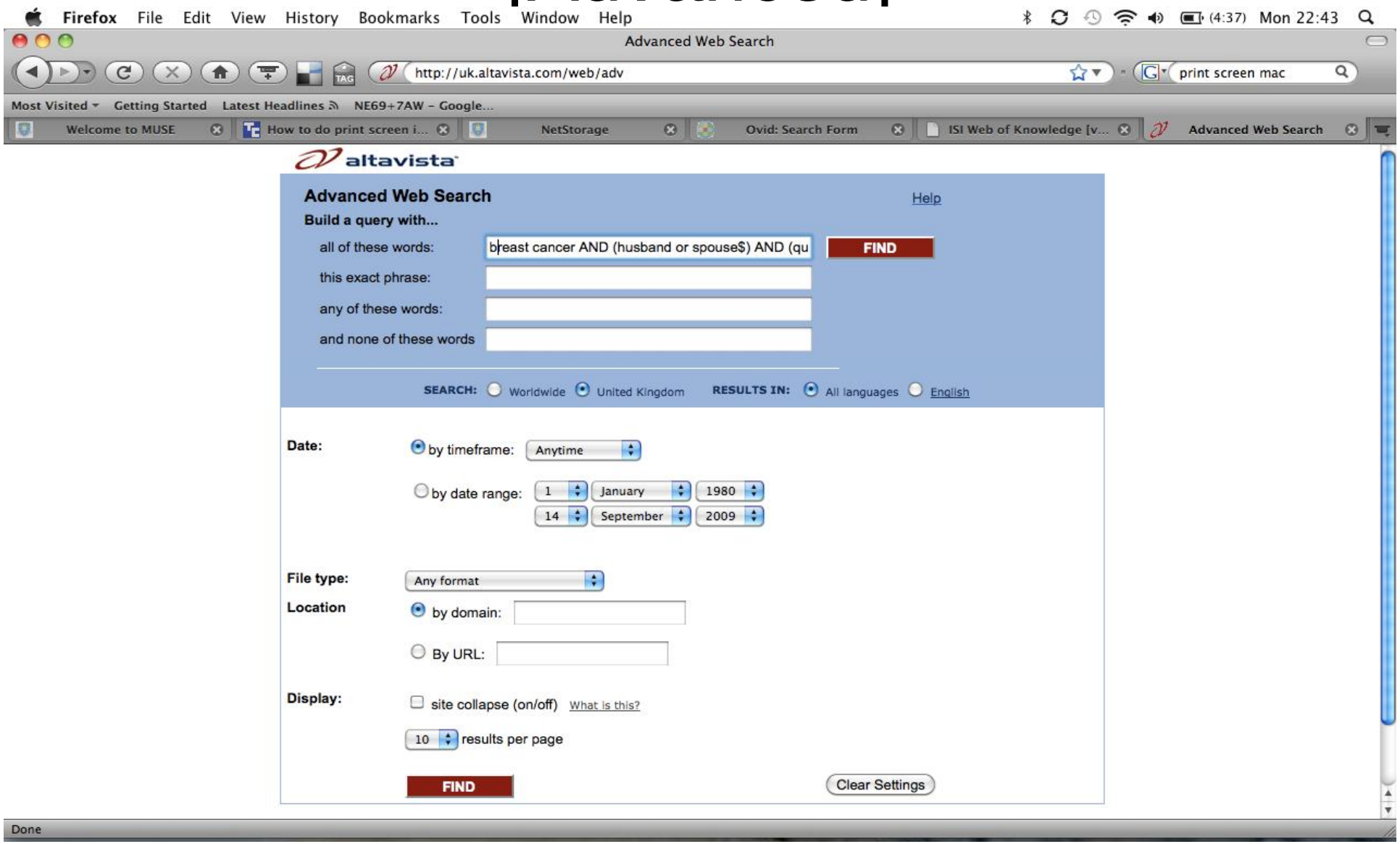
Using the Internet – Alta Vista [Advanced]



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Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)

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And now, it’s over to you!

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