

Supplemental vignette for Chapter 4

Using Zotero for managing literature reviews

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I use Zotero to manage citations for research, teaching, and keeping track of my own publications. I used to be an extensive EndNote user, but when I found out about Zotero I exported all of my files and switched. The primary reason at the time was because Zotero was a Mozilla Firefox Add-on and after I created an account with Zotero.org I was able to access my files in the cloud from any computer Mac, PC, or Linux. I believe EndNote now has a cloud version as well, but my use of EndNote ended at version 8 so I have never used its cloud features. Zotero now has a desktop client that behaves much more like EndNote, but for the most part I work with the Firefox Add-on.

Zotero was not easy to figure out. I consider myself quite savvy in terms of working with spreadsheets and databases, but with the Add-on interface I had to click through every feature to understand how it worked. However, now a new user can find short video tours at www.zotero.org in the support section. In Zotero I appreciate how it seamlessly recognize when I am at a journal website and identify article citations. For books, Zotero works very well on Amazon.com, but there are times that can be difficult depending on how the information is originally recorded by Amazon. For example, I recently recorded the citation information for a book with an author with first name, last name, and third for such as John Smith, III. When I downloaded the citation Zotero was unable to record the author information in the correct name fields. I have also noticed that the year of publication recorded on Amazon at times do not match the publication copyright year, so I have developed a habit to double check and edit the year when necessary. For the most part this happens with textbooks that are released one year, but have a copyright date for the following year.

I also like the way it is easy in Zotero to set up folders and tag citations. On the Zotero interface the tags show up as a folders, but they are not physical folders that you would expect on a Macintosh or Windows operating system. This is great when you want to tag one citation for more than one keyword. Every time you open a folder, the citation will be right there even though you may have tagged it for more than one keyword. This was useful to me when writing a book and I was organizing my citations based on chapter topics, but there were some citations that appeared in more than one chapter. Another feature about the Zotero folders that I like is that I can share entire folders with other Zotero members. I have done this primarily for course purposes, where my doctoral students and I jointly build a citation library of new resources we encountered for the course throughout the semester. This is great when conversations during class inspires me to refer students to books or articles that I had not originally thought to include in the readings.

I have learned to use Zotero in as simple of a manner as possible. In EndNote I used to use its "Cite while you write" feature, which embedded codes into word processed documents. In the end for me it became a source of a problem when the software could not locate the codes especially when I worked on multiple computers. Zotero has a similar feature, but I avoid it like the plague. So when I am ready to build my reference list I go into the Zotero database find it one by one and copy an APA formatted version of the citation

into a clipboard and paste it into my document. This method also makes me examine each reference one at a time to catch any errors that may have been entered into the database.

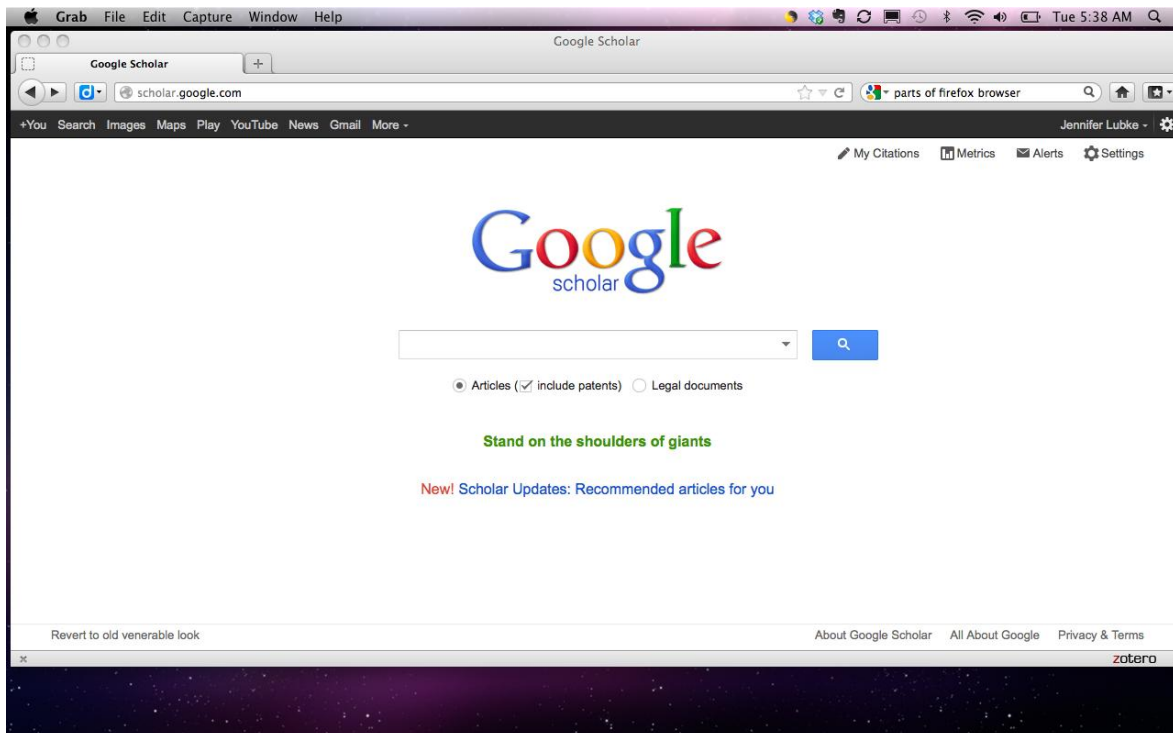


Figure 1: Once installed, Zotero integrates with the Firefox browser as an add-on button on the lower toolbar. (A new stand-alone version works with all browsers, but I have not tried it.)

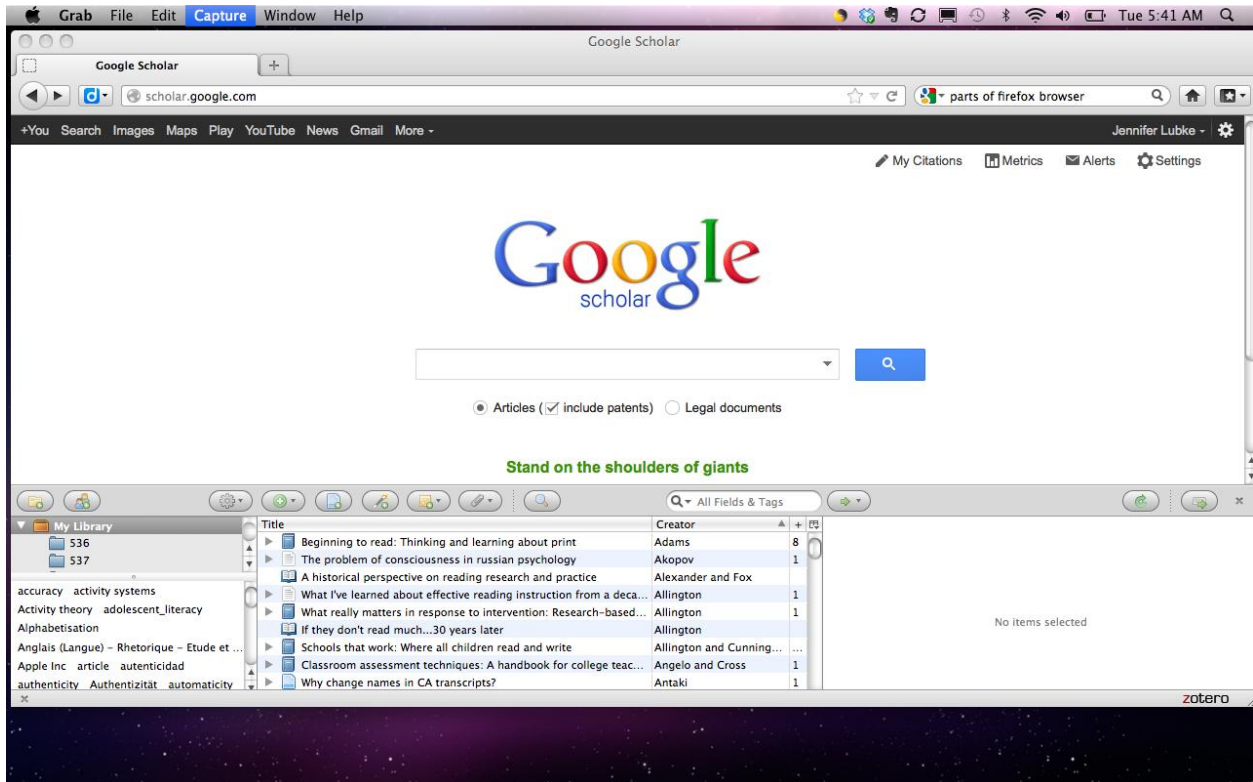


Figure 2. Click on the Zotero logo on the add-on toolbar, and the library appears in a split interface with whatever webpage you happen to be viewing.

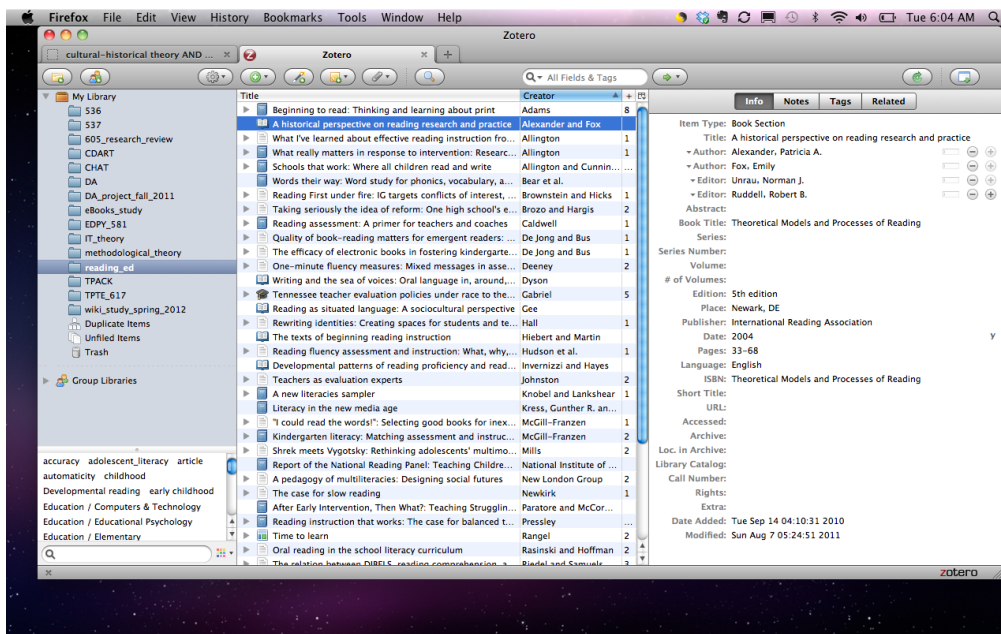


Figure 3. Clicking on the "Toggle Tab Mode" button in the upper right corner of the Zotero window enables a full view of the Zotero library. The left column displays all the folders/collections in the Zotero library as well as your tags, if you choose to tag your items.

Collections and tags are the two options for sorting and organizing the library. Click on any item in the middle column to display its bibliographic info in the right column.

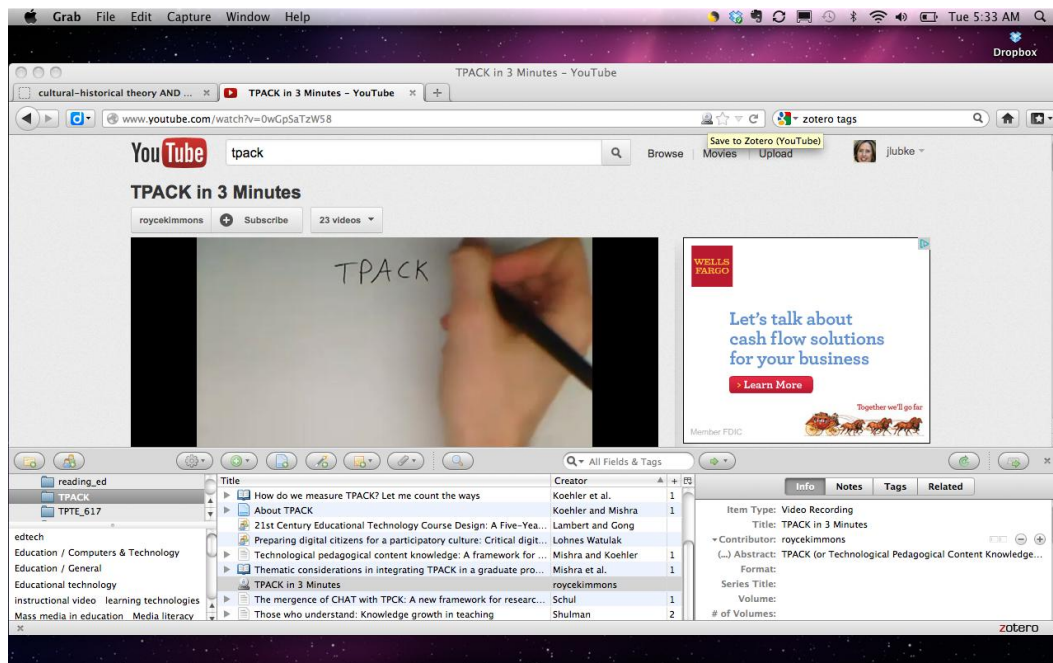


Figure 4. The “save to Zotero” icon appears in the address bar during online search. The icon varies according to the type of media you are saving to the library.

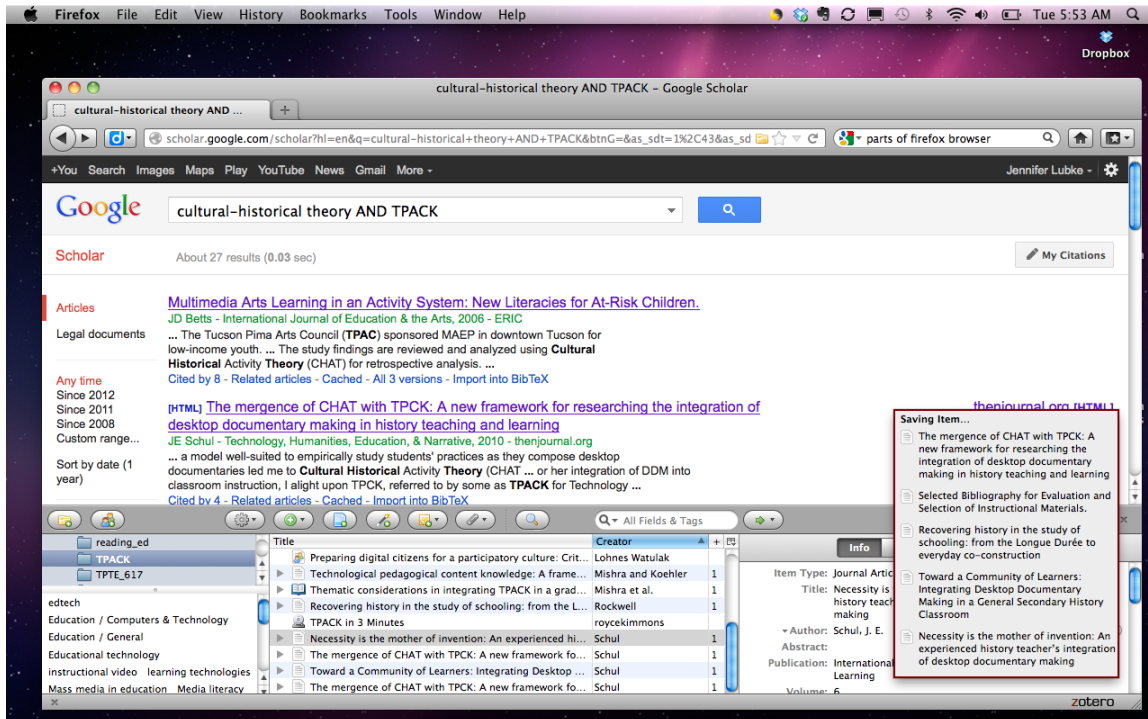


Figure 5. The yellow “save to Zotero” icon allows you to select and import multiple items at one time.