

Library Terminology

Abstract--A summary of an article or book.

Acquisitions--Department of the Library which orders new material. This term is used in the Online Catalog.

Archives-- A group of documents, photographs, plans, etc. collected to maintain a historical record of an institution. These items may be collected through a record-keeping process.

Article--An essay or research report on a subject. Articles can appear in magazines, journals, newspapers, or other sources such as encyclopedias.

Audiovisual--Information in a form other than words printed on paper. Examples include videos, DVDs, CDs, CD-ROMS, slides, audio tapes, records (vinyl), and software.

Author--The writer of a book or article. Usually this is a person (or perhaps two or three people), but it can also be a government agency, a symposium, a company, or other group that does not necessarily give the name(s) of the people who actually wrote the work.

Barcode--A small white label with closely spaced black stripes that can be read by a computer. Bar codes on books and on your student identification card are used to check out books from the library.

Bibliography--A list of books or other published writings. The list may be of books by one author, or on one subject. Sometimes bibliographies are annotated, that is, they include brief abstracts summarizing the important features of the works. Bibliographies can be found at the end of scholarly journal articles. If you find an article that is useful, then following the sources listed in its bibliography may also be useful.

Bookbag--Feature in the Online Catalog which allows users to select items of interest. This list may be printed to facilitate locating the item in the stacks. Also, this feature remembers items placed in the bookbag for future use.

Boolean Operators--The three Boolean operators are AND, OR, and NOT. These words are used to combine words in a database search.

AND asks the computer to look for two different concepts. For example, the way to write a search for the topic "Women in the military" would be women AND military.

OR instructs the database to look for either topic. This is particularly useful when one topic has many words that describe it. For example, if you were

searching for articles that were not just about the military as a whole but also about the branches, you might type military OR army OR navy OR air force OR marines.

NOT instructs the database to not return results with a certain term. For example, if you wanted information about the military but not about the Navy, you would type military NOT navy. These difference types of searches may be combined with a concept called nesting discussed below.

Bound Periodical--Several issues of a journal or magazine that are fastened together between hard covers so that they resemble a book. These items are located in the North Wing of the Library.

Call Number--A group of letters and numbers given to each book in the library that acts like an address. We use the Dewey Decimal System at this library. Books are arranged in the library by call number, and every book has a unique call number. The call number system arranges books so that books on similar topics are grouped together. You can find a book's call number in the Online Catalog. Example: 360.62 C283 1994. After you locate your number in the collection, look around to see if nearby books would also be useful.

Carrel--Study area for one person. The study carrels on the first floor of the South Wing are equipped with lights, power, and network connections.

Check Out--To borrow materials from the library. This is done at the circulation desk. You will need your student identification card to do this.

Circulating Collection--These are items that leave the Library such as books, videos, CDs, etc.

Circulation Desk--The counter where you check out items, return materials, renew items, request reserve material, etc. The circulation desk is near the front entrance.

Citation--Information that precisely identifies a book, article, website, etc.; includes title, author, volume and page numbers, and publication information. A single citation is sometimes called a reference; a group of citations gathered together is usually called a bibliography.

Controlled Vocabulary--Subject headings selected by indexes and catalogs to represent important concepts. Subject searches require knowledge of these headings. These can make searching easier by standardizing the way in which something is referred as in the case of using "Capital Punishment" in every instance of that concept regardless of the document calling that topic the death penalty, lethal injection, the electric chair, etc. Examples of this include Library of Congress Subject Headings, ERIC descriptors, NCJRS index terms, etc.

Current Periodical--Issues of a magazine or journal published during the last year. Our current periodicals are kept in the North Wing on putty-colored shelving. Lift the shelf up to see other issues for this year. For titles that publish frequently, inquire at the Circulation Desk for their availability and for that of certain titles shelved at the Circulation Desk.

Database--An electronic collection of information, often of citations, to materials. The Online Catalog is a database of books, videos, DVDs, CDs, etc. owned by the Library. Also, resources like *Academic Search Elite* and *Expanded Academic ASAP* are journal/magazine article databases as they contain citations and full-text articles.

Descriptors--A word or a group of words used as a subject to describe the content in books, articles, and other materials for the purpose of indexing or organizing these items by topic. As an important element of effective research, descriptors are needed to determine the correct headings for a specific database or catalog. Examples of such databases are ERIC, PsycInfo, Medline, etc. The books detailing these terms are located near the Reference Desk on the Dictionary Stand. See also Controlled Vocabulary.

Due Date--The date by which your borrowed books and materials should be returned. If you need to use the book for a longer time, you may renew it. Renewals can be performed online through the Online Catalog. Click on the "Your Account" function to complete this. Books cannot be renewed online if they are overdue. Late materials are considered overdue and will result in a fine.

Ebook--An electronic book. The Library subscribes to a product called netLibrary which provides over 22,000 titles.

Field--The part of a record in a database or Online Catalog used for a specific category of data. For example, the title field holds the title information for each record (eg. the name of the book). Many of the electronic databases allow you to search on these fields, so if you know the author's name and a word in the title, you can search just those two fields.

Fine--The amount of money which is owed by the borrower if an item is not returned on time.

Full-Text--Full-text means that the whole text of an item (usually an article) is available in the online system. Full-text articles may be in HTML format (word processed text) or PDF format (scanned image of the page which requires Adobe Acrobat Reader to view). HTML full-text prints faster but usually does not show the page breaks (which part of the text is on which page of the article). PDF full-text loads and prints slower, but displays charts and graphics better. Also, page breaks are retained.

Hold--If you need an item that is currently checked out to another patron, that item may be placed on hold. Placing an item on hold means that when the other person returns the item, you will be notified that it is available. You may place a hold at the Circulation Desk and through the Online Catalog.

Holdings--Often this term applies just to the issues of a magazine or journal owned by the library, but it can also refer to all the materials (books, periodicals, audiovisual media, electronic databases) in the library's collection.

Index--This term can be used in two ways. (1) A list of subjects discussed in a book usually found at the end of the text. (2) A list of journal articles arranged by subject and/or author. This second type can exist in print or as an electronic database (see the listing for database above).

Index Area--The section of the North Wing that contains the indexes to journal articles. Currently, the Library subscribes to the *New York Times Index* in print (as well as online) and the *ATLA Religion One* Index.

Interlibrary Loan--Borrowing a book or getting a copy of an article from another library. You can use this service (that is sometimes called just "ILL") to obtain items that are not owned by our library. Please allow time for this service; items may take up to two weeks to arrive. For more information, visit <http://www.methodist.edu/library/forms/forms.htm#ill>.

Journal--A publication that contains scholarly articles written either by professors, researchers, or experts in a subject area. An abstract and a bibliography usually appear with each article. Articles go through a process of peer-review before appearing.

Keyword--Searching a topic wherever the words may appear in a database, using "natural" language. Keyword searching is the most common kind of search.

Library of Congress Subject Headings--Terms used by the Library of Congress to divide knowledge into related subject areas, and by the library to arrange books on the shelves. These terms are published in large red volumes, often called "LCSH" or sometimes just "the big red books." Copies are located near the Online Catalog.

Limit--Users of resources, like the Online Catalog and various databases, may limit their searches. Limiting allows users to refine their search by placing restrictions such as "full-text" (show results where only the whole article text is available), "peer-review" (show results that only contain scholarly articles), "date" (the date of the article must be after a certain time period).

Loan Period--The length of time library materials may be borrowed. The time varies depending on the type of material borrowed and the borrower's status (student, faculty, staff).

Magazine--A periodical intended for the general public rather than for scholars. Examples are *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *Business Week*.

Microfiche--A flat sheet of film which stores periodicals or other documents which needs a reader to magnify the image.

Microfilm--A roll of film either 16mm or 35mm that stores periodicals or other documents which needs a reader to magnify the image.

Microforms--Journals that are printed in miniaturized form on roll of film or sheets of transparent plastic. Microform is the name of the group of which microfiche and microfilm are a part of.

Nesting--Nesting is a way to combine concepts using Boolean operators (see above) and/or truncation (see below) that groups the search. This is very similar to order of operations in math. If you wanted a comprehensive search on women in the military, you could try (women OR woman OR female*) AND (military OR army OR navy OR marines OR air force). This statement instructs the database to process first the items within the parentheses and then process the AND concept.

Online Catalog--This Internet site allows users to search the holdings of the Library. Patrons may search for items by keyword, author, title, etc. Users can also limit (restrict a search so that only items of the category specified are found) by format (video) or location (Teaching Materials Collection). Also known as an *OPAC--Online Public Access Catalog*.

Overdue--Material which is not returned to the library by its due date is considered overdue.

Oversize--Books that are too large for normal shelves; they are stored in special oversized stacks and have an L prefix in front of the call number. These are located in the North Wing, turn left immediately after entering, and go to the brick wall.

Periodical--A publication that is printed regularly. Examples include newspapers (daily or weekly), magazines, and journals.

Periodical Index--An alphabetical list which refers you to articles within periodicals. The list is generally arranged by subject or author. Periodical indexes are used to locate articles by subject or author within magazines, journals, and newspapers. The indexes are bound and arranged by year. Currently, the Library subscribes to the *New York Times Index* in print (as well as online) and the *ATLA Religion One Index*. Many of the items that

traditionally were available as indexes are now available in database form. The periodical indexes are located in the North Wing, main floor.

Ranges--The shelves where library materials are kept in call number order. Also called stacks.

Reference Collection--Reference materials include books such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs, and atlases. These items should be consulted for a quick fact (the name of a capital, a definition, the amount of coffee consumed by the average American). These materials are also a good place to look when choosing or developing a topic. They may not be checked out (non-circulating).

Reference Service--The Library provides reference services many of the hours in which it is open. A Reference Librarian is available to answer questions about conducting research, searching for books or articles, or any other question about writing a research paper, project, or presentation.

Renew--To extend the due date for an item. Books may be renewed through the Online Catalog's "Your Account" function as long as the item is not overdue or at the Circulation Desk.

Research Guides--These guides prepared by the reference staff answer common questions, suggest avenues of research, and point users to materials. Print versions of these are available next to the Reference Desk. Electronic versions are available at the Library's website at <http://www.methodist.edu/library/guides/guidelst.htm>.

Reserve--Library materials may be placed "on reserve" by faculty members. Reserve materials are kept at the Circulation Desk. These materials are loaned for limited periods of time. Closed reserve items cannot leave the building. The Online Catalog's "Course Reserve" tab allows users to search by instructor, course, or department to identify the materials on reserve.

Serial--A publication which comes out in parts. This includes periodicals such as magazines, newspapers, and journals, as well as books such as almanacs which come out each year.

Special Collections-- Many libraries have materials which are not placed in the public stacks. These may be old, rare, or expensive. These materials may be available to the public, but usually special arrangements must be made in advance to view them. Please ask at the Circulation Desk.

Stacks--The shelves where books are located.

Status --The place in an Online Catalog Record that tells you whether an item is available, checked out, etc.

Stop Words--These are words that databases will not search for. Some of these words include: the, a, for, of, etc.

Thesaurus--A list of words or group of words that can be used as subject headings or descriptors in a particular database, catalog, or index. See Controlled Vocabulary, Descriptors, and Library of Congress Subject Headings for more information.

Truncation--Truncation is a useful function of electronic databases and the Online Catalog. Searchers type in the root of a word (delinquen) and then a symbol (usually an asterisk *, but may also be a question mark?, or an exclamation point !) which asks the database to search for any word beginning with that. So a statement like delinquen* would retrieve articles which contain the words delinquent, delinquency, delinquents, delinquence, etc. One caution--truncating some words may not retrieve articles that you want. For example, ban* will retrieve ban, bans, banned, banning, etc. but will also retrieve banana, bandit, etc.

Volumes--Library materials that are part of a single title but appear as separate bound items. Individual issues of a periodical that are bound together into a single book are called a volume (usually, this equals one year of that periodical).

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