
Be in the Know with Library Terms

Abstract	A summary or shortened version of book or article
Advanced search	A search that allows special limitation by date, source, format, etc.
Anthology	A collection of stories, poems, books, etc. by different authors
Author	Person or persons (or government agency, company, etc.) responsible for a book, article, Web site, or other work.
Authority	Credentials or qualifications
Bibliography	A list of citations for publications used, usually found at the end of a paper, article, book, etc.
Biography	A book or written account of a person's life
Boolean operators	AND (narrows a search), OR (expands a search), NOT (excludes words/phrases) used in computer searching of databases
Broadcast search	A search of several databases or catalogs at one time
Browse search	A search that sorts results alphabetically by the type of search – by title, author's last name, etc.
Browser	A software program, like Internet Explorer, used to access Web pages
Call number	An identification number assigned to a library book, allowing patrons to locate the item in the collection. College libraries use Library of Congress call numbers, which combine letters and numbers, i.e. RC601 .T5 2007.
Catalog	A library catalog contains records for each item (book, DVD, Journal, etc.) in a library and may be searched by author, title, keyword, etc.
Citation	A complete reference to an article, a book, or other source of Information which fully identifies a publication by including author, title of article, source journal, volume, date and pages (if the citation is for an article) or author, title, publisher, place and date (for a book)
Classification	A system of organizing materials on shelves by subject. College libraries use the Library of Congress Classification System.
Copyright	Exclusive rights to publication of literary, artistic, musical, or electronic works as authorized by U.S. law.
Critical review	A review is a critical evaluation. By reading reviews, you can determine the quality of a book, movie, product, or musical recording.
Database	An organized collection of materials that can be searched for articles and other information on a particular research topic
Electronic journal	A journal whose issues are available online

Fields	Individual pieces of records stored in a database, such as authors, titles, dates, etc.
Full-text database	A database containing partial or complete text of works, such as articles, books, poems, etc.
General encyclopedia	An encyclopedia, like <i>Britannica</i> or <i>World Book</i> , that covers all subject areas
Government document	Any publication issued by local, state, national, or international governments
Hyperlink	Words or graphics on a Web site that may be clicked for additional information
Icon	A small symbol on a computer screen that represents a computer file or operation
Index	A print or electronic publication that allows you to find books or articles on a topic; also an alphabetical listing in the back of books used to find specific information
Information literacy	The ability to know when information is needed; also, the ability to identify, find, and effectively use information to support the issue or project
Interlibrary loan	A service by which libraries, who do not own materials needed by patrons, will borrow or get copies of them from other libraries
Internet	A worldwide network of computers that transmits text, video, images and sounds
Journal	A periodical containing scholarly articles written by authorities or experts in a given field of study; articles usually have a bibliography or list of references at the end.
Keyword search	In a keyword search of a database, a user types in terms related to a topic and retrieves items that have the words in the title, author, subject headings, text, etc.
Magazine	A periodical written for the general public with the purpose of informing and entertaining
Media	Non-print materials, such as films, videos, and DVDs, that require special devices for use.
Metasearch engine	A search engine that queries other search engines and combines results to optimize Web searching.
Nesting	Use of parentheses in a keyword search. Example: treatment AND (anorexia OR bulimia)
Newspaper	A daily or weekly publication that contains news, articles and advertisements
Peer-review	A process used for scholarly journals which insures quality control
Periodical	A publication issued at regular intervals, such as a magazine, newspaper or journal

Phrase search	Putting words together to conduct a search; quotation marks often needed
Plagiarism	Stealing someone else's ideas and presenting them as your own
Primary source	An account by an eyewitness of an event, such as diaries, letters, minutes of meetings, news footage, newspaper articles; data obtained through original research; creative works such as poetry, music, or art
Record	All of the information for a given item (book in a library catalog or article in a library database)
Reference	Area where library patrons may consult reference books (encyclopedias, handbooks, statistical sources, etc.) and ask for assistance
Relevant search	A search which sorts results according to various algorithms; some search engines rank retrieved documents based on the location and frequency of the keywords in those documents. Documents with the highest rank are listed first.
Reserves	Area where library patrons may check out items put on reserve by a professor
Scholarly journal	A periodical published for scholarly research, information in a special field, written by experts in that field; often known as academic, peer reviewed, refereed, or professional
Search engines	Software (Google, Yahoo, Mamma, Dogpile, etc.) that retrieves Web pages by matching search terms with words in the documents
Search strategy	An organized plan for gathering information
Secondary source	A work that interprets primary data, such as a book about eating disorders, a journal article about the role of tobacco in colonial economy, or a critical review of a play
Specialized encyclopedia	An encyclopedia that deals with a particular subject area, such as psychology or literature
Stacks	The area in the library where general collection books are shelved
Style manual	A guide to citing publications properly, such as MLA, APA, etc.
Subject search	A search in a database that uses subject headings, standardized words or groups of words dealing with a topic in a database or index
Thesaurus	A list of all the subject headings or descriptors used in a particular database or index
Title	The identifying name of a book, article, DVD, work of art, etc.
Truncation	Use of a word root and wild card symbol to pick up alternate endings in a keyword search, such as child* to retrieve child, childhood, children
URL	(Uniform Resource Locator) The address for a Web page, such as http://www.es.vccs.edu