

GE103 Glossary of Library Terms

Abstract

A brief summary or description of the main ideas of a book, article, or other document.

AND

The Boolean operator used to narrow a search by specifying that the words or phrases connected by AND be present in the retrieved results.

Annotated Bibliography

A bibliography that includes a brief description of each article or book listed. The description should help the reader evaluate the content and usefulness of each item.

Author field

The field in a record in a database where the author or authors are listed.

Bibliographic Record

An individual record in a database that describes and identifies a specific item (such as a book or journal) by fields (e.g. title, author, publication date, etc.).

Bibliography

A list of citations for books, periodicals, or other materials on a given topic usually found at the end of scholarly articles, books, or research papers.

Boolean logic (operators)

The connectors AND, OR, NOT used to combine key words or subjects to narrow, broaden or limit a computer search.

Bound Periodical

Several magazines or journals arranged together in one hard cover so that they appear to be a book-like volume.

Catalog

A tool used to learn what a library owns and where it is located. A standard format is used to describe books, journals, audiovisual holdings, etc. Most catalogs are now online or computerized.

Citation

Information which fully identifies a publication. A complete citation usually includes author, title, name of journal (if the citation is to an article) or publisher (if to a book), or Internet address or URL (if to a web site), and date. The form of the citation depends on the style required: Modern Language Association (MLA) or American Psychological Association (APA).

Classification System

Used by libraries to arrange materials by subject. Dewey Decimal System and Library of Congress Classification System are the most frequently used classification systems.

Controlled vocabulary

A listing of words or terms which must be used as subject headings or descriptors in a particular database.

Copyright

Legal privilege granted to an author, composer, etc. for exclusive rights of publication and distribution of a work.

Cross Reference

A term used in catalogs, thesauri and indexes to lead you from one heading or entry to another. Usually prefaced by the words: See, See also (SA), Use, Use for (UF), Broader term (BT), Narrower Term (NT).

Current Periodicals

A location within the library where recent issues of periodical titles are housed on periodical shelves. Older back issues may be found in other formats and housed elsewhere.

Database

An organized collection of computer records in a standardized format that can be stored, accessed and searched in a variety of ways.

Entry

A citation or record in an index or catalog.

Fields

The individual areas of a database record. Examples include the title field, the subject field, the author field, etc.

Format

The manner in which information is presented includes print, audiovisual, electronic or digital.

Full-text

The entire text of an article which has been entered or scanned into a database.

Hits

Results retrieved from a search in an electronic database.

Index

An alphabetical list of names, places, and subjects covered in a book, journal, or collection, giving the page or pages on which each item is mentioned. Also, a listing of the pages that comprise a web site.

Information Literacy

The ability to access, evaluate and apply information effectively. It requires decision making, problem solving or the acquisition of knowledge.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

A service which allows students, faculty and staff to request books and periodical articles from other libraries.

Journal

A publication containing scholarly articles written by experts. Journals are often peer-reviewed and contain bibliographies.

Keyword searching

Keyword searching allows you to retrieve information in a database by looking for a word or combination of words. Key words can be used in a general (free-text) search of all fields or in specific fields, such as title or subject.

Magazine

A periodical publication usually considered to be of more general or popular interest than a journal.

Media

Materials that are presentational and may include equipment.

Media Center

A separate location within the library where audio and visual materials are kept and signed out. Provides presentational support, equipment and design services for faculty and students.

Microform

Forms of reproduction in a size too small to be read without enlargement:

Microfiche -- transparent 4 by 6 inch flat plastic sheets of film containing micro-images of pages.

Microfilm--usually 35 mm rolls of film containing reduced images of printed matter and stored on a reel. Both forms are read using a special machine.

Natural language

A search statement expressed in normal language. Example: Why is the sky blue?

Nesting

A term used in Boolean searching to indicate the sequence in which operations are to be performed. Enclosing words in parentheses identifies a group or nest. Groups can be within other groups. The operations will be performed from the innermost nest to the outmost, and then from left to right.

NOT

The Boolean operator NOT is used to exclude words or phrases from a search.

OR

The OR operator broadens a search by including any of the terms. Examples: cinema OR film OR movie.

Peer-Reviewed Journal

See "Refereed Journal"

Periodical / Serial

A magazine, newspaper, scholarly journal, or serial which is published on a regular schedule: daily, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, etc.

Periodical Indexes and Abstracts

Periodical indexes list articles which have appeared in specified journals, magazines, or newspapers. They generally list author, title, name of periodical, volume, pages and date of publication. Indexes which include abstracts contain summaries of the articles.

Plagiarism

The unethical and dishonest act of using the ideas and wording of other authors without giving them proper credit.

Record: See "Entry"

Refereed Journal

A journal where articles are reviewed and selected by professional colleagues for publication.

Reference

A location within the library where non-circulating, print materials are kept. These include indexes, encyclopedias, dictionaries and other reference materials.

Reference Desk

Service area in the library where patrons can get help from librarians in using the library, locating library materials, searching databases and answering general questions.

Reserves

A library service that manages the circulation of certain required course materials selected by instructors and made available for short term loans. Items are listed in the catalog and are signed out at the circulation desk.

Scholarly Journal

See "Refereed Journal"

Search Statement

A statement constructed from keywords or phrases which 'instructs' the database to perform a search. A search statement may include keywords or phrases linked with Boolean connectors.

Search strategy

A methodology for focusing your research on a particular topic.

Serial

Library term for publications issued at regular intervals. This can be a periodical, journal, magazine, newspaper, annual report or a conference proceeding.

Subject field

The field in a database record in which the terms, descriptors or subject headings describing the content of the item are located.

Subject headings (Also called descriptors)

Words or phrases assigned to materials which describes the subject or a work. Determining the correct headings (also called descriptors) for a specific database or catalog is important for effective research. See also "Controlled Vocabulary".

Title Field

The field in the record of a database where the title or titles are listed.

Truncation

In an online search, the ability to enter the first part of a keyword, insert a symbol (usually * or ?) and retrieve all possible endings of that word.

For definitions of Internet and Web terms, please see:
www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Glossary.htm