Santa Rosa Junior College Libraries

Glossary of Library Terms

A
Abridged
Condensed or shortened in length.
Abstract
A short content summary of a book or article.
Alphabetical
Arranged in order of the letters of the alphabet; A to Z.
Annotation
A brief content description of a work. May include some explanatory and critical commentary.
Anthology
A collection of selected musical or literary works or excerpts, i.e., an anthology of modern poetry, essays or plays.
Archive
Repository holding documents or other material of historical value.
Article
Small self contained essay on a topic found in journals, periodicals, encyclopedias.
Atlas
A bound collection of maps.
Author
The person or corporate body chiefly responsible for the intellectual creation or artistic content of a work

B
Bibliographic Record
Gives you the complete information about a piece of information contained in the database. Includes many fields, for example, author (composer), title, publisher, subject(s), physical description, etc.
Bibliographic Database
A database containing information pertaining to publications such as books, periodical titles, and government documents. It does not contain the full text of an item.
Bibliography
A list of works (i.e. books, articles, electronic sources) on a particular subject, or by a particular author.
Biography
Information about a person's life.
Boolean Operators
Words AND, OR, and NOT used to combine search terms to broaden or narrow search results. Combining terms using AND, OR and NOT is sometimes called Boolean searching.
Browser (web)
A software program which accesses, reads and displays information from the World Wide Web; also called "web browser" or "client." e.g. Netscape, Internet Explorer, ...

C
California Case
Contains a collection of rare books. These books are about California or are produced by fine presses in California. Ask for assistance at the Reserve Desk for access to the California Case.
Call Number
The combination of letters and numbers found on the book's spine and in the Location part of the books bibliographic record in the Library Catalog. The call number indicates where a book is shelved in the library.
Catalog
The electronic database that lists the library's holdings (books, videos, compact discs etc.).
Circulation Desk (Check-Out Desk)
The desk just inside the front door where you may borrow and return books.

http://www.santarosa.edu/petaluma/library/guides/howto/glossary.htm
Chronological
Arranged in the order of occurrence in time.

Circulation
The library department that loans out and gathers library materials. The majority of the book collection covering all subject areas is in the library's circulating collection. You can check these books out for three week periods.

Citation
Gives information necessary to locate a publication. The citation for a book includes the author, title, publisher and copyright date. The citation for a periodical article includes the author, title of the article, periodical title, volume, date and page number. The citation for a web site includes the author, page name, site name, date page was posted, date page was accessed, URL for the page.

Computers
The computers in the library are for research purposes. The computers have access to the Internet and online resources. Please note: these computers do NOT have Word processing or email software.

Controlled Vocabulary
An agreed-upon list of search terms. May refer to the subject heading terms from the Library of Congress used in the Library Catalog, periodical or other databases.

Corporate Author
An organization or group of persons identified by a name and acts or may act as an author. Corporate authors cover a broad range of categories: associations, institutions, business firms, nonprofit enterprises, governments, specific agencies of government, conferences.

Criticism
Commentary or discussion about an author and/or their works. This commentary is evaluative and includes positive as well as negative view points.

Cross Reference
Directs researcher to look under different heading for information.

Database
A collection of stored information organized for retrieval by author, title or subject. Database usually refers to information in a machine readable form accessible by computer. An everyday example of a non-computer database is the telephone book or a cookbook.

Dictionary
Compilations of terms and their definitions listed in alphabetical order.

Dictionary Format
A reference source with author, title and subject entries filed in one alphabetical sequence.

Discussion Group (Internet)
Worldwide or local online forum allowing debate and open exchange of information on a variety of topics.

Divided Format
A reference source putting author, title and subject into separate alphabetical sequences.

Editor
One who prepares an edition for publication.

Encyclopedia
Usually made up of individual articles by authorities giving a broad overview and background information. With references to authoritative books and articles on a subject

Entry
A name or term under which a book is listed in the Library Catalog. One book may have several different entries, i.e., author, title, and several subject entries.

Essay
A short literary composition on a single subject usually presenting the personal views of the author.

Etymology
The history and derivation of a word.

Excerpt
A passage selected or quoted from a book, etc. an extract.
**Field**
The part of a record used to indicate a particular category of data. For instance, the title field in a database record displays the title for the record and the Subject field displays the subjects attached to the record.

**FTP**
File Transfer Protocol; a set of conventions defined for transferring data files from one computer to another.

**Full-Text Database**
A bibliographic database containing the complete text of the bibliographic item (such as a periodical article) referenced in the database.

**Gazetteer**
A geographical dictionary giving location, elevation and other geographical features for its entries.

**Government Document**
Any written work published by a government agency.

**Handbooks**
One volume reference sources on specific subjects.

**Help Screens**
Many databases and programs provide assistance through help screens. Always look for a HELP link or button whenever assistance is needed.

**Holdings**
A list of what the library owns in a given area e.g., holdings for a particular magazine title.

**Hold or Call Slip**
A library user may place a hold on a book checked out to another person; this ensures the person placing the hold will be next in line to receive the book when the book is returned.

**Home page**
Refers to the entry point or introductory page to a collection of Web documents. The home page can also be a Web page designed by an individual to present personal or professional information.

**Hypertext**
A document format which includes the use of specially coded, "clickable" terms or images. When selected or "clicked", these images connect to a linked location, file, or carry out a command to run an application or program.

**Index**
An alphabetized list of names, places or subjects. SEE ALSO Periodical Index.

**Interlibrary Loan (ILL)**
SRJC students and staff may obtain materials not owned by SRJC Libraries through this service. Ask for assistance at the Reference Desk.

**Internet**
Network of networks, made up of millions of computers from all over the world. Basic internet tools include World Wide Web, E-mail, Newsgroups, FTP and Telnet.

**Journal**
A periodical often specializing in a particular subject area, e.g., "Journal of English Studies." SEE ALSO Periodical. a periodical containing scholarly articles written by authorities or experts in a subject discipline.
K
Keyword
The significant or main words found in a field of a record, such as title or subject heading.

Keyword Searching
Keyword searching allows a user to construct a search by looking for a word or combination of words contained in several fields (e.g. author, title, or subject fields.)

L
Library of Congress or “LC” Classification
The classification system used for the libraries book collection. The “LC” system is used in college libraries. This classification system arranges books on the shelf by subject. The public library uses the Dewey Decimal Classification System.

M
MLA Style Sheet
The Modern Language Association’s bibliographic format for Parenthetical References (footnotes) and for List of Works Cited (bibliographies).

Media Services
The area where a non-print library material such as CDs, video tapes, slides, films, and filmstrips are located. This is the service desk for viewing any media (videos, tapes, etc.) that your instructor has assigned for the class.

Microfiche
Small cards of film for storing magazines, newspapers and other bibliographic information.

Microfilm
Cartridges of film for storing newspapers and magazines.

Microforms
Documents which have been photographed and reduced in size. Common formats for microforms are microfilm, microfiche, or microcard. College catalogs, telephone books, newspapers, magazines and government documents are available in microform.

N
Nesting
Search strategy used in computerized literature searching. Allow for complex combinations of search terms to be entered and searched at one time.

O
Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)
A computer index for books and compact discs in the library. Now known as the Library Catalog.

Oversize
Large books shelved in a separate section of the library.

P
Pagination
The numbering of the pages of a book.

Pamphlet
A written work usually under 50 pages. Pamphlets are a good source of current information.

Periodical
A periodical is anything published more than once a year. Newspapers, magazines, serials and journals are all periodicals.

Periodical Holdings List
An alphabetical listing by periodical title of all the magazines and newspapers in the library’s collection.

Periodicals Desk
The library department housing the most current issues of magazines, microfiche, the Press Democrat and the San Francisco Chronicle. The Periodicals Desk contains current and more dated issues of magazines, provides change and is the location for help with printing.

http://www.santarosa.edu/petaluma/library/guides/howto/glossary.htm
**Periodical Index**
A reference book or computer index listing periodical articles by subjects or personal names which have appeared in journals, magazines, or newspapers. Some periodical indexes are general and cover all subjects, e.g., The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. Some are specialized, e.g., The General Science Index and Business Periodicals Index.

**Physical Description**
The part of the bibliographic record giving the number of pages, size, illustrations, etc. for a book.

**Primary Source**
1. An account by an eyewitness or the first recorder of an event, in written or other form (e.g. diaries, letters, minutes of meetings, news footage, newspaper articles) 2. Data obtained through original research, statistical compilations or legal requirements. (e.g. reports of scientific experiments, U.S. census records, public records) 3. Creative works such as poetry, music, or art 4. Artifacts such as stone points, pottery, furniture, and buildings.

**Pseudonym**
A false name. Writers often adopt pseudonyms or pen names. For example, Samuel Clemens' pseudonym was Mark Twain.

**R**

**Relevance**
In certain searches the Library Catalog, Electronic Database or Web Search Tool will use a ranking system to determine which items are the most closely related to your topic. These items will display at the top of the results list.

**Record**
A collection of related data arranged in fields and treated as a unit. The data for each item in an electronic database makes up a record.

**Reference Book**
A reference book is for specific, background information rather than a book for you read from cover to cover; a dictionary is a good example. Reference books are used in the library and do not circulate. The reference collection is located on the gray carpeted area. These materials which cover all subject areas, cannot be checked out of the library. Use these materials only in the library.

**Reference Desk**
The reference desk, located in the central reference area, is staffed by professional librarians who offer help in analyzing your questions and directing you to print and electronic indexes and database for your research need. The reference desk is the point for assistance in using any item in the reference collection and electronic reference area.

**Renewal**
An extension of the loan period for charged library materials.

**Reserve Material**
Materials which a professor has placed on reserve for a class to use. These materials may be checked out at the Reserve Desk; some loan periods range from two hours to three days.

**Reference Librarian**
A person who is able to find information through varied sources such as books, magazines, and computers. The reference librarian provides research assistance for school assignment can help you research your school assignments.

**Related Subjects**
Additional subject headings related to your topic.

**Reserve Desk**
The library department handling items placed on restricted loan periods. The Reserve Desk is the location for frequently used materials and for materials instructors want students to use for their classes.

**S**

**Secondary Source**
Commentary or analysis of original/ primary sources of information.

**Search Terms**
Words or phrases describing research topics or ideas.

**"See" Reference**
Refers to the correct subject heading for a topic.
"See Also" Reference
Refers to additional or related subject headings on a topic.

Series
Groups of books or other items pulled together by their publisher under one title.

Sound Recordings
The library's circulating collection of musical recordings on compact discs and records.

Stacks
Shelves where the books and magazines are stored.

Stopwords
Common words (United States History) or two letter words (it, of, an). Often these words are not indexed and not searched by a database.

Subdivisions
More specific headings within the main subject heading preceded by a dash. Subdivisions help focus and narrow a topic.

Subject Heading
Words or phrases assigned to books under which all material dealing with this theme is entered in a catalog or a bibliography.

T

Thesaurus
A dictionary of synonyms and antonyms.

Title Page (t.p)
Page near the front of a book which displays its title, author and publisher.

Truncation
To search by the root of a word rather than the complete word, e.g., "FEM" rather than female, feminine, feminist, etc. By typing a special symbol at the end of a word retrieves all possible endings of a word. Frequently used symbols for truncation include the asterisk ( * ), the pound sign (#), or the question mark (?).

U

URL
Uniform Resource Locator - a unique address for a specific file available on the Internet. The structure of a URL is as follows: http://www.santarosa.edu/library/Refs

Unabridged
A dictionary that has not been reduced in size by omission of definitional terms.

V

Verso
The back side of a page in a book. Information about the publication of a book (such as copyright date) is printed on the verso of the title page.