

Glossary of Terms

Circulation

The circulation department deals with the actual borrowing of books. Books to be checked out should be brought to the circulation desk, and books that have been checked out should be returned to the desk. The circulation department also maintains the database of library users, makes and distributes library cards, and collects overdue fines and other fees.

Citation

A citation is a reference to a specific information source. It can be used in a footnote or in the text of a paper to indicate where a specific idea, fact, quote, etc., came from, or it can be in the list of references or bibliography at the end of a paper. Citations are formatted according to style rules established by various manuals, such as the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, or the *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The exact style manual to use in a class is usually established by the professor.

Database

A database is a searchable online compilation of information items, most commonly a compilation of articles or other texts. The database may include the full text of these items or may be limited to citations and abstracts. Access to databases is usually provided through an organization that has paid for it by purchase or subscription. Databases generally cannot be accessed over the free Internet.

Interlibrary Loan

Interlibrary Loan is a library service through which a library patron can acquire a particular book or article that is not in the library's collection. The library will find another library, preferably nearby, that does have the book and ask to borrow it for that patron. The material is sent from the lending library to the borrowing library and is then provided to the patron.

Journal

A journal is a serious, scholarly publication which is produced on a regular, recurring schedule, such as monthly or quarterly. Most journals use the peer-review process to select articles for publication. The majority have an academic or research focus and are published by universities, scholarly organizations, or specialty publishers. They usually do not accept advertising.

NetLibrary

NetLibrary is a growing collection of electronic books from major publishers, currently comprising approximately 70,000 titles. Patrons can view the entire text of each book on the computer screen, just as it was printed. Access to NetLibrary is usually provided through a library that has purchased access to the collection.

Online Catalog

An online catalog is an electronic index to the books held by a library. By consulting the online catalog one can find records of the books located in the library's collection, their locations, and the status of each book (available, checked out, for library use only). Online catalogs can usually be

searched by author, title, subject heading, and keyword. The full text of most books found in the catalog typically is not available, except in the case of electronic books. However, some additional information may be available for newer books, such as book reviews, tables of contents, or brief biographies of the authors.

Peer-reviewed Journals

Peer-reviewed journals are professional, scholarly periodicals that use recognized experts in the subject field to carefully screen articles that are submitted for publication, guaranteeing the quality of the articles published. These journals are usually academic or research-oriented in nature. They may be referred to as “scholarly” or “academic” journals as well as “peer-reviewed.”

Reference

The reference department is concerned with questions regarding information, resources, and library use. This department is usually staffed by professional librarians who assist patrons in searching for a particular book, finding articles on a topic, or using other resources to answer research questions. The reference department may also prepare instructional materials and coordinate library instruction.

Virtual Library

A virtual library provides access to library resources through an online gateway. These resources usually include full-text electronic journals, electronic books, websites, reference assistance, instruction, and other materials and services. Access to all or part of the virtual library is often limited to registered users. For many libraries, the virtual library mirrors the resources and services available in the physical library.

WorldCat

WorldCat is an online catalog of books and journals that reflects the holdings of thousands of libraries in the United States. It can be used to verify the existence of a book or article and locate it at a nearby library.