

XIX. Glossary of Library Terms

- **AACRII:** Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, second edition. The standard set of rules for cataloging. These rules describe the professionally accepted format for presenting information in a catalog record for library materials. They delineate how to handle multiple authors, alternate titles, etc.
- **Abstract:** A brief description or summary of a work.
- **Accession:** Adding new materials into the library collection.
- **Annotation:** A brief summary of the book usually found in a note in the MARC record.
- **Autobiography:** A biographical work about a person and written by that person.
- **Bibliography:** A list of resources used in a project. Also a resource list of items that have something in common, for example holiday books, books by a specific author, books with a common theme.
- **Biography:** A literary work written about the life of a person.
- **Boolean:** A search strategy that links various search terms with “and”, “or”, or “not” to narrow or expand a search in an online library catalog or database.
- **Call number:** The classification number assigned to library materials to designate the item’s place in the library collection. The two classification systems used are the Dewey Decimal and the Library of Congress. These systems place materials of similar subject matters in the same location. The call number is usually placed on the spine of the book.
- **Card catalog:** A library catalog in which each item in the library collection is described on two or more separate file cards. With the advent of computer catalogs, the paper card catalog is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Cards were placed in drawers containing identification information about a book. Cards were created for a book’s author, title, subject tracings and other persons of importance for the book (illustrator, editor, etc.).
- **Catalog:** The file of bibliographic records that describe material in a library’s collection. Automation of libraries has led to the demise of the card catalog and the advent of the online catalog.
- **Circulation:** The checking in and out of library materials. Circulation statistics can be useful in the budgetary process.
- **Circulation system:** The computer management system for signing library materials in and out. Most systems are integrated with an online catalog database
- **Citation:** The identifying information for a source in a research paper or project. These are proscribed by the format chosen. APA (American Psychological Association) and MLA (Modern Language Association) are two examples.
- **Collection:** The library’s holdings – books, films, videos, audiotapes, etc.
- **Collection development:** The activities involved in building and maintaining a library’s collection. Included are selection policies, examining the collection, selecting and purchasing materials, adding new materials to the collection, weeding outdated materials, etc.
- **Collective biography:** A literary work written about the lives of two or more people.

- **Copyright:** The laws governing the exclusive rights granted to the creator of a work. Libraries are often the first line of defense of copyright laws.
- **Cross reference:** A list directing patrons from one heading/subject to another or to similar items. “See” and “See also” are the terms used in cross referencing.
- **Dewey Decimal system:** The system of classification developed by Melvil Dewey. This system assigns numbers in 10 subject areas to organize all materials by subject matter.
- **Fiction:** A category of literature that is an imaginative creation and is not necessarily based on fact.
- **Folio:** An oversized book.
- **Full text:** In an online database, the entire text of the article is available.
- **Holdings:** The entire collection of a library.
- **Index:** Usually found at the back of the material. It is an alphabetical guide to locating specific topics in the resource.
- **Interlibrary loan:** Sharing resources between libraries.
- **Inventory:** The entire collection of a library. A physical inventory (comparing the recorded holdings to the actual holdings on the shelves) is usually taken once a year.
- **Journal:** An academic or professional magazine that is published at consistent times.
- **Keyword:** The terms chosen to search for information. A keyword search in an electronic database will look in all fields of a material record.
- **Library of Congress:** The federal library which serves the U.S. Congress and other libraries. The Library of Congress also works with publishers and libraries in developing and maintaining classification and cataloging of library materials.
- **Library of Congress Classification System:** Similar to the Dewey Decimal System, the LOC system classifies materials by 21 subject areas and uses a combination of letters and numbers. It is used primarily by post-secondary academic libraries.
- **MARC:** Machine Readable Cataloging. The arrangement of bibliographic information for computerized systems.
- **Non-fiction:** Written works intended to give facts or true accounts of real things and events.
- **Nonprint:** The term used for holdings that are not books or other printed materials. This includes movies, videos, DVDs, audio recordings, software, etc.
- **Novel:** A work of long, fictional prose narrative.
- **Periodical:** A magazine, newspaper or journal that is published on a regular, predictable basis.
- **Processing:** Preparing a library material for circulation.
- **Recto:** The right-hand page of a folded sheet or bound item.
- **Retrospective conversion:** The transferring of library materials information into electronic format.
- **Sears List of Subject Headings:** A standard used to determine the correct subject headings to use for new library materials.

- **Shelf list:** A listing of library materials in the order in which they are filed on the library shelves. Formerly a paper catalog, this has been superseded with the advent of library automation software.
- **Special collection:** A group of materials that are shelved together because of a particular theme. Examples are Maine Collections, Professional Collections, etc.
- **Spine label:** The label containing the book's call numbers and location on the shelf.
- **Stacks:** Areas of shelving housing the library collection.
- **Subject heading:** A word or phrase to indicate the subject, theme or focus of a book. Used by patrons in searching the online library catalog.
- **Title page:** The page at the beginning of the book that contains the book's author, title and publishing information. This is the page students should use when compiling bibliographies.
- **Tracings:** Subject headings for a book.
- **Verso:** The left-hand page of a folded sheet or bound item. Also the reverse of a page e.g. The verso of the title page is where publishing and copyright information may be found.
- **Vertical file:** The file cabinet that contains pamphlets, clippings, photos, etc. for reference use.
- **Weeding:** Removing old, damaged or no longer needed materials from the collection. Also referred to as "deselection" or "materials withdrawal".