



## Frequently Used Library Terms

**Abstracts:** Brief summary of a book or an article.

**Annotation:** A note or comment about a text, usually critical or explanatory.

**Authors:** The person(s) who wrote the book, article, etc. One who writes or creates something.

**Bibliography:** A list of sources, such as books and articles, used for a report or research paper.

**Biography:** An account of a person's life written by another person.

**Boolean Operators:** The connectors **and**, **or**, and **not**, used when searching on computerized indexes, such as FirstSearch.

**Boolean search:** A search allowing the inclusion or exclusion of documents containing certain words through the use of operators such as AND, NOT and OR.

**Browser:** Software that allows you to view the WWW.

**Call Number:** Group of letters and numbers on the spine or cover of a book which indicates the classification of materials and where the book is located on the shelf.

**Catalog:** A file of items (books, films, videotapes, computer software, etc.) sometimes access through cards or online computers.

**CD ROM (Computer Disc Read Only Memory):** Information contained or stored in an optical disk. This data is accessed through a computer.

**Circulating Materials:** Any material that can be physically removed from the library after being checked out at the circulation desk.

**Citation:** A reference to an authority that usually includes author, title, dates, pages.

**Concept search:** A search for documents related conceptually to a word, rather than specifically containing the word itself.

**Database:** An organized collection of information, used for research. Usually refers to searching with a computer.

**Entry:** Words or words, in a list (usually alphabetical such as in a library catalog or an index) which give access to information. For example, the catalog contains author, title, and subject entries.

**Full-text index:** An index containing every word of every document cataloged, including stop words (defined below).

**Fuzzy search:** A search that will find matches even when words are only partially spelled or misspelled.

**Holding:** A library's collection of information, used for research. Usually refers to searching with a computer.

**Homepage:** An Internet site.

**HTTP:** Language of the server.

**HTML:** Mark up language. Tells the server how the document looks on the screen. Allows the WWW to work.

**Index:** Listing, usually arranged alphabetically, of the contents of a book or journal. A periodical index lists the contents of journals, and magazines, thus providing subjects access.

**Inter-Library Loan:** Service wherein a library borrows materials from outside institutions.

**Internet:** The Largest online system in the world where data is sent or shared among computers over long distances.

**Journal:** A periodical which contains scholarly articles usually on one subject and issued by a professional groups or organization.

**Keyword search:** A search for documents containing one or more words that are specified by a user.

**LAN (Local Area Network):** Private communication network where two or more computers are linked in the same location.

**Library of Congress Classification System:** A classification system using letters of the alphabet for organizing collections. Used by most colleges and universities.

**Magazine:** A periodical for general reading containing articles on various subjects by different authors. See also "Periodical".

**Media:** Materials or items that are in a variety of formats other than print, i.e. film, video, audio cassette, slides, etc. Also called Audio Visuals.

**Microfiche:** A flat sheet of photographic film containing micro images of printed or graphic material.

**Microfilm:** A roll of photographic film containing micro images of printed or graphic material

**Microfilm/Fiche Reader/Printer:** A machine that magnifies the micro image. The printer can also make a copy of that image.

**Netscape:** Helper application. An example of a Web browser.

**Online:** Connecting a computer terminal to a mainframe computer.

**Periodical:** Newspapers, magazines or journals that are issued periodically.

**Phrase search:** A search for documents containing a exact sentence or phrase specified by a user.

**Precision:** The degree in which a search engine lists documents matching a query. The more matching documents that are listed, the higher the precision. For example, if a search engine lists 80 documents found to match a query but only 20 of them contain the search words, then the precision would be 25%.

**Proximity search:** A search where users to specify that documents returned should have the words near each other.

**Publisher:** The firm or corporation responsible for the manufacture and distribution of materials to the public.

**Query-By-Example:** A search where a user instructs an engine to find more documents that is similar to a particular document. Also called "find similar."

**Recall:** Related to precision, this is the degree in which a search engine returns all the matching documents in a collection. There may be 100 matching documents, but a search engine may only find 80 of them. It would then list these 80 and have a recall of 80%.

**Reference Collection:** A collection of books, special resources, and other materials used in searching for information and useful for supplying authoritative information or identifying sources. Reference books are usually consulted rather than read through. Generally, these materials are not allowed to be checked out.

**Reference Librarian:** A professional person(s), with a Master's degree in Library Science, responsible for assisting users finding information/resources in the library.

**Reference Question:** Any request by a library user for information or assistance in locating information.

**Relevancy:** How well a document provides the information a user is looking for, as measured by the user.

**Reserves:** Books or other materials that are kept at the circulation desk, so as to assure greater availability to an entire class. Many reserve materials have been put at the reserve desk by instructors for use by students in specific classes and are usually checked out on an hourly or daily bases.

**Search Engine:** The software that searches an index and returns matches. Search engine is often used synonymously with spider and index, although these are separate components that work with the engine.

**Spider:** The software that scans documents and adds them to an index by following links. Spider is often used as a synonym for search engine.

**Stacks:** A series of shelves arranged in rows that hold most of the library's collection of books and / or materials.

**Stand-Alone CD-ROM:** A CD-ROM that must be used on a single computer by a single user.

**Subject Headings:** A word or group of words that designates a particular area of interest to the library user under which all material dealing with a given subject is entered in an index, library catalog, or bibliography.

**Stemming:** The ability for a search to include the "stem" of words. For example, stemming allows a user to enter "swimming" and get back results also for the stem word "swim."

**Stop words:** Conjunctions, prepositions and articles and other words such as AND, TO and A that appear often in documents yet alone may contain little meaning.

**Title:** The distinguishing name of a book, magazine, article, or other item.

**Vertical File/Pamphlet File :** Loose leaf material kept in folders and arranged alphabetically by subject. Ask the librarian for the location of this file and assistance in accessing the materials.

**Thesaurus:** A list of synonyms a search engine can use to find matches for particular words if the words themselves don't appear in documents.

**More Resources:**

**Search Engine Terms**  
[http://www.cadenza.org/search\\_engine\\_terms/](http://www.cadenza.org/search_engine_terms/)  
Available in English and other several other language, this is a list of terms compiled by readers of the I-Search mailing list. It is especially oriented toward search engine marketing terms.

**Glossary for Information Retrieval**  
<http://www.cs.jhu.edu/~weiss/glossary.html>  
Scott Weiss provides an expanded list of terms and more technical definitions relating to search engines and information retrieval.

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