



Glossary of Doherty Library Terms

Abstract – a short description of an article and overview of its contents.

Accession number – a number assigned to each entry in a database

Bibliography – a list of resources on a certain subject containing books, journal articles, book articles, and websites.

Boolean – a system of combining keywords using the terms AND, OR, NOT to increase the accuracy of your search. Most databases and internet search engines allow boolean logic. See **truncation** and **wildcard**

Bound periodicals – all issues of a journal for a certain period of time (i.e. six months or a year) gathered together within hardback book covers. Our bound periodicals are in the basement of Doherty library in alphabetical order by title of the journal.

Call number – the letter/number combination on the spine of a book. This number is listed in the record of the book in the library catalog and indicates where you can locate the book in the **stacks**.

Circulating – books which you can check out and take home. Most books in Doherty are circulating. Non-circulating items include reference books, **journals**, **bound periodicals** and **Grad Phil** books.

Citation – the information in a database or bibliography which indicates where an item can be found. A citation usually gives such information as author, title, publisher, year, etc.

Controlled vocabulary – all library catalogs and most databases assign specific descriptive words for the subjects of the items they contain. Understanding these terms can make your search more efficient and your results more accurate than simply using random keywords.

Database – online collections of information which the library pays for. A database is not the same as the internet even though you get into our databases using our website. Databases can be collections of journal articles, collections of citations for journal articles and books, or complete reference books. Many databases have a parallel version in print.

Fiche – see **microforms**

Film – see **microforms**

Full-text – when an article is available in its entirety. Some of our databases are completely full-text while some mainly give citations for finding the article elsewhere. Full-text does not necessarily mean the images which accompanied the print version are available.

Grad Phil – the Graduate Philosophy Library. This is a special collection of materials located in the basement devoted specifically to advanced works in the study of philosophy. Only graduate philosophy students and faculty may check out materials in this collection, but all students may use them. The Graduate Philosophy Reference materials are located on the second floor and may only be used with special permission.

Hit – a response by a database or search engine to your search for specific subject matter. A false hit is a response that has nothing to do with what you are looking for. A better understanding of each database and its vocabulary will lessen the number of false hits.

Hold – to request a book that has been checked out. When the book comes back you will be the first one who gets it. You will be notified when the book becomes available.

Holdings – the particular volumes of a journal that we own. *Journal Holdings AtoZ* lists our holdings for our print periodicals and for those we have through databases.

ILL, interlibrary loan – to borrow a book or get a journal article from another library.

Journal – periodicals that are scholarly in nature.

Keyword/Keyword Search – the words you use in a search to find materials. The catalog or database will return all records where that word appears anywhere in the description of the item. The more specific your keywords are the more successful your search and the more accurate your results will be. Use synonyms for your keywords and **boolean logic** to improve your results.

LC or Library of Congress classification -- books in our library are arranged according to subject. Each of those subjects each is assigned one or two letters of the alphabet according to a system designed by the Library of Congress. Further divisions of the subject are assigned number sequences.

LC or Library of Congress subject headings – each subject in the LC classification system is assigned a certain term. This collection of terms is an example of a **controlled vocabulary**. Each record in the catalog lists the item's assigned LC subject headings.

Librarian – a person trained with a Master's in Library Science and one other graduate degree to help you find information

Magazine – a popular periodical. They tend to have short articles, glossy pictures, and advertising.

Microforms (fiche, film) – photographs taken of books or journals to preserve the materials and make storage more feasible. Microforms must be read using our two microform reader/printers. Printing from microforms is free at Doherty.

Peer reviewed/refereed – the most trusted form of **periodical**. Each article in a peer reviewed journal has been read by two or more experts in the same field as the author who judge the work to be accurate, timely and valuable.

Periodical -- serials that are published on some sort of regular basis or frequency

Periodical indexes – a collection of **citations**, usually for one specific subject or one specific periodical, which will help you find articles for your research. Indexes can be in book form or in a database.

Primary source – a direct source of information. A primary source can be an artifact (coin or photograph), an original creative work (poem or painting) or a historical document produced by someone who experienced the event.

Reference – the area to the left as you enter the library. The reference desk is staffed by trained reference **librarians** who will help you find the information you need for your research.

Scholarly – see **peer reviewed**

Secondary source – a work which analyzes and discusses primary sources.

Stacks – where the circulating books are shelved

Subject heading – descriptive terms which describe the content of the items in a database or library catalog. Within any given database or catalog, subject headings are uniform. See **controlled vocabulary**.

Thesaurus – a reference book which lists synonyms and antonyms for words. A thesaurus in a database lists the controlled vocabulary subject headings used in the database.

Truncation – in a keyword search, shortening a word to its most basic root followed by a symbol so that all versions of the word will be searched for. For example librar* will pull up library, libraries, librarian, and librarians. Most databases and search engines allow truncation.

Wildcard – a symbol typed within a keyword to indicate unknown or variations in spelling. Often indicated by a ?. For example wom?n will pull up woman, women and womyn.