

Library Terms

Abstract -- a brief summary of an article's contents

Bibliography -- a list of sources an author used when writing a book, article or essay, found at the end of written works

Boolean -- the logic system employed when searching a database using the operators and, or, or not

Call number -- a combination of letters and numbers indicating the location of an item in a library

Citation -- information needed to identify a source, including title, author, and publication information (which may vary depending on item format)

Database -- an online index of articles, books, websites, or other media searchable by keyword through various fields such as author or subject

Discipline -- a branch of knowledge

Documentation -- recognition of sources used by authors, usually in a Works Cited or References list

Embargo period -- the practice of withholding the most recent issues of a journal from full text access online through an aggregated database

Fields -- parts of a record for a source listed in a database, including the author, title, periodical name, or abstract

Format -- the form in which information is presented, such as a book, CD, computer file, or journal

Full text -- the complete electronic text of an article or book

Index -- a guide to finding sources or information within a source

Invisible websites -- websites with restricted access, usually requiring a subscription, and not searchable with public search engines such as Google (also called "private" or "proprietary" sites)

Information source -- a material beyond one's own thoughts in nearly any format from book to website

Interlibrary loan -- the practice among libraries of borrowing materials from one another for the use of their patrons

Journal -- used in reference to scholarly periodicals in the academic community, though sometimes the term appears in titles of popular sources (e.g., Ladies Home Journal, the Wall Street Journal)

Keyword -- a word used to search online for source materials on a topic

Library catalog -- a database that inventories all materials a library owns

Literature -- the written work produced by scholars and researchers, for example, scientific literature

Operators -- words used to connect ideas in Boolean logic; and, or, and not are common

Peer-reviewed -- articles reviewed and critiqued by noted experts ("peers") in the same discipline; sometimes called "refereed"

Periodicals -- journals, magazines, newspapers

Popular sources -- publications intended for a general audience

Record -- a description of a single source in a database

Reference work -- works with brief overviews of a topic, key ideas, important concepts, or tables of primary information

Scholarly journals -- journals which publish commentary and original research on academic topics, sometimes employing a peer-review process

Subject headings -- a standardized list of terms representing particular topics; Library of Congress subject headings are used commonly, though not universally

Trade Journals -- journals with content about a particular profession

Truncation -- a symbol added to the root of a word, most often an asterisk (*) but sometimes a question mark (?), pound symbol (#), or exclamation point (!); a search with a truncated term finds that root with any ending

Visible websites -- websites with open access through search engines such as Google (also called "free" or "public" sites)