

LIBRARY CATALOG: TRICKS AND TIPS

University of Missouri-St. Louis • <http://www.umsl.edu/library>
Reference Department • 314.516.5060
Email: e-ref@umsl.edu • Thomas Jefferson Library

→ALWAYS READ THE SCREENS←

Library catalogs are used to find material held by a library, including books, periodical subscriptions (magazines, newspapers, journals), etc. They **Do Not** include access to individual articles. UM-St. Louis uses the catalog of the [MERLIN](#) system (Missouri Education and Research Libraries Information Network). The MERLIN system provides access to the libraries of each of the four University of Missouri campuses. A link from the catalog provides access to the [MOBIUS Union Catalog](#) for the state of Missouri (*see section on the MOBIUS catalog*). Before you begin to use the catalog, however, it is important to know which library's collection you are searching. You may change the scope of the catalog from any search screen with the drop down box or the links at the bottom of the screen.

Selecting a Search Option:

To use the catalog effectively it is important to understand what type of search will best retrieve the information you need.

I Know . . .	Search . . .
a topic that I need information on.	Keyword or Subject
the exact title of a book.	Title
a few words from the title of a book.	Keyword
the name of an author of a book.	Author
the author and a few words from the title of a book.	Author/Title
the title of a journal, periodical, newspaper.	Journal/Periodical/ Newspaper Title, or use “ Locate Journal Title ” option under DATABASES from the Library home page .
material needed for a class is on Reserve.	Course Reserves

Using Searches Effectively:

- ⇒ **Keyword:** Searches for the term(s) in multiple fields (areas) of the catalog records, such as in titles, subject headings, and the notes. As you browse the results of a Keyword search pay attention to Subject Headings and other terms which can then be used as future searches. See “Search Techniques” for further explanation of Keyword searching.
- ⇒ **Subject:** Library of Congress Subject Headings: Headings determined by the Library of Congress to describe an item and to assign call numbers. Subject headings are not always intuitive. Type in the anticipated subject to retrieve a list of possibilities to view. Or use a title or keyword search and then look at the subjects assigned to the items retrieved; subject headings in the records are hot links and will lead you to other materials with the same heading(s).
- ⇒ **Journal/Periodical/Newspaper Title:** This option retrieves subscription information about periodicals owned by this library. This option **does not** allow you to search for articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers.
- ⇒ **Course Reserves:** Items placed on reserve can be searched by course number, the name of the professor (last name, first), or by course name.

Examples:

Course number: political science 1100
Professor's name: rochester, j. martin
Course name: introduction to american politics

Where to Get Help

Reference Desk (314-516-5060 or e-ref@umsl.edu)

The Thomas Jefferson Library reference staff is available to answer questions about searching the library catalog.

Search Techniques: (Used in **Keyword** searches.)

Truncation: Find any word starting with letters typed to the left of the truncation symbol, including the root word.

* **(The asterisk)** is the truncation symbol used in the Catalog. Use a **single asterisk *** to represent up to 5 characters, or **double asterisks **** for more than 6 characters.

Example: interview (retrieves interview, interviews, interviewing, etc.), or: math** (retrieves math, mathematics, etc.)*

Combining terms: **Multiple words typed next to each other without a connector will be searched as a phrase.**

- To **narrow** your search, link terms using the word **"and"**.
Example: employment and interview (retrieves records containing both search terms)*
- To **expand** your search, link terms using the word **"or."**
Example: laws or legislation (retrieves records where one or both search terms are found)
- To **exclude** terms precede them with the words **"and not."**
Example: missouri and not history (retrieves records containing the first term but not the second)
- **Phrase/Adjacency:** Place words inside double quotes. *Example:*
"civil war" (retrieves only records that contain the words next to each other in the order entered)
- **Proximity:** Use **near** to specify words close to each other, in any order. Use **within #** to specify words within a set range of each other. The symbol # may stand for any number.
Example: social work within 10 servic (retrieves records with both terms in any order as long as they are not separated by more than 10 words)*
- **Parentheses** can be used to **combine different search techniques.**
Example: employment and (laws or legislation)-- (retrieves records containing the first term and one or both of the terms enclosed in parentheses)

Catalog Features: options for modifying your initial search

Feature:	Function:
Limit/Sort or Modify Search	Restrict your search by publication year, words in title, author, subject, etc. The option, Modify Search is available from the results of keyword searches and allows the search to be rerun after applying additional limits. Example: Limit by material type: select EBOOKS.
More Like This	Show nearby items on the shelf, browse by call number.
Click on subject heading	Search the collection for material related to your current search.
Return to List	Go back to the previous list.
Change MERLIN scope	Repeats your search in the catalogs of MERLIN libraries.
MOBIUS Union Catalog	Repeats your search in the catalogs of MOBIUS libraries.
Request	Books not available locally may be requested from other campuses. You will need to know your Student/Employee number and remember that UM-St. Louis is part of the MERLIN Cluster.

Example of ways to modify an existing search:



E-Books and E-book Collections

The library enters links for individual E-Books into the Library Catalog. Search result lists will indicate the material



type using the icon for E-Books-- E-BOOK . You may modify the results of any Catalog search by selecting EBOOKS from the limit Material Type.

Please fill in the boxes, select limits, and click Submit:

Find: "solar power" in Any Field:
and in Any Field:
and in Any Field:
and in Any Field:

Limit to:

School: MU-Law, UMKC, UMKC-Law, Missouri S&T, **UMSL**

Specific Library Location: ANY, MST Library, MU Ellis Library, MU Archives, MU Engineering Library

Language of Work: ANY, English, French, German, Italian

Year of Publication: Within, After and Before

Publisher Name:
Keywords:

Conference Proceedings: ANY, Yes, No

Material Type: ANY, **EBOOKS**, THESES/DISSERTATIONS, ONLINE THESES/DISSERTATN

Sort by: Search and Sort: sorted by relevance

Entire collections of e-BOOKS may be accessed from the Database list. Examples: *CREDO*, *Gale Virtual Reference Library*, *Oxford Reference Online*, *Safari Books Online*, *ebrary Business and Economics*.

MOBIUS Union Catalog Access

A link to the [MOBIUS Catalog](#) provides access to a statewide network of libraries. From the MERLIN Catalog the option "MOBIUS Union Catalog," is found on all result screens. Both systems are searched in the same manner. However, you will notice differences in the way catalog records are displayed.

⇒ Choose "**Request**" for requesting books not available locally from other MOBIUS libraries.