



# LIBRARY CATALOG: TRICKS AND TIPS

→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 and St. Louis University. 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. The option of changing this setting is on the main menu, "**change MERLIN catalog site**" or, you may change the scope of the catalog from any search 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, Subject Table of Contents/Notes
the exact title of a book.	Exact 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
material needed for a class is on Reserve.	Reserve

## Using Searches Effectively:

- ⇒ **Keyword:** Searches for the entered 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 can be found using the five volume set at the Reference Desk, or by browsing the results of a Keyword search. A search by subject heading retrieves that heading and a list of related headings.
- ⇒ **Table of Contents/Notes:** A keyword search of chapter headings, and tables of contents, for a portion of the collection.
- ⇒ **Journal/Periodical/Newspaper Title:** This option **does not** allow you to search for articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers; rather, it retrieves subscription information about periodicals owned by this library.
- ⇒ **Reserve:** Items placed on reserve can be searched by the name of the professor (last name, first), by course number, or by course name.

**Examples:**

Course number: political science 11  
Professor's name: caliendo, stephen  
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.

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**Search Techniques:** (Used in Keyword or Table of Contents/Notes 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 interviews, interviewing, etc.), or: math\*\* (retrieves mathematics)

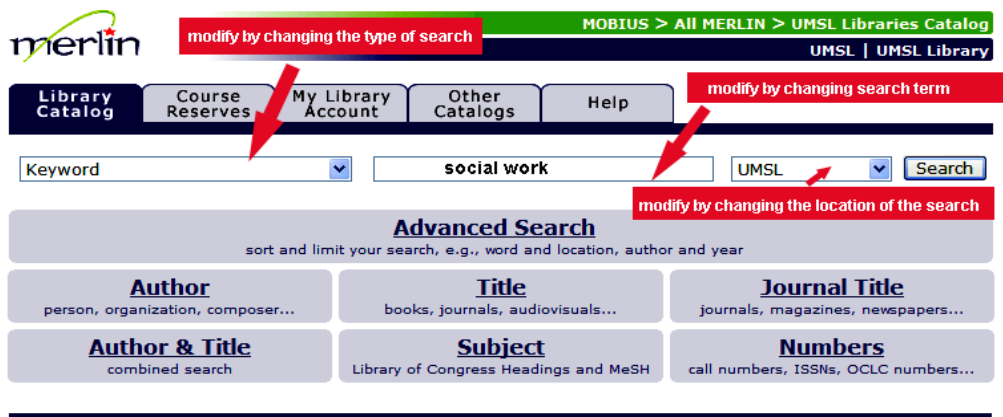
*Combining terms:* **Multiple words typed next to each other without a connector will be searched as a phrase.**

- 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:** Multiple words are searched as a phrase. *Example:* civil war  
(retrieves only records that contain the words next to each other)
- 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.
Click on call number	Show nearby items on the shelf, browse the shelf.
Click on subject heading	Search the collection for material related to your current search
Return to browse	Go back to the previous list
Change MERLIN scope	Repeats your search in the catalogs of <b>MERLIN</b> libraries.
MOBIUS Union Catalog	Repeats your search in the catalogs of <b>MOBIUS</b> libraries.
Request item	Books not available locally may be requested from other campuses.

*Example of ways to modify an existing search:*



MERLIN · Missouri Education and Research Libraries Information Network  
a MOBIUS Library Catalog

**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, "**Display holdings**" to find out which institution(s) own the item, and to see if a copy is available.
- ⇒ Choose, "**Request**" for requesting books not available locally from other MOBIUS libraries.