



The Library's home page loads ready to search the CCC Library Catalog (aka "CougarCat"). Use this to find items the library owns: books, e-books, CDs, videos, maps, etc. Remember that the Catalog can tell you which magazines we own, but won't find articles inside those magazines – use EBSCO for that!

A. BASIC SEARCH TIPS

1. Identifying subject headings.

For best results, be sure you and the catalog are using the same vocabulary. Example:

Search for *e-commerce*. (You should get fewer than 20 items.)

Open any of them to see the record, and scan down to the Subject line.

Notice that the catalog is using the subject *electronic commerce*.

Search for *electronic commerce* (don't just click the link); you should get many more hits.

Try **keyword** searches for 2 **different** topics; look for the related **LC subject headings**.

Search term(s) you tried

relevant LC Subject headings shown

Topic 1

Topic 2

2. Truncation (*) - this retrieves *any ending*. Ex.: **pollut*** >> pollution, polluting, polluted,...

Pick a term for which truncation might be useful, and try it!

Search term: _____ # hits: _____

3. Searching in the subject field (s:)

Researchers are often plagued by "false hits." For example, **lions** gets many irrelevant items.

s:lions retrieves only items with "lions" in a subject heading – only books really *about* lions

Try it. Search term: s: _____ # hits: _____

B. VIEWING RESULTS

1. Sorting.

Results are grouped into: Most Relevant; Highly Relevant; Very Relevant.
 Within each group, results are sorted most recent first.

Do any keyword search: _____

How many items are: ___ Most Relevant ___ Highly Relevant ___ Very Relevant

Sort your results by **Date** (look under the search box) or **Title**.

Limit your list to only items that are **available**. # hits: _____

(Note that once you set a limit, the sort switches to date, even if you still ask for relevance!).

2. Making & Printing a Booklist

Search any topic to get a “result list” of at least several items.

Mark up to 5 items and click the **Save Marked Records** button – this puts them in your **cart**.

A **cart icon** should now appear on your screen; click it to view your saved items.

Notice that if you click Submit, the default is that it will send the Full Records to your **email**.

Change this to send your list to the **screen**. Try both the “brief” and “full” views.

Brief view takes up less space but doesn’t show the location or status.

Print your booklist, in whichever format you prefer. (Use **File > Print** or **right-click > print**)

C. EXPLORING “ADVANCED KEYWORD” FEATURES:

To get to the “Advanced Keyword” screen:

- from the Library’s home page, click “**more search options**.”
- from any other Catalog screen, click the “**Modify Search**” button.

1. Field Searching

Try searching for a term in the **subject** field. _____ # hits: ____

This is the same as using **s**:

No luck? It might not be a term the catalog uses; search **any field** and check the subjects!

Try searching for a famous **author**. _____ # hits: ____

2. Limits. Return to the Advanced Keyword screen. Try out the following limits.

(Be sure to reset each one to ANY before going on to the next one!)

Collections: Search for an item on your subject in the **Reference** Collection. Hits: ____

Material Type: Search for a video or DVD on your subject. Hits: ____

Date Range: Search for books published on your topic in the last 10 years. Hits: ____

D. BOOKS: CHECKING FOR EVIDENCE OF CREDIBILITY

Examine a book you have found.

1. Author’s qualifications

Check the book jacket/front matter for details on the author. For e-books, check the “contents” tab for author info. No luck? Look the author up on *Google*, or check Amazon for book reviews.

What qualifies the author(s) to write on this subject? (credentials / experience)

What are the author’s **affiliations**? (institutions, organizations)

Publisher: _____

___ university ___ professional society ___ commercial ___ self-published ___ can't tell

Publication Year: _____ is the information... _____ out-dated _____ still relevant

Documentation: Are sources cited? _____ none ___ a few _____ many

What kind? _____ mostly journals and academic books

_____ mostly magazines and newspapers