

Multilingual Glossary for Today's Library Users - Definitions

The Glossary is not meant to be an exhaustive list of every term a librarian might need to use with an ESL speaker but rather a listing of the terms that are most likely to be used in such a context. For more extensive definitions:

- *Feather, John, and Paul Sturges, eds. 2003. International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.*
- Prytherch, Ray. 2005. Harrod's Librarians' Glossary and Reference Book. Aldershot, England: Gower.
- Reitz, Joan M. ODLIS: Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science. Libraries Unlimited. www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/odlis_A.aspx.

Abstract: A summary or brief description of the content of another longer work. An **abstract** is often provided along with the **citation** to a work.

Archives: **1.** A space which houses historical or public records. **2.** The historical or public records themselves, which are generally non-circulating materials such as collections of personal papers, rare books, ephemera, etc.

Article: A brief work—generally between 1 and 35 pages in length—on a topic. Often published as part of a **journal**, **magazine**, or **newspaper**.

Attachment: A separate file (e.g., text, spreadsheet, graphic, audio, video) sent with an email message.

Authentication: A security process that typically employs usernames and passwords to validate the identity of users before allowing them access to certain information.

Author: The person(s) or organization(s) that wrote or compiled a document. Looking for information under its author's name is one option in searching.

Bibliography: A list containing **citations** to the resources used in writing a research paper or other document. See also **Reference**.

Book: A relatively lengthy work, often on a single topic. May be print or electronic.

Boolean operator: A word—such as AND, OR, or NOT—that commands a computer to combine search terms. Helps to narrow (AND, NOT) or broaden (OR) searches.

Browser: A software program that enables users to access Internet resources. Microsoft Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Safari, and Mozilla Firefox are all browsers.

Call number: A group of letters and/or numbers that identifies a specific item in a library and provides a way for organizing library **holdings**. Three major types of call numbers are Dewey Decimal, Library of Congress, and Superintendent of Documents.

Catalog: A database (either online or on paper cards) listing and describing the books, journals, government documents, audiovisual and other materials held by a library. Various search terms allow you to look for items in the catalog.

Chat: A type of communication from person to person through typed messages, via computer or mobile device.

Check-out: To borrow an item from a library for a fixed period of time in order to read, listen to, or view it. Check-out periods vary by library. Items are checked out at the **circulation** desk.

Circulation: The place in the library, often a desk, where you check out, renew, and return library materials. You may also place a **hold**, report an item missing from the shelves, or pay late fees or fines there.

Citation: A reference to a book, magazine or journal article, or other work containing all the information necessary to identify and locate that work. A citation to a book includes its author's name, title, publisher and place of publication, and date of publication.

Controlled vocabulary: Standardized terms used in searching a specific **database**.

Copy card: A card that enables its user to print from a computer, or to make copies of a document at a photocopy machine. Student ID cards sometimes serve as copy cards.

Course management system (CMS): Integrated online applications that allow users to view and complete class materials and post messages, which facilitate discussion beyond the classroom. Also referred to as a "Learning Management System" or "Course Management Software."

Course reserve: Select books, articles, videotapes, or other materials that instructors want students to read or view for a particular course. These materials are usually kept in one area of the library and circulate for only a short period of time. See also **Electronic reserve**.

Database: A collection of information stored in an electronic format that can be searched by a computer.

Descriptor: A word that describes the subject of an article or book; used in many computer **databases**.

Dial-up: A device using telephone lines that allows a computer to access the Internet or two computers to communicate.

Dissertation: An extended written treatment of a subject (like a book) submitted by a graduate student as a requirement for a doctorate.

Document delivery: A service that retrieves or photocopies information sources for library users. Some libraries restrict document delivery services to distance education students, faculty members, or graduate students.

DOI: Acronym for Digital Object Identifier. It is a unique alphanumeric string assigned by the publisher to a digital object.

Download: **1.** To transfer information from a computer to a program or storage device to be viewed at a later date. **2.** To transfer information from one computer to another computer using a modem.

E-book (or Electronic book): An electronic version of a book that can be read on a computer or mobile device.

Editor: A person or group responsible for compiling the writings of others into a single information source. Looking for information under the editor's name is one option in searching.

Electronic reserve (or E-reserve): An electronic version of a **course reserve** that is read on a computer display screen. See also **Course reserve**.

Encyclopedia: A work containing information on all branches of knowledge or treating comprehensively a particular branch of knowledge (such as history or chemistry). Often has entries or articles arranged alphabetically.

Flash drive: A small portable device for storing computerized information. A flash drive, sometimes called a thumb drive, can plug into the USB (Universal Serial Bus) port of any computer and store electronic information. See also **Thumb drive**.

Hardware: The physical and electronic components of a computer system, such as the monitor, keyboard and mouse. Hardware works in conjunction with **software**.

High speed access: Refers to the speed and efficiency of an Internet connection— which determines how long Web users must wait for a particular Web site to load, or appear on their computer, after they click on a link to it. High speed access is usually achieved by using a DSL line (digital subscriber line) or a cable modem to connect to the Web, as opposed to a **dial-up** line which results in a slower connection speed.

Hold: A request to have an item saved (put aside) to be picked up later. Holds can generally be placed on any regularly circulating library material in-person or online.

Holdings: The materials owned by a library.

Hyperlink: An image or a portion of text which a Web user can click to jump to another document or page on the Web. Textual hyperlinks are often underlined and appear as a different color than the majority of the text on a Web page.

Icon: A small symbol on a computer screen that represents a computer operation or data file.

Index: 1. A list of names or topics—usually found at the end of a publication—that directs you to the pages where those names or topics are discussed within the publication. **2.** A printed or electronic publication that provides references to **periodical** articles or **books** by their subject, author, or other search terms.

Instant messaging (IM): An Internet-based service allowing real-time, text communication between two or more users. Instant messaging is also known as **chat**, especially when more than two people are communicating.

Interlibrary services/loan: A service that allows you to borrow materials from other libraries through your own library. See also **Document delivery**.

Journal: A publication, issued on a regular basis, which contains scholarly research published as articles, papers, research reports, or technical reports. See also **Periodical**.

Keyword: A significant or memorable word or term in the title, abstract, or text of an information resource that indicates its subject and is often used as a search term.

Learning management system: See **Course management system**.

Limits/limiters: Options used in searching that restrict your results to only information resources meeting certain other, non-subject-related, criteria. Limiting options vary by database, but common options include limiting results to materials available full-text in the database, to scholarly publications, to materials written in a particular language, to materials available in a particular location, or to materials published at a specific time.

Link: See **Hyperlink**.

Magazine: A publication, issued on a regular basis, containing popular articles, written and illustrated in a less technical manner than the articles found in a **journal**.

Microform: A reduced sized photographic reproduction of printed information on reel to reel film (microfilm) or film cards (microfiche) or opaque pages that can be read with a microform reader/printer.

Modem: A device that connects a PC to the Internet and converts digital signals from the computer to a form that can be sent using a voice (analog sound signal) telephone line and vice versa.

Mouse: A device that allows the user to move and click the cursor on a computer screen for different functions.

Multimedia: Any information resource that presents information using more than one media (print, picture, audio, or video).

Newspaper: A publication containing information about varied topics that are pertinent to general information, a geographic area, or a specific subject matter (i.e. business, culture, education). Often published daily.

Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC): A computerized database that can be searched in various ways— such as by keyword, author, title, subject, or call number— to find out what resources a library owns. OPAC's will supply listings of the title, call number, author, location, and description of any items matching one's search. Also referred to as "library **catalog**" or "online **catalog**."

PDF: A file format developed by Adobe Acrobat® that allows files to be transmitted from one computer to another while retaining their original appearance both on-screen and when printed. An acronym for Portable Document Format.

Peer-reviewed journal: Peer review is a process by which editors have experts in a field review books or articles submitted for publication by the experts' peers. Peer review helps to ensure the quality of an information source. A peer-reviewed journal is also called a **refereed journal** or **scholarly journal**.

Periodical: An information source published in multiple parts at regular intervals (daily, weekly, monthly, biannually). **Journals, magazines, and newspapers** are all periodicals. See also **Serial**.

Permalink: A link that will return you to the same page every time you click the link.

Plagiarism: Using the words or ideas of others without acknowledging the original source.

Primary source: An original record of events, such as a diary, a newspaper article, a public record, or scientific documentation.

Print: The written symbols of a language as portrayed on paper. Information sources may be either print or electronic.

Proxy server: An Internet server that acts as a "go-between" for a computer on a local network (secure system) and the open Web. Often checks to determine "right of access" to the secure environment and speeds up requests by caching frequently accessed Web pages. Can also act as a firewall. See also **Authentication**.

Publisher: An entity or company that produces and issues books, journals, newspapers, or other publications.

QR code: Abbreviation for Quick Response code. A two-dimensional bar code that is made of small squares in a unique pattern. QR codes allow users to connect to additional resources through mobile devices.

Recall: A request for the return of library material before the due date.

Refereed journal: See **Peer-reviewed journal**.

Reference: **1.** A service that helps people find needed information. **2.** Sometimes "reference" refers to reference collections, such as encyclopedias, indexes, handbooks, directories, etc. **3.** A **citation** to a work is also known as a reference.

Remote access: The ability to log onto (or access) networked computer resources from a distant location. Remote access makes available library **databases** to students researching from home, office, or other locations outside the library. See also **Authentication**.

Renewal: An extension of the loan period for library materials.

Reserve: **1.** A service providing special, often short-term, access to course-related materials (book or article readings, lecture notes, sample tests) or to other materials (CD-ROMs, audio-visual materials, current newspapers or magazines). **2.** Also the physical location—often a service desk or room—within a library where materials on reserve are kept. Materials can also be made available electronically. See also **Course reserve**, **Electronic reserve**.

Scholarly journal: See **Peer-reviewed journal**.

Search statement/Search Query: Words entered into the search box of a database or search engine when looking for information. Words relating to an information source's **author**, **editor**, **title**, **subject heading** or **keyword** serve as search terms. Search terms can be combined by using **Boolean operators** and can also be used with **limits/limiters**.

Secondary sources: Materials such as books and journal articles that analyze **primary sources**. Secondary sources usually provide evaluation or interpretation of data or evidence found in original research or documents such as historical manuscripts or memoirs.

Serial: Publications such as journals, magazines and newspapers that are generally published multiple times per year, month, or week. Serials usually have number volumes and issues.

Software: The programs installed on and used by the components of a computer system (or, **hardware**).

Stacks: Shelves in the library where materials—typically books—are stored. Books in the stacks are normally arranged by **call number**. May be referred to as "book stacks."

Style manual: An information source providing guidelines for people who are writing research papers. A style manual outlines specific formats for arranging research papers and citing the sources that are used in writing the paper.

Subject heading: Descriptions of an information source's content assigned to make finding information easier. See also **Controlled vocabulary, Descriptors.**

Thumb Drive: See also **Flash drive.**

Title: The name of a book, article, or other information source.

Upload: To transfer information from a computer system or a personal computer to another computer system or a larger computer system.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL): The unique address for a Web page which is used in citing it. A URL consists of the access protocol (*http*), the domain name (*www.nmsu.edu*), and often the path to a file or resource residing on that server.

User ID: A number or name unique to a particular user of computerized resources. A user ID must often be entered in order to access library resources remotely.

Virtual reference: A service allowing library users to ask questions through email, text message, or live-chat as opposed to coming to the reference desk at the library and asking a question in person. Also referred to as "online reference" or "e-reference."

Wireless: The name given to any electronic device that sends messages through space via electric or electromagnetic waves instead of via power cords.

Zip drive/zip disk: Devices used in the creation of compressed (or "zipped") electronic information.

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