

Online Library Catalog Exercise

An online library catalog (sometimes called an “OPAC” -- Online Public Access Catalog”) is used to determine what materials are available at a particular library. You can use the Davis Memorial Library online catalog to find:

- books
- music CDs and cassettes
- videos and DVDs
- computer programs (CD-ROMs)
- art prints, posters, and maps
- music scores
- selected resources on the internet (particularly for teacher education and justice studies)

You can use the online catalog to find out what journal **titles** are available in the library, but you cannot use the online catalog to search for journal articles **within** those publications. To find articles from magazines and journals, click the “Electronic Resources” link on the library home page.

To complete the following exercise, you may want to refer to the “Basics of the Online Catalog” guide. This guide is available in print at the library or online at the library website. Go to the library home page (<http://www.methodist.edu/library/davis.htm>), click on “Research Help” then “Research Guides” then “Basics of the Online Catalog.”

1. You’re looking for a good book to read over fall break. Someone recommended **The Stone Woman**. You conduct a “title phrase” search and determine that the library has the book.

What is the call number? _____

Is it available for checkout? _____
(Hint: Look at the status line. “Not charged” means “Not checked out”.)

Who is the author? _____

How many of his books does the library have? _____

What is the publication year of the oldest one? _____

2. You’ve just seen the movie “Supersize Me” and you’ve been inspired to do some research of your own. (No, not how many drive-throughs you can hit in one day.) You want some books to take home with you.

Conduct a “Title Phrase” search for **fast food** and select “Main Circulating Books” under the Quick Limit option. How many results do you get? _____

Revise your search, this time searching for “**fast food**” (use the quotation marks, since it’s a keyword search) as a “keyword” search. (Keep your “Main Circulating Books” limit.) How many hits did you get this time? _____

Remember: a title search only searches the title, but a keyword search searches anywhere in the record.

What word based on the name of a famous fast food chain could you use when you start looking for journal articles about the social impacts of fast food restaurants?

Hint: look at the title of the book by George Ritzer.

3. Compare the results of the following searches. (Make sure Quick Limit is “None”, and that you type the quotation marks as they appear below.)

Keyword = “**rock & roll**” yields _____ hits

Keyword = “**rock and roll**” yields _____ hits

Keyword = **rock and roll** yields _____ hits

Remember: putting quotes around phrases tells the computer that you want to keep those words next to each other. Without the quotes you’re telling the computer, “Show me all the records that have those words, and I don’t care if they’re next to each other or not.”

4. Using the online catalog, determine which books are on either side of this one on the shelf.

Hint: Type in the call number, then choose “Call Number” in the pulldown list. To see the previous book, hit the “Previous” button.

Call number: _____ Title: _____

Call number: 797.122 R264c 1992 Title: Canoe handbook

Call number: _____ Title: _____

5. You’re putting the finishing touches on your research paper, and you used a book from the library. You made a note of the title and what pages you used, but as you’re compiling your works cited page, you realize that you forgot to record the publication information before you gleefully chucked the tome into the book drop. Look up the book in the online catalog, and complete the citation:

_____ (author’s name). A Plague of Frogs : the Horrifying

True Story. _____ (place of publication): _____

(publisher), _____ (date).