Library Information Glossary

Abstract

A summary of an article. Before you print a full article and waste your money, read the summary first. Sometimes you can tell if the full article is going to provide some or all the information you need by reading the summary.

Boolean Searches

Combines concepts using the words AND, OR, and NOT. Using boolean operators help to narrow or broaden your search. For example, using Appalachian and Coal Mining will narrow your search to produce results with both words. Using OR will expand your search by producing results with one word or the other. Sometimes one of your search terms may produce a list of results that includes articles that are not relevant to your topic. Try using NOT in a search strategy. For example, Moonshine NOT alcohol. Alcohol will be excluded from the search.

Call Number

A call number helps you find the location of a book on the shelf. These are usually found on the spine of a book. For thin books, the call number may be on the front cover. Our Library uses the Library of Congress Classification System to organize materials. To learn more take a look at the Library of Congress Classification System. See the example below.

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<tr>
<th>DA</th>
<th>D = World History</th>
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<td>DA = Great Britain</td>
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Citation

A reference to a book, magazine, journal article, or other work containing the information consulted or used. It helps to locate and identify the person responsible for the work. The citation should contain the author’s name, title of the work, publisher, place of publication, and publication date. There are many ways to cite a work. It will depend on your field and instructor on the style you are required to use. See also https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/.

Format

Materials may be in many formats such as print, electronic (ebook), microfilm, microfiche, DVD, etc.

Full-text

This usually refers the entire text of an article, and may include charts, graphs, and images.
Holdings

Materials or items contained in the library’s collection. Libraries may have several different collections and located away from the main collection. At WVU Tech Library, books about WV or books written by West Virginians are located separately from the general collection.

Interlibrary Loan

If you find a reference to a book or article you need for research, but it is not found in your campus library you can submit an Interlibrary Loan request to borrow the material from a participating library in state or out of state. Interlibrary Loan Services are free to WVU Tech students and faculty.

Library of Congress Classification System

Our library uses the LC system which is an alpha numeric system to organize its materials. This system divides knowledge into 21 main classes and then divides knowledge into subclasses. For example, books classed under D are books on World History. Books classed under the subclass DA are about Great Britain; materials classed under E-F contain books on History of the Americas; Books about Technology are classed under T, and books about Bridge Engineering are under subclass TG. For more on the Library of Congress Classification System go to https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/lcco/

Location or Collection

The library may have one or more collections of materials in the library and may be located in different areas. For example, WVU Tech Beckley Library has a WV Circ collection. This means we have some WV books that circulate-can be checked out. We also have a WV Ref collection. A collection of Reference books related to WV or the region. These books cannot be checked out. The WV collections are located separately from the general collection.

Current Collections/Locations:

Stacks = general circulating books
WV Circ = West Virginia general circulating books
WV Ref = West Virginia reference books (non-circulating)
Reserves = Textbooks on reserve
Reference = general reference book collection (non-circulating)

Peer-review

Before an article is published, the author submits his work to a panel of experts or peers in his/her field. It is examined for accuracy, quality, knowledge, performance, and credibility.

Periodical

Refers to a magazine, newspaper, or journal. Periodicals are published at regular or irregular intervals such as daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually. Most journals are considered scholarly because they disseminate new research in a field. Magazines are not considered scholarly because they are often written by staff writers or other contributors who are not experts.
Primary Source

The keyword for understanding what a primary source is, is original—an original source of information. In the field of history, a primary source is a relic, an artifact, diary, letters, photographs, manuscripts, art, recordings, and legal documents created during the time being studied. For example, the Diary of Anne Frank. It was written during World War II by Anne Frank which is a firsthand account. A book about Anne Frank based on her life from her diary is not a primary source, but considered a secondary source. However, the definition varies in other disciplines. For example, in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) primary sources include patents, theses, dissertations, lab notes, technical reports, journal articles containing original research, papers and proceedings from conferences.

In Archaeology, a farming tool is considered a primary source. A pamphlet written about the tool is a secondary source.

In Journalism, an interview of a person is a primary source. A biography of that person is considered a secondary source.

Reference

A book containing useful facts, definitions, brief descriptions, for example, and typically consulted when information is needed quickly. A reference item includes a dictionary, encyclopedia, manual, handbook, almanac, and an atlas.

Scholarly

This refers to a source that is peer-reviewed or published by a professional association or publisher. See Peer-review

Secondary Sources

A secondary source may be written about a person, object, document, or event after it happened. Secondary sources often interpret information, describe, evaluate, or summarize original research done by another. Examples include textbooks, magazines, books, and reviews.

Tertiary Sources

Tertiary sources include dictionaries, encyclopedias, indexes, manuals, abstracts, directories, and almanacs. These contain information collected from primary or secondary sources.