OneSearch

Rebecca M. Marrall, Associate Professor & Librarian
Western Washington University Libraries

OneSearch is Western Libraries’ catalog. But what is a library catalog? In the simplest terms, a library catalog is a tool that you use to find an item in a library. Throughout the twentieth century, library professionals used card catalogs to educate patrons on what content was available in a collection. With the onset of computers and the World Wide Web, most library catalogs within the United States have been rehoused in electronic relational databases simply called ‘catalogs.’

A library houses, and lends out, many different items: Journal and magazine articles, physical and electronic books, audiovisual materials (such as films on DVDs or BluRay), federal or local government documents, and more. You can search the library catalog to locate, and retrieve or request materials at your institution. Each item in a library usually has an entry in the catalog, and these entries contain a description. Each item description includes information about the author, title, edition, number of pages, publisher, date, and other relevant details of publication. Usually, library catalog allows users to search for materials within an organization or an institution; however, OneSearch, the library catalog at Western Libraries, is a little different. OneSearch is a shared catalog, which means that patrons can search for scholarly materials and items at Western Washington University and throughout an additional 38 academic libraries in the Pacific Northwest. Students, staff, and faculty affiliated with any of these institutions may borrow a wide variety of materials.

---

**Definitions**

- **Catalog**: A relational database that users use to find an item in a library.
- **Item / Catalog record**: Individual entries within a library catalog are called ‘records.’
- **Fields**: The information in each record is divided into ‘fields,’ and each field contains a specific type of information. Examples of these fields include author, title, publication date, and more. **Search Strategy Alert**: You can conduct searches by different fields.
- **Controlled Vocabulary**: ‘Controlled vocabulary’ referred to highly specific subject terms assigned to a publication. Please note that the Library of Congress Classification scheme is merely one source of controlled vocabulary.
- **Subject Heading**: Also called descriptors, these controlled vocabulary terms describe the content within a publication through a systematic and consistent methodology. **Search Strategy Alert**: You can conduct searches by different subject headings.
- **Call Number**: A unique identifier assigned to many print materials and items within a library. The call number is used to locate the item within a building.
Exploring OneSearch

Search Scopes

OneSearch performs keyword searches by default. Keyword searches match your search terms to results that include those terms anywhere in the item description. Searching by keyword is designed to be intuitive and easy to use. Google operates in a similar fashion, so you may be familiar with this search mechanism. You can also browse among the tabs to limit the breadth of your search results. Because OneSearch provides results from so many libraries, databases, and collections across the Pacific Northwest, the catalog has organized the search experience around location and time to availability. Called search scopes, these fourth tabs allow the user to pre-emptively identify which collections and libraries they want to search within (Please see Figure 1.1). The scopes are...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WWU</th>
<th>+ Summit</th>
<th>+ Articles</th>
<th>+ More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♦ Discover scholarly materials available at Western Libraries.</td>
<td>♦ Discover scholarly materials available at Western Libraries and at one of 38 academic libraries in the Pacific Northwest.</td>
<td>♦ Default scope in catalog.</td>
<td>♦ Retrieves results from Western, other libraries, and from many article databases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Use this search scope to find materials available at Western Libraries.</td>
<td>♦ May need to request an off-site item from another library (which will take additional time to access the item).</td>
<td>♦ Retrieves results from Western, other libraries, and from many article databases.</td>
<td>♦ Some of these items may require additional delivery time (through an InterLibrary Loan request).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Too many results? Use this scope to limit search results.</td>
<td></td>
<td>♦ May take additional time to access an item.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Does not retrieve search results from EBSCO databases.

Figure 1.1 OneSearch Infographic
Search Interfaces

In OneSearch, there are four types of search interfaces: Basic, Advanced, Browse, and Journals. Please note that these interfaces are different from the search scopes we just discussed. Different search interfaces allow you to conduct different types of searches (such as journals or government documents); the search scopes allow you to control how many search results you retrieve, and from where. Each search interface allows users to conduct different, and more focused, searches. Please note that only Basic and Advanced Search feature the search scopes discussed above.

- **Basic Search** provides users with a simple search box that is analogous to the Google Search box. Basic Search is great for known item or preliminary searching. For example, if you are seeking a specific item that the Libraries owns, Basic Search may be a quicker way to search for this item. You can find this interface on the Libraries homepage.

- **Advanced Search** means that you have more search options. You have three search bars, and can combine your search keywords and filters. You also have drop-down menus that allow you to limit by year, material type, language, and location. Using the Advanced Search interface is very effective if you have a research topic that requires multiple keywords and/or requires more search filters.

- **Browse Search** allows you to search for call numbers, titles, authors, Library of Congress Numbers, SuDoc Numbers, and subjects. Browse Search displays the results in a proximity fashion (i.e., how closely an item is related to another item). This is useful method for browsing a catalog by subject or topic.

- **A-Z Journals Search** allows you to perform a journal title search within OneSearch.

Evaluating Search Results

When examining your search results, you should be able to see these details: title; author/creator; format; and the availability indicator (the colored strip). The colored lines next to the item record are called *availability indicators*, and are designed to quickly signal the estimated availability of an item. They signal the following information:

- **Green** for immediately available (either online or within the library).

- **Grey** for currently unavailable.

- **Yellow** indicates that it may take time to retrieve the item. Often you will be prompted to request the item from ILLiad/InterLibrary Loan or using Summit borrowing.

When conducting a search in OneSearch, you will get many results. Some of these results will feature both Access Options and Request Options buttons. But what’s the difference?

- **Access Options** provides a list of retrieval options for an item.

---

Did You Know?

The Orbis Cascade Alliance is a consortium of academic libraries in the Pacific Northwest. Membership in this consortium means that partner libraries agree to share selected library materials through an arrangement called Summit. So if Western Washington University Libraries does not have an item, be sure to check the Access Options or Request Options to learn about your options for requesting an item from another library.

While Western Libraries cannot own all possible research materials (indeed, no library can promise that) the Libraries do strive to provide access to a diverse array of materials for our students, staff, and faculty.
• **Request Options** provides a list of your request options for this item.

• **Details** shows in-depth information on the item, including title, author, subjects, descriptions, and call numbers.

• **Virtual Browse** performs a facsimile of an in-person “shelf-reading” experience by replicating the shelf browsing experience through electronic means. Clicking on an item will direct you to the item record.

• The **Citations** feature retrieves all of the items cited within a specific search result. Please note that this feature only appears for search results that are journal articles or chapters; furthermore, these results only reflect what Western Libraries has access to — and thus, the list of citation results you retrieve may not be complete.

• Likewise, the **Cited by** feature retrieves results that cite the specific search result. And likewise, this feature only appears for search results that are journal articles or chapters; furthermore, these results only reflect what Western Libraries has access to — and thus, the list of citation results you retrieve may not be complete. For those interested, both the **Citations** and **Cited by** features use CrossRef to generate these results.

In order to determine how to retrieve the desired item most quickly, start with **Access Options** and then double-check your **Request Options**. If you want to modify your search results, see the **Refine My Results** menu (located on the left side of the screen). This menu allows you to limit your search results by format, author, collections, peer-reviewed status, and much more.

**Search Filters**

You will likely retrieve results while searching OneSearch. But what if you don’t find any items about your topic in OneSearch? One strategy is to change your search terms. Another strategy is to change your search filters. Research and inquiry are an iterative process, meaning that you may need to refine your search terms and strategies in order to find the most relevant and useful sources for your topic. In OneSearch, you can most easily modify your search results by taking advantage of the **Filter My Results** menu (which presents itself after you conduct an initial search). You can modify your search results by the following options:

- **Format**: Limit search results by the format of the item, such as article, book, and more.

- **Subject**: Limit search results by the subject of the item, such as media or communication.

- **Genre/Form**: Limit search results by the document type of the item, such as documentary or case study.

- **Date**: Limit search results by publication dates.

- **Author / Creator**: Use this filter to limit search results by the author or creator of the item. What’s the difference? An author is a single person responsible for the creation of the publication, while a creator may refer to an organization or entity responsible for publishing the item.

- **Library**: Use this filter to search within a specific library or collection by clicking on a collection title.

- **Language**: Limit search results by a specific publication language.

- **Journal Title**: Searching for a publication within a specific journal? Use this filter to limit search results by journal title.

**General Search Strategies**

Before delving further into OneSearch, let’s pause to discuss general search strategies. While you can certainly take advantage of the features and filters within OneSearch, you have some additional search strategies available to you. Many of the strategies covered in this next section can be applied to many other catalogs and databases.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keyword</strong></td>
<td>When you conduct a keyword search, you are simply entering search terms that indicate your topic or a title or an author. This type of searching has been popularized by Google Search, and matches the search term to an identical word found in the document. Remember that this search string <strong>must</strong> be CAPITALIZED.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Boolean Operators**| Boolean operators, also called logical operators, were named after the English mathematician who developed a form of algebra, George Boole. Boolean operators are a search strategy that allows you broaden or narrow your search. The three operators are **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT**. To be effective, Boolean operators **must** be CAPITALIZED.  
  
  **AND**: Search statements with this operator searches the catalog for items that contain all of the search terms. This strategy will narrow the amount of results you retrieve, and may be useful in focusing your search results.  
  
  **OR**: Search statements with this operator searches the catalog for items that contain any of the search terms. This strategy will expand the number of search results that you retrieve.  
  
  **NOT**: Search statements with this operator searches the catalog for the first search term but not the second search term. This strategy is great when you’re conducting research on a topic that has many synonyms.  
  
  **Example of this Search Strategy?**  
  
  AND Example: books AND films  
  OR Example: books OR films  
  NOT Example: books NOT films |
| **Phrase Searching** | Conduct a search with quotation marks around a phrase or a title. This signals to the catalog algorithm that you want to search for an entire phrase or title. |
| **Nested Searching** | You can combine search terms with more than one Boolean operator. To do so, you simply incorporate parentheses in the search strategy. |
| **Truncation & Wildcard** | If you want to search for variants of a search term, consider using truncation or wildcard strategy. Truncation allows you to search for a search term variant by assigning an asterisk symbol at the end of a search term. This search strategy signals to the library catalog algorithm to matching variants of a search term to the original entry.  
  
  **Example of this Search Strategy?**  
  
  Wildcard Example: wom?n (Will search for woman, women, womyn, etc.)  
  Truncation Example: commun* (Will search for communication, community, etc.) |
Saving Search Results: Your OneSearch MyAccount

As a Western student, you have access to several features available through your MyAccount within OneSearch. However, you must sign in with your MyWestern universal username and password to access these materials. When you sign into OneSearch, you are presented with three features: MyAccount, Queries, and eShelf. MyAccount presents up-to-date information about your library-related activity, including loans, existing requests, fees, and messages. You can also edit your personal information in the ‘Personal Settings’ section. Queries are the searches you have performed. You can save any searches to your MyAccount in order to refer to these results in the future. eShelf retains saved items (as opposed to searches) in your MyAccount. You can group saved items by folders and add annotations to those folders for future reference. You are not required to sign into the Catalog unless you are off-campus, or need to request an item.

Requesting Materials

What if you find an item within OneSearch — and Western Libraries doesn’t own it? Don’t worry! You can likely borrow it from another library. Because OneSearch is a shared catalog, and can retrieve results from other academic libraries in the Pacific Northwest, be sure to check both the Access and Request Options buttons. These buttons will give you an overview of your access options for both electronic and physical copies of an item within the Orbis Cascade Alliance.

If you find an item that you want to request but is unavailable within the Pacific Northwest, you can request the book or item through InterLibrary Loan. InterLibrary Loan is essentially a service agreement between all libraries to lend materials to a patron not affiliated with their institution for a specified amount of time. As a student enrolled at Western, you can request most materials from another library. There are no costs to you for this service (though you can accrue fines for the tardy return of items, or failing to pick up an item). You can request an item, or simply learn more about, InterLibrary Loan at this website.

When Should I Use OneSearch?

A successful research experience requires knowing when to use the right tool. OneSearch is an excellent place to begin your inquiry into a topic. The sheer number of materials that OneSearch can retrieve for you will likely give you a broad overview on what’s available on your topic. Once you have refined your research question, and found some preliminary materials in OneSearch, you can segue into searching for materials in the article databases available at Western Libraries.

Here are additional strategies that may enhance your research experience:

- **Phrase Searching:** Use phrase searching (“The quotation marks” search strategy) in OneSearch in order to retrieve more relevant results.

- **Take Advantage of the Search Scopes:** Use the search scope (WWU, WWU + Summit, WWU + Summit + Articles, WWU + Summit + Articles + More) that is most relevant to you for an efficient search.

- **Search Filters:** Depending upon the topic, OneSearch can retrieve thousands of results. Since you likely don’t have the time to weed through thousands of items, use search filters to limit your results to the most relevant items for your inquiry.

- **Time:** Give yourself enough time to complete an assignment. Your topic may require you to borrow materials from another library, and delivery of these materials take additional time.
• **Research Assistance:** Find a Subject Librarian or go the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio for research assistance.

• **Additional OneSearch Resources:** If you need a reminder on how to perform a task in OneSearch, check out the OneSearch Tips guide ([http://bit.ly/2aol1yc](http://bit.ly/2aol1yc)) or visit the OneSearch Frequently Asked Questions ([http://bit.ly/2aZLW8Q](http://bit.ly/2aZLW8Q)).

## Chapter Conclusion: Why is this important to you?

In this chapter, you’ve learned how OneSearch differs from traditional library catalogs; you’ve discovered important features unique to OneSearch, such as search scopes and filters; and how to request items that may not be housed at Western Libraries. But why does familiarity with OneSearch matter? Because knowledge of, and familiarity with, your library catalog is crucial to a successful research experience. It’s important to know when to use the catalog, and how to maximize the features within. When you can conduct effective and efficient searches, and retrieve relevant and useful results, the quality of your scholarship increases dramatically.

As you progress through your research process, be sure to consult the OneSearch LibGuide for the most up-to-date information, and / or to e-mail onsearch@wwu.edu with questions or concerns.

---

### One Last Thing...

Most university and college libraries in the United States organize collections by the Library of Congress Classification Scheme (In contrast, public and K-12 library catalogs rely on the Dewey Decimal Classification System. More on [that here](#)).

The Library of Congress classification scheme organizes collections by subject, and using a strictly controlled vocabulary, assigns a unique identifier (referred to as a call number) to each publication. Furthermore, each publication has specific subject headings assigned to this publications. Learn about the [Library of Congress Classification Scheme](#).