



Library Information Terminology

For a more complete listing of terminology, see ODLIS: Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science at <http://lu.com/odlis>.

ABSTRACT – A brief summary that gives the essential points of a book, article, or document. Often found at the beginning of articles or in indexing/abstracting sources.

ANNOTATION – A note describing, explaining, or evaluating an item in a bibliography.

BIBLIOGRAPHY – A list of books, periodical articles, and/or other materials cited in a publication or on a particular topic, usually arranged alphabetically by author or title. Often found at the end of books, chapters, articles, and papers or as separate works.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION – Annotation that completely identifies a specific book, periodical article, conference paper, report, or any other published work. Also called a citation or a reference. May contain the author, title, place of publication, publisher, date, pages, volume, issue number, and other pertinent information needed to identify the item.

CALL NUMBER – Letters, numbers, or symbols, separate or in combination, assigned to a book or other library material to indicate its location. Usually serves to group materials on the same subject in the same area in the collection.

CARD CATALOG – A file in which entries on separate cards are arranged in specified order. Lists the library's books and other library materials alphabetically by author, title, and subject. The Florida Institute of Technology's Evans Library card catalog was closed in 1992.

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM – A particular scheme of classification such as Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress (LC). The Florida Institute of Technology's Evans Library, like most academic libraries, uses LC.

HOLDINGS – The books, periodicals, and other materials held (or owned) by a library in its collections.

INDEX – (1) A list of periodical articles, usually concerning a particular subject area, arranged by authors and titles, and including the information needed to find the articles. Usually published and distributed at regularly scheduled intervals throughout the year, and frequently is cumulated into a single volume at the end of the year. (2) An alphabetical subject listing, giving page numbers, of a book's contents.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY – A product of the intellect that has commercial value, including copyrighted property such as literary or artistic works, and ideational property, such as patents, appellations of origin, business methods, and industrial processes.

INTERNET – The international network of networks.

JOURNAL – A periodical issued by an institution, corporation, or society, containing current news and reports of activities and research in a particular field. Usually scholarly in nature. Example: Journal of American Chemical Society.

MAGAZINE – A periodical for general reading, containing articles on various subjects by different authors. Usually popular, rather than scholarly, in nature. Example: Time.

MICROFORM – A miniaturized, photographic reproduction of printed material, produced on a roll or sheet of film. Microforms must be viewed on a reader that enlarges the image to its normal size.



Reader/printers are used to make copies of individual images. Roll format is called microfilm; sheet format is called microfiche.

MONOGRAPH – Systematic and complete treatise on a particular subject. It may be one volume of a series or may stand alone.

ONLINE CATALOG – A catalog of bibliographic records in machine-readable form, maintained in a computer system and permitting access through terminals which are in communication with the main computer for the length of the transaction. Access is gained by using predetermined search protocols.

PEER-REVIEWED – See REFEREED.

PERIODICAL – A publication with a distinctive title intended to appear in successive numbers or parts at regular intervals. Scholarly journals, popular magazines, and newspapers are all periodicals. Examples: New York Times, Business Week, Journal of the American Medical Association.

PRIMARY SOURCE – In scholarship, a document or record containing firsthand information or original data on a topic, used in preparing a derivative work. Primary sources include original manuscripts, periodical articles reporting original research or thought, diaries, memoirs, letters, journals, photographs, drawings, posters, film footage, sheet music, songs, interviews, government documents, public records, eyewitness accounts, newspaper clippings, etc.

REFEREED – Also called peer-reviewed, scholarly publications that, at the direction of the editorial board, have been reviewed by several experts in the field.

REFERENCE SOURCE – Print or electronic resource designed to be consulted for specific facts rather than to be read as a whole. Example: dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks.

REMOTE ACCESS – Ability to gain entry to a library's online system from some distance away or outside of the network.

SECONDARY SOURCE – Any published or unpublished work that is one step removed from the original source, usually describing, summarizing, analyzing, evaluating, derived from, or based on primary source materials, for example, a review, critical analysis, second-person account, or biographical or historical study. Also refers to material other than primary sources used in the preparation of a written work.

SERIALS – Publications issued in successive parts usually at regular intervals, and intended to be continued indefinitely. Example: newspapers, annual reports. Serial, periodical, journal, and magazine are terms that have slightly different meanings but are used sometimes incorrectly but interchangeably.

SERIES – A continuing collection of volumes issued separately and often pertaining to the same subject. When the final volume is issued, the series is complete. Example: Time-Life Series, Ocean Technology Review.

TERTIARY SOURCE – A written work, such as a chapter in a textbook or entry in a reference book, based entirely on secondary sources, rather than on original research involving primary documents. Whether a source is secondary or tertiary can be determined by examining the bibliography (if one is provided). Another clue is that secondary sources are almost always written by experts, but tertiary sources may be written by staff writers who have an interest in the topic but are not scholars on the subject.