Research/Library Glossary

includes specific terminology for SJSU King Library

Abstract: A brief summary of a journal article, book, etc.

Almanac: A publication, usually an annual, containing useful facts and statistical information.

Annotation: A critical or explanatory note about a citation, often including an evaluation of the source.

Annual: An item that is published once a year.

Archives: Archives are collections that can be published or unpublished materials but are in some way unique that caring for them requires special preservation. Generally, these materials are of historic in nature either in history, to the area or person, or in our case to the university. Also Special Collections.

Bibliography: A list of citations for books, articles or other materials. A bibliography may be a full book or a brief list of books or journal articles. An annotated bibliography also includes a short summary of the work listed.

Bound Periodicals/Journals: Several issues of a magazine or journal that have been brought together to form a book.

Boolean Operators: Words, such as AND, OR, and NOT, which are used to combine search terms to either broaden or narrow the results of a search.

Browser: An application program that provides a way to view and interact with the World Wide Web. Examples: Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari.

Call number: Like an address for a book on a shelf. A combination of letters and numbers assigned to a book that gives it a unique location in the library. Libraries are arranged by subject. Call numbers are placed on the spines of the books, which are shelved in call number order in the stacks. Example: ND 237 S47 F74.

Card Catalog: Card catalogs are pieces of furniture containing drawers filled with cards that provide information about materials in the collection. Most card catalogs have been replaced by online catalogs.

Catalog: Catalogs contain records for the books, serials, media, and other items in the collections of the Library. The online version of the catalog may be called by different names, but often they are referred to as the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog) or the PAC (Public Access Catalog). SJSU’s online catalog is named OneSearch.

Chat: A user is able to have a live chat reference session with a Librarian in real time.

Circulation Desk: A service desk where you can receive your library card, check out, renew, and return library materials, pay fines, pick up holds, and inquire about general library functions.

Citation: Specific information (for example, author, title, place of publication and year of publication) that describes an information source. Citations are components of a bibliography or footnote. The purpose of a citation is to give a cited work credit and give the reader the necessary information to locate that resource. Examples of the information given would be author, title, journal name, place of publication and publishing date.
**Controlled Vocabulary:** Specific pre-defined words and phrases, known as subject headings or descriptors, to classify books, articles, etc. for an index or database. Using a controlled vocabulary helps arrange resources on a similar subject under a specific term.

**CSU+:** In ILL service (see InterLibrary Loan) that borrows from other CSU libraries.

**Database:** A collection of records stored electronically usually accessed through a computer connected to the Internet. Searching a database enables advanced search techniques to be used, as in keyword searching or searching particular fields (title, abstract, author, etc.) of a record. You have access to many excellent databases through your local library.

**Dictionary:** A reference source that provides meanings of words and other information. Specialized dictionaries are available for many subject areas.

**EBooks/E-Journals/E-Articles:** The “E” stands for Electronic. Books, Journals, Articles and other materials are now widely accessible via the Internet in a PDF or HTML format.

**Encyclopedia:** A reference source containing information on a variety of topics. This information may be supplied in short paragraphs or in lengthy articles that include citations to other works on the same topic. Encyclopedias can be general, covering all topics, or specialized, focusing on particular disciplines such as art or philosophy.

**Field:** A part of a record used to identify a particular category of data. For example, the title field displays the title for each record in the database. Some other fields are author, journal name, etc.

**Full Text:** A full text database contains the complete text of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, etc. Full text databases became common in the 1990s when computer storage technology made them economically and technologically possible.

**Hold:** A request for library materials to be held for you at the circulation desk.

**Holdings:** 1) What the library owns in terms of materials, including electronic formats. 2) In the online catalog, it is a field in a serial (newspaper, journal, or magazine) record that shows exactly which years and volumes of that serial are available at the library.

**Index:** 1) A list of names or topics usually found at the end of a publication, which directs you to the pages where the names or topics are discussed. 2) A printed or electronic publication (or database) that lists references to periodical articles or books by subject and/or author.

**InterLibrary Loan (ILL or CSU+):** A service that allows you to request a book or article from another library. Articles will be emailed as PDFs usually in a few hours. A book can arrive within a few days, depending on where it is coming from. This is a free service for University users.

**Internet:** A system of computer networks that connects computers all over the world. This worldwide network enables computer users to communicate through email, find information on the World Wide Web, and access remote computer systems, such as library catalogs.

**Keyword Search:** A search using ANY word or series of words. You may search across fields or within a field. For example searching "podcasting" in the abstract field of a particular database will yield all records with the word "podcasting" found in the abstract field. This particular type of search can be
handy when searching on newer ideas, such as "podcasting," that may not have a Controlled Vocabulary term yet.

**LCSH (Library of Congress Subject Headings):** A controlled vocabulary used to describe the contents of works. Materials classified with Library of Congress call numbers use these subject headings. They are alphanumeric, meaning that the class number contains first letter followed by lines of numbers.

**Libguide:** A library libguide is an online guide that serves as a map and guide to resources on a specific topic and ideas for how to go about researching that topic.

**Library Catalog:** A searchable online database, which provides a listing of the materials (such as books, periodicals, films) owned by a library. It provides the location and the loan status of the materials.

**Media:** Films, tapes and other audio-visual materials that require the use of special listening or viewing equipment.

**Monograph:** A *monograph* is a specialist work of writing on a single subject (usually a book) or an aspect of a subject, usually by a single author.

**Open Access (OA):** It is the access to free online availability of research materials, e.g. articles, books, or other manuscripts, to users. For SJSU, our OA is call Scholarworks.

**PDF (Portable Document Format):** A file format that allows files to be viewed as images, maintaining the original look of the document. An Adobe Acrobat Reader is required to view PDF files. You may come across many full-text articles found in EBSCOHost and other databases as PDF files.

**Periodical:** A publication issued at regular intervals (may also be called a serial). Examples of periodicals are journals, magazines and newspapers.

**Reference:** A service provided by libraries to assist patrons in the retrieval of information and the use of information resources.

**Reference Collection:** Collection of books, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and almanacs, that provide factual information and leads to other information resources.

**Reference Librarian:** Reference librarians are specialists in the field of information retrieval. Generally, they have a Master’s degree in library science, and many have other graduate degrees as well. They are available at reference desks to help you find the information you are looking for. Remember, you are not bothering them. It is their job to help people find what they need!

**Renewal:** An extension of the loan period for checked out library materials. Renewals may be handled in person at the circulation desk or by clicking on a link in the library's catalog.

**Research Guides:** See Libguides.

**Reserves:** Materials that have been set aside by a professor for a class to use. Print materials are kept behind the Circulation Desk with a limited check out period. **E-Reserves** are online materials that faculty place for access usually through online systems like Canvas.

**Scholar:** A specialist in a particular branch of study. Usually these people have Ph.D.’s.
**Scholarly Journal**: A periodical devoted to a specific field of scholarly knowledge. Articles appearing in scholarly journals are generally peer reviewed (reviewed by an authorizing board). Please note the difference between a scholarly journal and a magazine, is that a magazine not peer reviewed and is not usually considered scholarly.

**Search Engine**: On the internet, a program that finds Web resources and indexes them. Users perform searches and are returned results that match their request. Google, Bing, and Yahoo are examples of search engines.

**Serial**: Publications received periodically, such as newspapers and magazines.

**Special Collections**: A library unit that stores materials that are special in nature. These are be manuscripts (published or unpublished), photographs, rare documents, and university records.

**Stacks**: The area of the library where the circulating collection of books and bound periodicals are shelved. These materials are arranged in call number order.

**Subject Headings**: Standardized words or phrases assigned to books, articles, or other materials. Subject headings are created by humans and are used to describe materials as well as to bring together materials that are similar in subject matter.

**Subject-Specific Encyclopedia**: More focused than a general encyclopedia, covering a particular area of information. These are particularly useful when your need an overview a subject that may be new to you or to assist in refining a topic.

**Thesaurus**: A list of the specific words or phrases used as subject headings or descriptors in a particular database, catalog, or index.

**Truncation**: A special character added to the end of a word to retrieve the root word and all possible endings of that word. For example, typing comput* will retrieve compute, computes, computing, computer, computers, etc. Certain databases and search engines are capable of this, although they often use different characters other than an asterisk.

**World Wide Web (www)**: Also known as "the Internet." A global network of Internet servers providing access to document by hypertext links.