



LIBRARY
Enriching world-class scholarship

Searching Library Catalogues

“How-to” guide

■ WHY ARE LIBRARY CATALOGUES IMPORTANT?

- In many disciplines, especially in the humanities and social sciences, **books** are a major source of information – often more important than journal articles. But how do you identify books that are relevant to your research?
- Libraries are institutions where books are stored and preserved. Library catalogues are the **key** to these collections.
- **No library has every book ever published.** So to research a topic thoroughly, you have to search more than one library's catalogue.
- **Union catalogues** are databases that include the catalogues of many libraries, but there is still **no database that lists every book ever published.**

■ WHAT WILL I FIND IN A LIBRARY CATALOGUE?

- Library catalogues list **mainly books**. However some library catalogues also list large numbers of **maps, audiovisual items, music scores, manuscripts** and other resources.
- Many library catalogues now link to **electronic resources online**. Some of those resources will only be available to registered users of that library, but other resources will be freely available.
- Very few library catalogues list individual journal articles. The catalogue will tell you if the library has a particular journal, but normally it will **not list all the articles in those journals**.

■ HOW IS A LIBRARY CATALOGUE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER DATABASES?

- Library catalogues have **very limited information** about the individual books in the library.
- This is a typical library catalogue record for a book:

Author	Pomeroy, Sarah B.
Title	Spartan women / Sarah B. Pomeroy.
Publisher	Oxford, U.K. ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2002.
Description	xvii, 198 p. : ill. ; 25 cm.
Note	Includes bibliographical references (p. 171-183) and index.
LCCN	2001055961
ISBN	0195130669 (cloth) 0195130677 (pbk.)
Language	English
Subject	Women -- Greece -- Sparta (Extinct city) Sparta (Extinct city) -- Social conditions.
Format	Book

As you can see, the book is almost 200 pages long, but the library catalogue database does not contain any detailed information on the contents of the book. So when you search the catalogue, **you are only searching the information that you can see above**. You are *not* searching the full text of the books, or even a detailed summary of the books. You are only searching **brief descriptions** of the books in the library.

- Sometimes the library catalogue has more information on the contents of a book:

LCCN Permalink:	http://lccn.loc.gov/2007296604
Type of Material:	Book (Print, Microform, Electronic, etc.)
Main Title:	Trading on alliance security : Australia in world affairs, 2001-2005 / edited by James Cotton and John Ravenhill.
Distinctive Title:	Trading on alliance security.
Published/Created:	South Melbourne, Vic. : Oxford University Press, 2007.
Related Names:	Cotton, James, 1949- Ravenhill, John.
Description:	xvi, 424 p. : ill. ; 25 cm.
ISBN:	9780195550566 0195550560
Summary:	The events of September 11, and the government's decision to align closely with the United States in the 'war against terrorism', brought security to the forefront of Australian foreign policy from 2001 onwards. Trading on Alliance Security, the latest in the long-established Australia in World Affairs series, charts the Howard government's response to a particularly demanding external environment, in an era when foreign policy issues had a significant impact on domestic electoral politics.
Contents:	Part 1. The Foreign Policy Scene. --1. 'Trading on alliance security': Foreign Policy in the post-11 September era. --Part 2. Relationships.-- 2. Extreme Allies: Australia and the USA.-- 3. Rebuilding engagement: Australia and Southeast Asia.-- 4. Australia and Japan: Challenges and Opportunities. --5. Australia and China: Towards a Strategic Partnership?-- 6. Australia, Britain and the European Union.-- 7. Australia and the fragile states in the Pacific.-- 8. Perfect Strangers: Australia and West Asia. --Part 3. Issues. --9. Security, Defence and Terrorism. --10. Australia and the Global Economy. --11. Pragmatism, prosperity, and environmental challenges in Australia's foreign policy. --12. Australia and International Human Rights.-- Part 4. Foreign Policy and the Political Process. --13. Neither entirely comfortable nor wholly relaxed: Public opinion, electoral politics and foreign policy. --14. Parliament and Foreign Policy. --15. After the Flood: Foreign Policy and the Management of Intelligence.
Notes:	Includes index. Bibliography: p. 365-404.
Subjects:	Australia --Foreign relations. Australia --Politics and government.

This improves your chances of locating relevant books, but it is still far short of full-text searching.

■ HOW SHOULD I SEARCH A LIBRARY CATALOGUE?

- Think of **broader search terms**. For example, if you are looking for information on "The role of women in Indonesian political life", there may be relevant information in books about Indonesian politics or about women in Indonesia. So you might search on keywords such as: *politics Indonesia* or *women Indonesia*.
- Make use of the **subject headings** in the catalogue records. You might find a useful catalogue record like this:

Women as political actors in Indonesia's new order / Indra McCormick

[Availability](#)

Bib ID 2484166

Format Book

Author [McCormick, Indra](#)

Publisher Clayton, Vic. : Monash Asia Institute, 2003.

Description 38 p. : 30 cm.

ISBN 1876924241 : 1876924241 :

Series Working papers (Monash University. Centre of Southeast Asian Studies) ; no. 123.

Notes Bibliography: p. 35-38.

Subjects [Women in politics - Indonesia.](#) | [Indonesia - Politics and government - 1966-](#)

Other Authors [Monash University. Centre of Southeast Asian Studies](#)

Notice the subject headings at the bottom of the record. Click on one of the subject headings to find **other books on the same subject**.

- Many libraries in the English-speaking world use the **Library of Congress subject headings**. So if you identify subject headings that describe your research topic, you can use those subject headings to search many different library catalogues.
- Make use of the **call numbers (classification numbers)**. For example, in the following record, notice that the classification numbers are underlined (hypertext):

NAME (S) : [Eigenbrod, Renate, 1944-](#)
[Hulan, Renée, 1965-](#)

TITLE (S) : *Aboriginal oral traditions : theory, practice, ethics /
edited by Renate Eigenbrod and Renée Hulan

PUBLISHER: Black Point, N.S. : Fernwood Pub., 2008.

NOTES: Presentations from a conference held at the Gorsebrook
Research Institute, Halifax, N.S., Apr. 21-23, 2005.
Includes bibliographical references and index.

NUMBERS: Canadiana: 20079072496
ISBN: 9781552662670 : \$24.95

CLASSIFICATION: LC Call no.: [GN476 A36 2008](#)
Dewey: [398.2089/97 22](#)

SUBJECTS: [Indigenous peoples](#)
[Oral tradition](#)

In many library catalogues, you can click on the classification number in a record to see **other books with the same classification number**. You can often **browse** through adjacent classification numbers, just as if you were browsing books on the library shelves.

■ WHICH LIBRARY CATALOGUES SHOULD I USE?

- Do you know of an **institution** which specialises in research in your area? This might be a research institute or government body. Is its library catalogue available online?
- Is there a **university** where there is significant research activity on the topic? Use its library catalogue.
- Does your research topic have a **regional focus**? If so, try the catalogue of the relevant national or state library, or the catalogues of university libraries in that region.
- Use a **union catalogue**. These are very large databases that incorporate the catalogues of many libraries.
- See the **Useful Links** section at the end of this guide.

■ SOME OTHER TIPS

- Like most other databases, library catalogues will normally allow you to **mark** or **save** references that interest you. These references can then be downloaded or emailed to yourself.
- Some catalogues will allow you to set up an account or profile so that you can save searches. The searches will be run regularly and **updates** emailed to you to **alert** you of new references.
- When you identify books that will be of use to you, you can use the UQ Library **document delivery** service to request them, if they are not held in the UQ Library. There are limits to the number of items that you can request from the document delivery service.

■ USEFUL LINKS

Australian Libraries Gateway

<http://www.nla.gov.au/libraries/>

Find Australian libraries and link to their catalogues.

Libraries Australia

<http://library.uq.edu.au/record=e1001015>

A union catalogue incorporating holdings of many Australian libraries.

WorldCat

<http://www.worldcat.org/advancedsearch>

The largest union catalogue. Includes holdings of many libraries from around the world.

COPAC

<http://www.copac.ac.uk/>

Union catalogue of UK academic and research libraries.

The European Library

<http://search.theeuropeanlibrary.org/>

Combined search of many European national libraries.

KVK (Karlsruhe Virtual Catalogue)

http://www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/kvk/kvk/kvk_en.html

Combined search of many libraries in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and worldwide.

Amicus

<http://amicus.collectionscanada.ca/aaweb/aalogine.htm>

Union catalogue of Canadian libraries.

Melvyl

<http://melvyl.cdlib.org/>

Union catalogue of research libraries in California.

Catalogue Collectif de France

<http://ccfr.bnf.fr/>

Union catalogue of French libraries.

REBIUN

<http://rebiun.absysnet.com/>

Union catalogue of Spanish university libraries.

NACSIS Webcat

http://webcat.nii.ac.jp/webcat_eng.html

Union catalogue of Japanese research libraries.

National Library Catalogues Worldwide

<http://www.library.uq.edu.au/natlibs/>

Links to catalogues of national libraries.