

# LOCATING RESEARCH MATERIALS USING META-CATALOGS: WORLDCAT\*

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## Abstract

This module, part of a series on performing humanities research, offers a brief introduction to WorldCat, a meta-catalog that searches the holdings of thousands of libraries worldwide. WorldCat allows you to locate resources whether or not they are held by your local library. Here, we will explore the functions of WorldCat by conducting a basic search and narrowing our search by subject and media type.

## 1 Introduction

WorldCat is a system designed to help you to browse the collections of over 16,000 libraries world wide. You can also order books the books you find on WorldCat from other libraries through Interlibrary loan. WorldCat is an excellent resource for finding out what is out there as well as getting it delivered to you here.

### Accessing WorldCat

Fondren provides three computer labs on the first floor of the library. You must be an enrolled student at Rice to access the internet in these areas. If you are a student at Rice and have not yet registered with to use the internet resources available to you, you may do so at the OwlNet<sup>1</sup>. WorldCat is available to everyone, however, on the computers surrounding the information desk.

WorldCat can be accessed from any internet connection by visiting the website for Rice University. Once you find the home page for Rice, click on General Public and then on Fondren. From the Fondren home page, click on Catalog and you will see a list of options on the right side of the screen. Select Other Library Catalogs and then scroll down a bit, you will see WorldCat under the Major Collective Catalogs heading.

### How WorldCat Searches

First, let's take a quick look at what WorldCat looks for when you begin a search. Here is an example of one entry among thousands in the index.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.owlnet.rice.edu/>

Title: **Oriental Cairo, the city of the "Arabian nights",**

Author(s): [Sladen, Douglas Brooke Wheelton, 1856-1947](#) ; [Roosevelt, Theodore., 1858-1919](#).

Publication: London, Hurst & Blackett,  
Year: 1911

Description: xvi, 391 p. front., plates, fold. maps. 23 cm.

Language: English

Standard No: **LCCN:** 11-9987

**SUBJECT(S)**

Geographic: [Cairo \(Egypt\) -- Description and travel.](#)  
[Egypt -- Description and travel.](#)  
[Le Caire \(Egypte\) -- Descriptions et voyages.](#)  
[Égypte -- Descriptions et voyages.](#)

Note(s): Includes index.

Class Descriptors: **LC:** [DT143](#); **Dewey:** [962.16](#)

Responsibility: by Douglas Sladen ... Illustrated with sixty-three intimate pictures of life in oriental Cairo, from photographs by the author, and with the newest map of Cairo.

Document Type: Book

Entry: 19770329

Update: 20041122

Accession No: **OCLC:** 2844876

Database: WorldCat

Figure 1

The information presented above may be viewed as a list of terms you could use to locate this particular work through WorldCat. There are a few things we should take note of here:

First, WorldCat searches for the information you see above in specific ways. For example, if you were to do a title search for Douglas Sladen, you would not receive an entry for "Oriental Cairo". This seems simple (and possibly silly) but it brings to an important point. Notice how everything in this entry is worded, that is how WorldCat sees it in the index. If you want the system to locate something for you, then you must learn what it looks for and how it looks for it.

Second, you can find this work through any one of thousands of combinations of keywords, most of which you see here in the entry. Make a note of the way in which the words are categorized now, it will be important later.

## 2 Basic Search

Let's take a look at our basic search options.

Figure 2

Notice the black circles to the right of some of the text boxes, these will link you to more information about what to put in them. We have collected that information for you here.

**Keyword**

The Keyword index includes information from Source Phrase, Subject and Title indexes. Author information is not included in the Keyword index.

Examples	Notes
<i>dog or dogs or canine</i>	Use the keyword index when you are unsure of the correct title or subject.
<i>harry potter rowling</i>	Terms from the title only will match records; this search will not match many records.

Figure 3

## Author

The Author index includes authors of books, actors and directors of movies, and even company names.

Examples	Notes
<i>John Smith</i>	Terms can match surnames, firstnames, or both in items with multiple authors.
<i>smith,john</i>	Be sure to enter spaces between words; this search will not match many records.
<i>"smith john "</i>	To search for an exact name, enclose in quotes the last name followed by the first name and/or middle name or initial.

Figure 4

## Title

The Title index contains words from the title and translated or variant forms of titles.

Examples	Notes
<i>macbeth</i>	Entering a single term matches all records that contain the term somewhere in the title.
<i>harry potter stone</i>	Search for the most relevant terms within a title to find variations of that title.
" <i>goodnight moon</i> "	Enclose a phrase in quotes to match all terms in order; also use quotes to search for an exact title.

Figure 5

### ISBN Number

The ISBN index (International Standard Book Number) contains publishing industry standard 10-digit identifiers for books, videos, and sound recordings.

Examples	Notes
0590353403	Match items with the ISBN.
059035342x	059035342X

Figure 6

## Year

The Year index can be searched for an individual year or for ranges of years. **Note:** This index can not be searched without at least one other index.

Examples	Notes
1964	match items published in a single year
1920-1940	match items published from a range of years
1995-	match items published in a given year and all subsequent years

Figure 7

### Getting Started

Follow these directions closely when entering your information about the work you are looking for. A few seconds of thought at this point will save you many minutes of browsing through entries you probably didn't have to see.

Try to locate "Oriental Cairo" by title, author, subject and year to get a feel for what each search will produce separately.

### 3 Advanced Search

Let's take a look at the Advanced Search options to get a feel for the how WorldCat can refine your search for you and save you time and effort. Here is a look at their Advanced Search Page.

Figure 8

Select the arrow box to the right of the text box across from Search For: and you will find a much longer list of options than with the basic search. If you are using the Advanced Search option, then you probably know a little more about what you need than the title or author's name. These options will become more pertinent as you begin to look for a wider variety of works. For now we will just explore how the Advanced Search can help narrow your results for organizational purposes.

#### **Different ways of looking for your subject**

The most productive uses of the Advanced Search for the beginner are those having to do with the Subject Search and with limiting the media you are searching for. We will take a look at both options here.

Select the arrow box to the right of the keyword text box, anyone will be fine. Scroll down to the Subject heading and then look for named person, highlight that option. Now enter the our author's name and select Search.


- 2.  [Twenty years of my life /](#)  
**Author:** Sladen, Douglas Brooke Wheelton, 1856-1947.  
**Publication:** London [England] : Constable, 1914  
**Document:** English : Book  
**Libraries Worldwide:** 11  
More Like This: [Search for versions with same title and author](#) | [Advanced options ...](#)  
 [See more details for locating this item](#)
- 3.  [Douglas Brooke Wheelton Sladen letters, 1889-1915.](#)  
**Author:** Sladen, Douglas Brooke Wheelton, 1856-1947.; Stedman, Edmund Clarence.; Putnam, George Haven, **Publication:** 1889-1915 **In:** Allison-Shelley manuscript collection  
**Document:** English : Archival Material  
**Libraries Worldwide:** 1  
More Like This: [Search for versions with same title and author](#) | [Advanced options ...](#)  
 [See more details for locating this item](#)

Figure 9

We see our biography, the very thing a Named Person search should produce. We also find that Douglas Sladen’s personal letters exist in an Archive somewhere. Select the title heading to find out more.

**Douglas Brooke Wheelton Sladen letters,**

Douglas Brooke Wheelton **Sladen**; Edmund Clarence **Stedman**; George Haven **Putnam**

1889-1915  
**English**  Archival Material 2 items.

The collection consists of two handwritten letters: to E.C. Stedman, 21 Aug. 1889, thanking him for his efforts in firming up a book contract, including some personal news; to George Haven Putnam, 3 Jan. 1915, including personal and business news, chiefly related to England’s war effort.

Figure 10

We have just located two personal letters of Douglas Sladen, we know when they were written, to whom and what subjects they address. This is the kind of document that can turn a mediocre research project into something really interesting.

**Limiting the media your searching for**

Let’s say you just need a picture of your author or you just want to find out what kinds of internet resources might list him or her. Scroll down to the words Limit Type To: and observe the media icons. Lets check Internet Resources and Visual Materials.

Limit type to:  
 match any of the following












<input type="checkbox"/>  Books	<input type="checkbox"/>  Serial Publications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  Articles
<input type="checkbox"/>  Visual Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>  Sound Recordings	<input type="checkbox"/>  Musical Scores
<input type="checkbox"/>  Computer Files	<input type="checkbox"/>  Archival Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>  Maps
<input type="checkbox"/>  Internet Resources		

Figure 11

No pictures, but we do have two online resources to check out. The important thing to remember here is that narrowing your options can sometimes open up doors that you may not expect. Now that you have some experience with specifying what you need, try experimenting with the different options just to see what else you can find.