Printable Tutorial for Using WorldCat to Locate Library Materials

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Basic Searching:

When you access WorldCat, the search box is available on the entry page of the web site. It is similar to what is shown in the image below:

You do not need an account to use WorldCat. Note at the top of the search box that there are several tabs. The "Everything" tab will use your terms and search every type of resource out there imaginable. When you type in search terms, a box will also pop up with a list of possible searches that you might want to use. That pop-up box is shown in the image below:

That same box will pop up regardless of which tab you use on the WorldCat search box.

The "Everything" tab will return the most results. Our WorldCat search for the broad term "education" returned more than 16 million results! An image of that search screen is shown below:
You can always add more terms to your search in the "Everything" box, but too many terms might return no results at all so be careful!

The other tabs on the WorldCat search box help you to limit your search results before you see the list of items returned in your search. The "Books" tab will allow you to search for your terms and return results for items only classified as books. Some of these items will be in print, while others may only be electronically available on site at a specific library. The "DVDs" tab will search for anything classified as a video, even if it isn't necessarily in DVD format. You'll likely also find items here in VHS, Blu-ray, or digital format, but keep in mind that those digital formats are likely not accessible to the general public online. The "CDs" tab will return anything classified as a sound recording, whether in CD format or as a sound file. The "Articles" tab includes an extra search box, shown below:

On the "Articles" tab, you can search by a key word for specific articles, and in the second search box you can limit to a specific journal or magazine title. The same restrictions apply here to anything found in electronic format- it may be held through licensing at a specific library, but likely isn't available to the general public online. Most electronic resources shown through WorldCat are only available to you if you are either on-site at the holding library or have one of their library-specific access codes which is sometimes a part of a patron's library card number.
Advanced Searching:

You can conduct an “Advanced” search from the WorldCat search screen by selecting the “Advanced Search” option under the search box. An image of this appears below:

Advanced searching allows you to search for multiple attributes of specific resources at the same time. This prevents the need to limit those results further once you view are in the search results screen, though you can change them at any time even after you search within WorldCat. An image of the “Advanced Search” screen appears below:

On this screen, you can search for both the author and the title of a specific item, for example, which will dramatically decrease the number of results you’ll find on the results list that do not apply to your topic. You can also limit your items here by the year of publication, or items published within a specific range of years. “Audience” allows you to limit your results to exclude (or include) items written for adults or children. Limiting your search to exclude “juvenile” as audience, for example, would remove picture books, children’s videos, etc. from your search results, as many public libraries in particular have huge collections that support the children’s demographic. Limiting by format allows you to narrow your results to a specific type of item. In an earlier section of this tutorial, we mentioned that on the main search screen you are already given options to limit your search to specific types of items like books and CDs. Within each of these broad categories are additional opportunities to limit your list of results. For example, in a standard book search, we might want to find materials that are only in large print format. Using the main search box on the WorldCat screen, your results will list all types of books. You can seek out only large print materials through the Advanced Search options. An image of the Format pull-down menu is available below:
You can also limit results by language, which can be helpful particularly when you are fluent in the language of the translation but not the language of the original publication.
Layout of the Search Results Screen:

Regardless of the type of search that you conduct in WorldCat, the format of your results list page will look close to what you see below:

Notice there are two columns. The left column, discussed in the next section of this tutorial, allows you to change your search criteria.

Your list of results is displayed in the larger right panel. Many items in the list may include pictures of the cover art for specific resources. At the top of your results list, there are several features to help you more easily navigate inside WorldCat. Note the option to “Save to” above the first item in your list of results. An image of this option is shown below:

If you want to save anything in WorldCat, you must first sign up for a free account. This is a completely free resource and will not send you spam or solicitation emails. Look toward the top right of your screen for the links to “Sign in” or “create a free account” if you wish to save any of your search results for later use. An image of this is shown below:

Please note that account creation will only save your access to these records and not to the full text of any item. For instructions on creating your account, please proceed through this tutorial.

The far right side of the search results screen displays your options for sorting your list of results. You can sort by relevance to the terms that you entered. You can sort alphabetically by author or title. You can also sort by the year of publication to place newer (or older) items near the top of the list for easier retrieval. An image of the sort dropdown menu is shown below:
Note also the page navigation options above the sort menu. It’s a better practice to use these navigational options within WorldCat than your browser’s back button. Often the back button will take you back to the first page in your list of results, but these internal navigation options will return you back to the exact point you were in your search results before clicking on a particular title.
Limiting Your Results after Searching:

If you decide, after a keyword search for example, that your list of results is too large, you can narrow your list of results by using the options in the boxes on the left side of your search results screen. These options are divided into two categories: Format and Refine Your Search.

You can expand or collapse these options using the dropdown arrow next to the title. An image of the options collapsed appears below:

Once expanded, you’ll see the wide array of options for limiting your search results. An image of the expanded options appears below:

In the Format box, you can limit items by broad category (article, book, and video are some of the options). The number to the right of each option is the number of items in your list of search results that will be provided if you limit by that option. You can also limit within the broad categories. For example, when searching for a video resource, you may want a specific format, like DVD. Checking the box next to DVD, rather than the box next to Video, will limit your results to only items that are in DVD format. You can select the “Show more…” link at the bottom of the box to see even more options!

The Refine Your Search box, located directly under the Format box in the left menu, is shown in the image below:
There are six limitation options provided—Author, Year, Language, Content, Audience, and Topic. A “Show more…” option is available within each of these broad categories and at the very bottom of the box with options for additional broad categories. Note that limiting by Author will limit your search results to the country in which the item was published, not the author of a specific work.

Clicking on anything in Format or Refine Your Search will automatically adjust your search results to comply with whatever category you’ve selected. You can select multiple categories in each of the boxes. To return to your original list of results without limitations in the Format box, simply remove the checkmark next to the options you had previously selected. In the Refine Your Search box, you’ll be given an option to view all of your search results again within that specific category. For example, we limited our search results to only those items published in 2016. Our options in the Refine Your Search box under Year changed to provide us with an option to show “All Years.” An image of this is shown below:

Selecting the “All Years” will undo the limitation for only those items published in 2016.
Find a Library:

Not sure if there is a library near you? Under the search box on the WorldCat home page, you can select the Find a Library option access specific information about libraries in your area. An image of the Find a Library link under the search box is shown in the image below:

Search by name, zip code, state, or province in the Find a Library search box. An image of the Find a Library search box is shown below:

Note that only libraries with a profile in WorldCat will be shown in your search results.

Searching by zip code, for example, will provide you with a general list of libraries in your area, similar to what we see in the image below:

You can refine your search by “Library Type” using the left menu. A link is provided to each library’s web site as well as their online catalog. You are provided with the distance from you to
that library and a link to Google maps to get you there. Adding a library as a favorite will make it easier for you to find the next time you search inside WorldCat!
Zip Codes for Specific Items:

You can also locate information for a specific library once you’ve found an item in your list of search results that you want to locate. Click the name of the item in your list of search results. When the item’s record displays, scroll down the page to the “Find a copy in the library” box. An image of this is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Name</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State University</td>
<td>26 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elyria, OH 44035 United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorain County Community College</td>
<td>41 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elyria, OH 44035 United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuyahoga Community College</td>
<td>36 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Learning Center Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaker, OH 44110 United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State University Libraries</td>
<td>76 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, OH 43210 United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type in your zip code and click the button to the right of the search box that says “Find libraries.” A list of libraries with that specific item on the shelf will display, complete with your driving distance to that library, a Google maps option to get you there, and links to library information, web sites, and catalogs. Some links are also available to “Ask a librarian” to make it easier for you to contact that library directly.
Creating a FREE WorldCat Account:

As noted earlier in this tutorial, users can sign up for a free account via WorldCat. This is a non-solicitation resource, meaning no one is going to send you spam or try to sell you something if you sign up for a free WorldCat Account. In order to sign up for a free WorldCat account, select the option to “create a free account” located at the top right of your screen. An image of this is shown below:

Opting to “create a free account” will send you to a screen to input your information. An image of this is shown below:

You must be 13 years or older to sign up for a WorldCat account. It’s a good idea to use an email address that you check frequently when you sign up for an account. If you lose your username or password, you must use the lost password links inside the sign-in area and that information will be sent to you at the email address that you use when you create your WorldCat account.

Once your account has been created, you will be transported to a project dashboard. This is shown in the image below:
If you want to save lists, searches, favorite libraries, etc. you must be signed in to WorldCat. This page holds all of the information about anything you will have saved inside WorldCat after you are logged in. Note on the far right that there is an option under your profile username to change your account from “public” to “private.” If you do not want anyone else using WorldCat to be able to see the lists you’re compiling, we recommend that you change your profile status to “private” to protect others from accessing that information.

Now that you have created a WorldCat account, you may use the search box at the top of the window to create a search, select items in your list by checking the box next to the item number, and save items from that search using the “Save to” dropdown menu on your search results screen. An image of this is shown below:

You can create as many new lists as you need if the default options (Things I Recommend, Things I Own, Things to Check Out) do not apply.

This concludes our WorldCat tutorial. If you have any questions about this resource, you can contact the TU library via email at library@tiffin.edu.