



What is a Subject?

@ DOROTHY H. HOOVER LIBRARY

Subject Searching

specific terms used to describe what a book, website, periodical articles is ABOUT

PROS:

Subject searching allows you to:

- **look up topics**
- look up **an artist as a subject**
- subject headings are standardized throughout North America

CONS:

Subject searching:

- does not allow you to make up your own terms
- does not allow you to use Booleans to join terms
- means that you have to use the exact terms that are established for each catalogue, index or database

Subject Headings

Academic libraries use **Library of Congress Subject Headings** to organize books by topic, by combining the geographic area, time span, or subject, covered by the publication.

Databases and web sites often use the same organizing principle; however, web designers, database creators, and libraries often do not use the same subjects to describe information.

For Example: there are many terms used to describe Canada's First Nations People, including "Indian," "Aboriginal," "N'Amerindian," etc. To ensure that all books about First Nations' people and culture are in the same shelf in the library (so that you can find them easily!), one term has to be used. The Library of Congress, unfortunately, still uses the "Indians of North America" as the official description for books on Native culture.

Using Subject Searches

OCAD Library Catalogue:

EXAMPLE: if you want a book on Aboriginal Rock Art in Canada, you need to enter the exact phrase

- **Indians of North America–
Canadian Shield–Art**

However

✓ Use **Subject Keyword** and you only need to enter one or two terms in any order

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tario College of Art and Design

Search the library catalogue by Subject, Title, Contents, (eg. Exhibition Catalogues), Author, Series, or

Search: GO

- General Keyword
- General Keyword
- Subject Keyword**
- Subject (A - Z)
- Title Keyword
- Title Browse (A - Z)
- Author Browse (last name A - Z)
- Name Keyword
- Series Keyword
- Series Browse (A - Z)
- Journal or Magazine Title (A - Z)
- Library of Congress Call Numbers
- ISBN

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