

Definitions

Abstract

A summary of an article, book, report or audiovisual material.

Accession number

A number assigned to each book as it is received in the library, for example 748.

Accessions book or register

A book in which details of all materials are entered immediately after receipt.

Acquisition policy

A policy for obtaining new materials for the resource centre.

Acronym

A pronounceable abbreviation formed by combining initial letters or parts of words – for example, UNESCO for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Attachment

A document or file sent with an e-mail message.

Author

The person or corporate body responsible for the content of a publication – for example the writer of a book, compiler of a bibliography, artist or photographer.

Author catalogue

A card catalogue of author cards arranged alphabetically. Author catalogues usually include cards for editors, second and third authors, etc, and title cards in the case of anonymous works.

Bibliographic

Relating to books and other resource materials.

Bibliography

A list of books, periodical titles, or audiovisual materials.

Boolean searching

Using the terms 'and', 'or' or 'not' to search for a specific combination of words in a database. These combining terms are sometimes represented by symbols, which vary from program to program.

Braille

A system for printing or writing for blind people, consisting of raised dots that can be interpreted by touch. Each dot or group of dots represents a letter, numeral or punctuation mark.

Browse

To look through materials on a shelf, often in a leisurely manner.

Capacity (computers)

The ability of a computer to store and process information, measured in terms of the size of the hard disk and memory, and the speed of the computer's processor (see also 'specification').

Card catalogue

A catalogue taking the form of cards that are filed in drawers or boxes (see also 'author catalogue', 'dictionary catalogue', 'subject catalogue', and 'title catalogue').

Catalogue (noun)

A list of all the books, maps, journals, recordings and other materials in a resource centre, with details of each. A catalogue may be arranged by alphabet, by classification number, or by subject.

Catalogue (verb)

To compile a catalogue.

CD-ROM drive

A device that, connected to a computer, can read information stored on compact discs (CDs). Can be internal or external.

CD-RW (Read-Write) drive

Similar to the CD-ROM drive, but with the added function of being able to record (write) information on a blank 'recordable' compact disc (CD-R), for storing, archiving, or backing up information. Can also be used to record over (over-write) data on an existing CD, if using a 'rewritable' CD (CD-RW).

Classification number or Class number

A number or combination of numbers and letters used to identify a particular book and locate it on the shelves.

Classification

See 'Classification scheme' and 'Classifying'.

Classification scheme or system

A system for arranging books and other materials on the shelves, usually according to subjects. Different groups or classes of materials are identified using numbers, letters, symbols or a combination of the three.

Classifying

Describing a material by subject (see also 'Indexing').

Collation

Physical description of a book. It consists of the number of pages, presence of illustrations (maps, tables, graphs, charts, figures), bibliography and appendices.

Collection

A group of books or other materials, or all the materials in the resource centre.

Compiler

Someone who brings together material from various sources – for example, the compiler of a bibliography.

Copyright

The exclusive right to publish a material for a specified number of years (in the UK, usually 50 years after the death of the author).

Corporate author

An organisation or institution acting as the author or editor of a publication.

Cross-reference

A referral from words or names to others, for example in a catalogue or keywords list (see also “See’ reference’ and “See also’ reference’).

Current awareness bulletin

A bulletin that helps users keep up with a range of new developments, for example new materials, book reviews, announcements about meetings and conferences, and news of resource centre activities.

Data

Information that is entered into, stored in and used by a computer – for example, information that is in a database.

Database

A collection of data stored in a computer in such a way that it can be *searched* through to find certain items, *displayed* or *printed* in various styles, and *sorted* in a number of different ways, so that it is ordered by author, title, subject, date, etc. A bibliographic database is the electronic equivalent of a card catalogue, but is faster and more flexible.

Database search

The means of retrieving information from a database.

DAT drive

Digital audio tape drive that stores a lot of information, used for backing up computer data.

Dictionary catalogue

A card catalogue of author, title and subject cards, filed together alphabetically.

DSL

DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) is a service that offers an 'always-on' Internet connection that is faster than a standard dial-up connection. DSL technology uses existing 2-wire copper telephone wiring to deliver high-speed data services.

Dust jacket

The paper cover around a book.

Edition

One of a number of printings of a book or other materials, issued at separate times with alterations.

Editor

Someone who prepares material for publication or supervises the publication of a work or collection of works.

Electronic communication

The exchange of messages and information, as well as access to information sources using computers and telecommunications devices, such as telephones and modems. Methods of electronic communication include the Internet, e-mail and CD-ROM.

Electronic conference

A forum for discussion and exchange of information using e-mail between a group of people who share an interest in a particular topic.

E-mail (electronic mail)

A means of sending messages from a computer to one or more other computers over a telephone line.

Electronic mailing list

Allows a group of people to communicate with each other using e-mail. A message is sent to the mailing list address and automatically distributed to all members of the group.

Field

The part of a database record that contains information about one particular aspect of a material or organisation, such as the author or the title of a book, or the address or activities of an organisation.

Field tags

Labels used by a computer program to identify individual fields, such as 200 for the title field, or 300 for the author field. Programs designed for use by individuals or less traditional information services usually use names rather than numbers.

Format

The general appearance of a material, for example, book, video or CD-ROM.

Formatting language

Codes used by some programs to arrange information for display, printing or exporting.

Freeware

Software programs that are available free of charge, usually without support from the developer.

Gatekeeper

Someone who is usually part of a user group, who scans and assesses information and shares it with other members of the group.

Guide card

A card in a card catalogue that is slightly taller than the other cards, containing letters, names or words indicating the content of the cards directly behind it in the catalogue.

Heading

A word, name or phrase at the top of a catalogue card to indicate a particular aspect of the material, such as author, title or subject.

HTML (hypertext mark-up language)

Formatting commands which are used to create documents on the World Wide Web.

HTTP (hypertext transfer protocol)

A set of formal rules which enables files to be transferred between computers over the World Wide Web.

Hypertext

A highlighted word, phrase or image in a document on the web which, when activated, leads the viewer to another part of the same document or a related document on a different website.

Hypertext link

A link between highlighted words, phrases, or images on the web.

Impact

The effect of an activity, for example, the effect that a resource centre and its services has on users' work.

Imprint

The place, name of the publisher, and date of publication, written on a catalogue card (in that order).

Information need

A need for information arising out of lack of knowledge or experience to undertake an activity. There is often no awareness of the need until the lack of the information prevents a problem being tackled.

Indexing

Identifying the subjects covered by a publication using a list of subject headings or thesauri, and listing them.

ISBN (international standard book number)

A number assigned by a publisher to a specific book or edition of a book.

ISSN (international standard serial number)

A number assigned by a publisher to a periodical.

Internet

A network of networks which links millions of computers around the world, using telephone lines. The networks are linked together so that they appear as a single network to the user.

Internet browser

A software program, such as Netscape Navigator, Internet Explorer, or Opera, which allows the user to view documents on the World Wide Web.

Internet service provider (ISP)

An organisation that provides access to the Internet. In order to connect to the Internet, you must go through an Internet Service Provider.

Intranet

An Intranet is an internal or private Internet system used strictly within one organisation. The main purpose of an Intranet is to share organisation information and computing resources among staff.

Joint author

One of two or more people responsible for the content of a publication.

Keyword

A word or phrase used in cataloguing or bibliographic databases to describe a subject. Sometimes called a descriptor.

Keywords list

A list of subject terms, often including cross-references to related terms.

Literature search

Searching (looking through) sources such as catalogues, databases, bibliographies, indexes, periodicals, books, newsletters, CD-ROMs, e-mail and the Internet, or contacting other organisations, to locate materials on a particular subject. Literature searches form an important part of an advisory service.

Material

Any material kept in a resource centre, including books, newsletters, periodicals, manuals, reports and audiovisual materials.

Modem

A device that enables messages to be sent from one computer to another, via a telephone line. A fax modem enables faxes to be sent from a computer.

Moderator

A person responsible for managing an electronic mailing list or conference to ensure that it is used for its intended purpose and to keep track of messages.

Monograph

A paper, book or report on a particular theme.

Multi-media

Materials made up of more than one format – for example, a training pack made up of a video, posters, overhead projector slides, and notes for trainers and students.

Needs assessment

Assessing information needs in order to ensure that appropriate information is provided (see also 'Information need').

Network

A formal or informal group of people that are in contact with each other to share ideas and experience, often following a set of objectives that help to guide the networking.

Networking

Keeping in contact with individuals or organisations working in a similar field, to exchange ideas and experiences, and provide mutual support.

Operating systems

The software programs used to run a computer – for example, DOS and Windows.

PDF (Portable document format)

A universal electronic format which can be read on any computer by using a software program called Adobe Acrobat Reader. PDF files look exactly like the original document, containing all the formatting, tables, illustrations, and graphics, but are more compact and can be read by any computer using Acrobat Reader.

Periodical

A publication issued in successive parts and intended to be continued indefinitely (includes yearbooks, journals, newsletters and newspapers).

Publication date

The year a publication appears.

Publisher

A person or organisation that produces and issues resource materials.

Publisher's catalogue

A list of currently available publications.

Record

Section of a computer database equivalent to a card in a catalogue. Each record contains all the information about a particular material. Records are made up of fields.

Reference book

A book, such as an encyclopaedia or a dictionary, used to obtain specific information.

Reference material

Books, videos and other materials that may be used in the resource centre – they may not be borrowed.

Reference interview

Discussion with a user to find out their information needs, including subject areas, format of materials (such as book, articles, video), content of materials (such as audience level), what they want to use the materials for, and so on.

Repackaging information

Re-issuing material in different ways to meet the needs of different groups.

Repeatable field

A field within a database that can be repeated – for example, for multiple authors or keywords.

RTF (rich text file)

Format of a word-processed document which contains text only, but includes basic formatting such as bold and underline. An RTF file can be read by most word-processing programs and is given the file extension .RTF (for example, REPORT.RTF)

Scope note

A note on the meaning of a keyword and how it should be used.

SDI (selective dissemination of information)

Notifying individual users about materials that will interest them.

Search

See 'Database search' or 'Literature search'.

Search engine or search directory

A tool that helps viewers to find information on the World Wide Web. A search engine can search for a word or combination of words appearing on web pages and displays the addresses of these pages.

‘See’ reference

A referral from a heading or keyword not used to a heading or keyword that is used.

‘See also’ reference

A reference indicating related headings or keywords.

Serial

See ‘Periodical’.

Series

A set of materials with the same format and related contents, usually related in subject or form, that are issued successively, usually by the same publisher. A series has a collective title that may appear on the title page or on the cover.

Shelf list

A list of materials in a resource centre arranged in the order in which they appear on the shelves.

Shelf reading

Checking the order of materials on the shelves. Materials should be ordered according to the classification number and then by author. Any materials that are mis-shelved, can be re-shelved in the correct order.

Software

The programs that enable the computer to carry out functions, such as word processing or sending e-mail.

Specification (computers)

Details of the computer components, such as hard drive, memory and CD-ROM drives, giving size, speed, make and model.

Spine

The back of a book connecting the front and back covers. The title and author usually appear on the spine.

Subfield

Part of a field that is subdivided – for example, for titles and subtitles, or place of publication and publisher.

Subject catalogue

A card catalogue of subject cards arranged alphabetically. Subject cards often include cross-reference cards from words not used in the catalogue to those that are used.

Subject cataloguing

The assignment of classification numbers and keywords.

Subtitle

A secondary title, often used to expand or to limit the main title.

Text file

A word-processed document which includes only text and no formatting, tables or images. A text file can be read by any word-processing package and is given the file extension .TXT (for example, REPORT.TXT).

Thesaurus

A collection of keywords or descriptors (generally within a special field of knowledge) which lists the keywords and displays their relationship. Similar to a keywords list.

Title

The distinctive name of a book or other material. The proper title of printed material is often different from the title that appears on the front cover, so it is important to check the proper title page.

Title catalogue

A card catalogue of title cards arranged alphabetically.

Title page

A page that appears at the beginning of a book and that contains the most complete bibliographic information, including the title, author's name, publisher and date of publication.

Transfer protocol

A set of formal rules describing how to transmit data across a computer network.

URL (uniform resource locator)

The address of a page or document on the World Wide Web.

User group

A group of people who have a common interest and can be provided with information as a group rather than individually.

Web

A shortened term for World Wide Web.

Web page

A document or file of information on the World Wide Web that can contain text, pictures and sound. Web pages can be linked together by hypertext links.

Website

A number of web pages displayed by the same host computer.

Weeding

The process of removing materials from the collection that are either in bad condition, no longer accurate, or replaced by other newer materials or more recent editions of the same publication.

WWW (World Wide Web)

One of the most popular features of the Internet, made up of millions of 'pages' of information linked together. The WWW gives access to many types of files, such as text, sound, image and moving pictures.

Zip drive

A drive that can store a large amount of data, often used for backing up computer data. Zip disks can currently hold the equivalent of 180 floppy disks.