Search and use query syntax

Find information about searching and using query syntax in the WorldCat Discovery interface.

About searching

Notes about searching in WorldCat Discovery:

• By default, searching from the search box in WorldCat Discovery will automatically apply the keyword index
• Searches that contain index labels and Boolean operators can be entered in any search box in WorldCat Discovery
• When searching on the Advanced Search screen, if you use an index in a search field, you must use indexes for all search terms

An index is two characters followed by a colon (:) or by an equal sign (=).

• Use a colon to search for the words anywhere in the specified index. For example: rs:unrestricted
• Use an equal sign to perform a phrase search. For example: rs=unrestricted online access

For additional information, see Searching WorldCat Indexes.

Search relevance indicators

Search relevance indicators highlight matching search terms in the result entries. If you add an index label to your search terms, the relevant subject entries will also display in the result set.
Frequently used indexes and syntax

Boolean operators

WorldCat Discovery supports the use of (AND, OR, NOT). Boolean operators must be capitalized.

Index labels combined with Boolean operators can be entered in any search box in including the multiple search boxes on the Advanced Search screen. Boolean searches are processed in left to right order.

When the Boolean AND is used, searches will match on and retrieve the same set or records regardless of the order in which the query terms are entered. The sorting or ranking of the records will vary according to the word order, bringing different records to the top of the search results.

For additional information, see Boolean operators in Searching WorldCat Indexes.

Approximate term queries

There are three operators for approximate term queries: asterisk (*), and question mark (?) or pound sign (#):

Truncation

Enter the first three characters of the term (at a minimum) and follow with an asterisk (*).

Example of terms in search results: securit-y, securit-ies, or securit-ization
Example of search: securit*

Wildcard
Enter the first three characters of the term (at a minimum) and follow with a wildcard. WorldCat Discovery supports the use of two wildcard characters the pound sign (#) and the question mark (?).

Use the pound sign to represent a single character.
Use the question mark to match missing (zero) and up to nine characters including no additional characters.

For additional information, see Wildcards and truncation in Searching WorldCat Indexes.

Watch a video

Search techniques in WorldCat Discovery (6:30)
This video demonstrates a few search techniques in the current view of WorldCat Discovery.

Learn more in a training course: WorldCat Discovery search fundamentals