Library Catalog Basics
**Terms**

**Call Number:** A call number is a combination of numbers and letters assigned to books and other items that can be used to find the item on the shelf. Call numbers also separates items by topic. (Example: The book, *Camels and Llamas at work* has a call number J636.295)


**Facet:** A Facet is an aspect, property, or characteristic of an item. Please see page

**OverDrive**
A downloadable eBook, and audiobook, & eMusic service.

**Place Hold**
Place Hold is a catalog feature that lets you reserve an item that is not available or is at another location.

**Subject Heading**
A standardized term or phrase used in library catalog to group together materials on the same topic.

**Social Catalog**
The library’s catalog is a social catalog. You are able to add book reviews, tags, and YouTube videos. You can get reading recommendations from others, and much more.

**Tag**
A tag is term or phrase that users have added to catalog records to group together items on the same topic.
Frequently Asked Questions

How many items can I check out at a time? You can have up to 50 items checked out at a time.

How many items can I have on hold? You can have up to 25 items on hold.

Can I suggest that the library purchase an item? Yes, please see page 16 for instructions.

Can I request something that the library does not own? Yes, please see page 16 for instructions.

My holds always come in all at once. Can I stop that from happening? Yes, you can “suspend” your holds. Please see page 12.

What does “In Transit” mean? When an item’s status is “In Transit,” that means the item is on its way from one library location to another.

If something is on the shelf at one branch and I want it to go to another branch, how long does that take? It usually takes 3-4 business days from an item checked in at one location to be sent to the hold shelf of another location. Time can vary depending on if a branch is closed.
1. If you are starting at the Library’s homepage: *www.spl.org*, click on Log into Your Account.

2. Enter your library card number and PIN. Then click Log In.
3. Choose a **Username**

Then click on **Check availability** to see if your user name is free to be taken

Add an **Email Address**

Click on **Enable Recently Returned** if you would like the catalog to remember items you’ve returned

Read the **Terms of Use** and click on **I accept the Terms of Use**

Click on **Register**

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**Q: What is a username?**

**A:** A **username** is a name that you can use instead of your barcode to check your account. Think of a **username** as your library nickname. You can use your real name, but something more anonymous is recommended. Please click on **Help** for more information.

**Q: What is **Recently Returned**?**

**A:** Your library does not keep records of your borrowing without your permission. However, when you enable the **Recently Returned** feature, the system will start building a list of all the titles you borrow. In addition to providing a useful way to track what you’ve recently borrowed, the **Recently Returned** page provides a convenient location for adding star ratings, comments and other information. Please click on **Help** for more information.
1. To adjust your privacy setting, log into your account if you haven’t already done so.

Start at the Library’s catalog: [http://seattle.bibliocommons.com](http://seattle.bibliocommons.com).

Click on Log In to My SPL, and enter your Username and PIN. (See above.)

2. Click on My Settings > Privacy.

3. Adjust your Privacy settings to your liking by selecting or deselecting the appropriate boxes. Click on the Question Mark (?) for more information.
1. If you are starting at the Library Homepage – www.spl.org – type keywords in the search box and click Find.

If you are starting at the Library’s catalog - seattle.bibliocommons.com – type keywords in the search box and click Search.

3. You will see a list of library items that match your search.

Expand the Facets on the left to narrow your results by a format.
4. To narrow your results further, choose more Facets.

Here we will choose: **Content = Fiction** and **Language = English**

**What is a Facet?**

A “Facet” is an aspect, property, or characteristic of an item.

In our example, a keyword search for Harry Potter brings up not only the novels, but:
- books about Harry Potter movies
- books of criticism
- books in other languages
- CDs
- DVD movies
- etc.

You can use aspects of what you want – such as **Format = books**, **Content = Fiction**, and **Language = English** — to narrow your results quickly.
Now that you’ve found an item, you can place it on hold. There are two ways to place holds.

1. From a list of search results: click on **Place a Hold**, then **Select a Pickup Location**, and finally click **Confirm**

2. From the title record, you will also click on **Place a Hold**
   
   Then choose a **Pickup Location**
   
   And click **Confirm**.
You’ll see this at the top of your screen:

![Hold requested on Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. You are number 5 in line.](image)

NOTE: If you see this at the top of your screen, that means you have reached your hold limit of 25 items:

![Unable to place hold. The maximum 25 hold limit has been reached. Canceled holds ready for pick up count against your limit for at least 24 hours](image)

To see the items you have on hold, mouse over:

**My SPL**

and then click on

**Holds**

![The Seattle Public Library](image)
After you login, you will see this screen:

Click on **Total items** to see your items checked out

Click on **All holds** to see your items on hold

Click on **Fines** to see your fines

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**Renewing Items**

Navigate to your items checked out by either:

Mouse (but do not click) over **My SPL**, then click on **Checked Out**

OR

Click on **My SPL** and then click on **Total Items**
See the due date here

To renew, **check the box** next to the item you want to renew.

Then click renew.

You’ll get this message when your hold has been renewed:

You’ll get this message if you were unable to renew your item:
Managing holds

Navigate to your holds by either:

Mouse (but do not click) over **My SPL**, then click on **Holds**

**OR**

Click on **My SPL** and then click on **All Holds**

See where you are on the waiting list

See if your item is ready to be picked up

Suspend your hold by selecting the item and clicking on **Suspend**

Suspended items will be on the Suspended Tab
Pay your fines

Did you know you can pay your fines online?

You can do this from the library’s website

Or by navigating to your fines in the catalog:

Mouse (but do not click) over My SPL, then click on Fines

OR

Click on My SPL and then click on Fines
You'll see an itemized list of your fines. Next click on **use your credit card or PayPal account online**

Please follow the instructions on the following screens.
The catalog provides a number of ways to find new items. Use your mouse to hover over each of the menu options. You’ll see further options appear.

**Recent Lists** will show you new lists created by other patrons or library staff.

**Recently Reviewed** Items are items patrons have written reviews of.

**On Order Titles and Popular Searches**

The library has created a number of automated search lists that you may find helpful, including items “On Order.” To find these items, click on **New Titles**.

Scroll down to view the various lists.
Lists and Shelves

A list is a collection of up to 32 titles related to a specific topic or idea of your choosing. By default, lists are public, and they appear on the Recent Activity page, so others can see them. Creating lists is also a great way to help other readers discover new works.

Your My Shelves pages enable you to keep track of library items you’ve borrowed, or plan to borrow in the future.

To see the My Shelves and My Lists features, mouse over (but do not click) on My SPL, and then choose the appropriate option under My Collections.

Interlibrary Loan and Purchase Suggestions

Are you looking for something specific that the library does not own? You can try an Interlibrary Loan or Purchase Suggestion. From any catalog page, scroll all the way to the bottom of the page, and click on the appropriate link.
Book Reviews and Previews

You can find **reviews** and **previews** for many books when you click on the title.

You can also see things like **Subject Headings** and **Lists** and **Tags**
Advanced Searching

From any catalog screen, click on Advanced Search.

Use the form below OR to construct a search with keywords and other limits:

- Enter Keywords
- Choose a Language
- Find items Available at a particular branch
- Choose a Format
- Click on Search