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HASTINGS ONLINE CATALOG

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For the past year or so, the Hastings Law Library has been running a web-based catalog for the public to use. Forget those old days of searching through rows of drawers filled with paper cards, and forget those not-so-old days of monochrome monitors with text-based, command searching. Now you can search our collection with a point and a click (and an Internet connection, of course). The URL to get you started is <http://webcat.uchastings.edu>.

What You're Going to Find

The Catalog contains bibliographic records for all books, journals, looseleaves, newspapers, and other non-book materials held by the Library. You can access information on the status of current journals, look at new book orders, or check whether a title is "available" (meaning that it should be on the shelf). The Catalog also provides access to electronic resources; URLs embedded in bibliographic records provide links to electronic resources such as databases and full-text versions of documents. For instance, if you're searching for California or federal documents, and there is a corresponding website listed in a note field, you can now click on that link and go directly to the document.

Our Catalog is updated daily and if you are searching journals or titles that include pocket parts, you can access our check-in records by clicking on the *Latest Received* link once you've pulled up a title. You can also check your record online to see what you have checked out. From the main menu page, click on *View Your Record*, then enter your name (or law firm name) and the bar code from your borrowing card (starts with 25012). You'll be able to view the titles you have borrowed and all of the due dates.

How To Search

Non-book items include microfiche, microfilm, DVDs, and videotapes. But no matter the material, the searching capabilities are the same: Title, Author, Keyword, or Subject. The first option is to search by Keyword, but other options can be used by choosing from the list that appears when you click the arrow of the pull-down menu. Title searching is first in this article because most of the phone calls we receive at the Reference Desk are from patrons asking us if we own a particular book.

Searching by TITLE

When you search by title, the computer looks for the words you type in the *exact order* in which they appear. If a title begins with "The" or "A," the system will ignore it; it will also ignore capitalization and punctuation, and will search interchangeably for the word "and" and the ampersand ("&") so you can use either one. If a title begins with a number, you can either spell out the number as a word or type in the numeral.

Searching by AUTHOR

An Author search can be used for personal, organizational or government authors. There is also the option of reversing the order of the name searched if the search fails to retrieve any records. For example: A search of the name "Fletcher Andrews" will not retrieve any records. The system then displays:

Your entry "fletcher andrews" would be here ----- Change search to andrews, fletcher.

If the user clicks on andrews, fletcher, the search is redone.

Searching by KEYWORD

Searching by Keyword is a very popular way to search. This search will look for instances of the word you typed in the title, subject or note fields. If you get too many hits, you can narrow your results down by using the Limit/Sort button. For instance, searching for the Keyword "crime" retrieves over 3,000 records. By Limiting your results to only the ones which have the word "juveniles" in the title, you can narrow your list down to 5 records.

Another feature is the * (asterisk) which can be used in the Keyword search function to bring up all variations of a word cataloged in our collection. For example searching "law*" will retrieve hits for "law, lawmen, lawsuit, lawns, Lawrence" and "lawyerland,"¹ among others.

Searching by SUBJECT

When you search by Subject, you are searching special headings used by the Library of Congress; these Subject Headings are like the *Words and Phrases*² of libraries all over the U. S. If you do a Keyword search using the words "laws" and "handicapped" you will get 30 hits. 'Well,' you think to yourself, 'there are probably more than 30 titles in the Hastings collection that discuss this topic, so what other terms could I use?' By going to the record of the first title, you can scroll down to the Subject Headings and see that the first one is "People with disabilities -- Legal status, laws, etc. -- United States." That is what the Library of Congress suggests as an official category for books on that topic. If you click on that Subject Heading, a list of 108 entries will come up, a few more to choose from if you didn't find one you liked in the earlier list.

This type of online catalog is being used by libraries all over the nation. The colors may vary or the buttons will look different but basically they all work the same so give it a try. See you in the stacks!

1 *Lawyerland : what lawyers talk about when they talk about law* by Lawrence Joseph, KF297 .J64 1997

2 *Words and Phrases* West Publishing, KF156 .W6

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