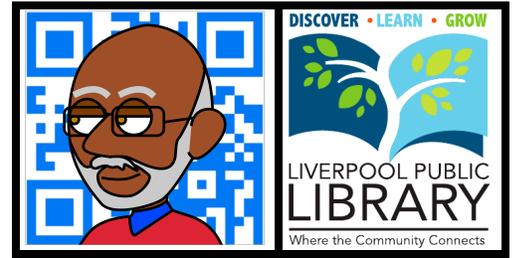


Tech Tips from Mr G

Secrets of the Library



At a recent conference I was amazed to find out how many people are totally baffled and confused about how to use the library. I was told that people feel that there's some sort of "secret handshake" you have to know in order to find anything. Well, as George and Ira might say, it ain't necessarily so. You don't have to have a special degree and there's no secret handshake you need to know in order to get the most out of this, or any other library. The goal of this handout is to initiate you into some of those "secrets."

The Basics: Fiction and Non-Fiction. Biographies Too!

The general rule for most libraries (and the key word here is most) is that, no matter what part of the collection you're in, books are divided up into three sections: **fiction**, **non-fiction**, and **biographies**. This means that whether you're in the **Children's Room**, the **Large Print** collection, or the regular **Adult Collection**, you'll find books divided up into those three sections. Knowing that is the first step to being able to find things.

Fiction - Alpha by Author

Books in the Fiction section are shelved in **alphabetical order** by the **author's last name**. This means that Meg **Cabot** comes before Stephen **King**, and Amy **Tan** comes before Alice **Walker**. Once you find the author, the books are in alphabetical order by **title**. This means that within Kurt Vonnegut, **Breakfast of Champions** comes before **Cat's Cradle**, which comes before **We Are What We Pretend To Be**. So if you know the name of the author, that's a quick way to at least get to where the book should be.

But what if you only know the name of the book? Then you look it up in the **catalog**.

Non-Fiction - by Call Number

Books in the Non-Fiction section are shelved in **call number** order. There are lots of different call numbering systems, but the one most commonly used by public libraries is the **Dewey Decimal System**, created by **Melvil Dewey**, back in 1876 (and by the way, our charter was signed by him). It gives each subject area its own call number, which is sort of like a ZIP code for books. For example, if you've found **Religious Literacy** by Stephen Prothero in **200.7107**, you should find other books on religion nearby.

But how do you find the call number for a certain book or a certain subject? You look for it in the **catalog**.

Biographies - Alpha by the Subject's Last Name

This is probably the easiest section to look through. Books on **Thomas Edison** will come before books on **Henry Ford**, and they'll both come before books on **Steve Jobs**, no matter who wrote them.

When Fiction is Non-Fiction

OK, so I went looking in the fiction section for some of my favorite books by **Bailey White**, who is a southern author of short stories, and only found her novel **Quite a Year for Plums**. But what about **Mama Makes Up Her Mind** and **Sleeping at the Starlite Motel**?

This is one of those places where fiction isn't always fiction. We have both of the other two books, but they're shelved in non-fiction with the call number of **814.54**, which is generally used for **collections** of work by a particular author or editor. The same applies to things like **Grimm's Fairy Tales** and the works of **Shakespeare**.

And how do you find the call numbers for these books? In the **catalog**, of course.

Large Print

We have quite a substantial large print collection, and these books are located in the first set of stacks, even before the fiction. And as with the general collection, the large print books are divided up into **fiction**, **non-fiction**, and **biography**. However, we get a little more precise in this collection. Here we break out the fiction books into sub-categories of **romance**, **mystery**, **western**, and **general fiction** before moving on to **non-fiction** and **biography**.

End Caps and Special Displays

What's an end cap? Have you ever seen the displays at the ends of the aisles at the supermarket? Those are called **end caps** and their goal is to alert you to this week's special deal on a product. We have these too. Sometimes they're true end caps, and are displayed at the ends of certain aisle. Other times they may just be special displays as you walk into the library.

These special displays may be seasonal, to go with certain holidays (look for a lot of romance books in February). They may be part of a special program that we're putting on, or connected to a popular movie or TV show. They could even be the **staff picks** for the month (some of us love to read). And of course there are the **new books** (or at least books that are new to us).

Magazines

This is really embarrassing to tell you, but many years ago, when I was in a local comic book store, I had the hardest time trying to find all the comic books featuring Superman. There seemed to be absolutely no order to the store. It seemed perfectly obvious to me that all the Superman books should be in one place, all the Batman books should be in one place, all the Spiderman books should be in one place, and so on. But they weren't. I had to scan the shelves of the entire store, looking for the magazines I wanted.

And then one day it hit me. The store was arranged in **alphabetical order by title**, and not by **character**. Now all of a sudden everything made sense to me. I had to look all over the store for Superman titles because he was in so many. He was in **Action Comics**, **The Adventures of Superman**, **Superman: The Man of Steel**, and probably a few others that I can't recall.

This was embarrassing not because I was in my late 20s and still reading comic books, but instead because I was working on my library degree and hadn't noticed something as obvious as the entire store being in alphabetical order, which is a librarian kind of thing to do.

Well, in case you hadn't figured it out by now, our magazine collection, just like the comic book store, is in **alphabetical order by title**. That means that you'll find the **AARP the Magazine** before **Model Railroader** and **Quilter's World** before **Yoga Journal**.

You can check out all but the most recent issue for three weeks at a time, and we keep most monthly magazines for a year.

Reference

The **Reference** section is where we keep research materials that we want to keep in the building and available for everyone to use. This includes things like **dictionaries** (English, other languages, and specialized); **almanacs**; **college guides**; **directories**; **encyclopedias**; **atlases**; **law books** (but don't ask us for advice); **medical books** (but don't ask us for a diagnosis); **guides** of all kinds; and **local history** materials, including old **Liverpool High School yearbooks**.

It's really worth taking a walk through the Reference section to see just what we have there.

Media: CDs, DVDs, and Audiobooks, Oh My!

The library is not just books! It's information in all forms. Or as the vision statement on our webpage (www.LPL.org) says:

Community members will utilize library services and resources for enlightenment and entertainment. They will find free, diverse, accessible and up-to-date materials and resources, including electronic technologies.

Music

We have a special rack for music CDs, where they're shelved in **alphabetical order by artist** within the genres of **Jazz**, **Classical**, **Country**, **Popular**, **Musical**, and **Folk**. There's also a special **end cap** for **new** and **featured** materials.

DVD and Audiobooks

DVDs and Audiobooks have their own set of shelves. We start with **Foreign Films**, then **Documentary Educational and Cultural, Local History, Feature Films, Teen Audiobooks and Playaways**, and finally, **Adult Audiobooks and Playaways**. We also have audiobooks available for download through **OverDrive** at onlib.lib.overdrive.com.

And if you're looking for a specific DVD or audiobook, you can always look for it in the **catalog**.

The MediaBank Machines

The MediaBanks are the two big red machines that dispense certain very popular CDs, DVDs, Blu-Rays, and games. Items borrowed from these machines have to be returned to them. You can find out what's available through them and reserve an item by using the special MediaBank computers. Items that are in the MediaBank machines also show up in the **catalog**.

Freegal

Did you know that you could download three free songs a week from the **Sony Music Catalog**, and it's perfectly legal? That's what **Freegal** is all about. It's a service that's available specifically to you as a holder of a Liverpool Public Library card.

And eBooks Too...

Welcome to the 21st century. It may not look the way you thought it would when you watched **The Jetsons**, but it's a pretty neat place to be nonetheless. And one of the neat things we have for you in the 21st century is **eBooks** that you can borrow for your **Kindle, Nook, iPad**, or a host of similar devices through **OverDrive** or the **3M Cloud**. We have people specially trained to help you learn how to do this, and they're called our **eBook Angels**. Just call to make an appointment with one of them. Or you could pick up a handout and teach yourself. You can even download them from www.lpl.org/computers-and-computing/tech-tips.

The Catalog

I've mentioned the catalog a number of times, and with good reason. We have a wonderful online catalog that you can use from anywhere in the world, as long as you can get on the Internet. This means that you can not only look for materials, but you can put them on hold too. However, I'm going to leave showing you how to use the catalog to another handout. You don't want to try to cram too much into one place, you know.

And Speaking of Secrets...

We keep yours. State law prohibits us from telling anyone else what you have out, what you've taken out, or even what you have on hold. This even applies to family members. It doesn't matter whether you've checked out **50 Shades of Grey, Gray's Anatomy, or Anatomy of a Murder**; your secrets are safe with us.

Ask Us Almost Anything

Many years ago, in my first library job, we had red pencils with gold letters on them that said **Need Help? Ask A Librarian!** It was a good way to let people know that we were there to answer just about any question they had, and that if we didn't know the answer right off the top of our heads, we could certainly look it up. But I didn't know just how many of those red pencils we had.

It seems that they had run out of the most recent supply of pencils and needed to order more, so they sent a note to the person in charge of purchasing saying to order "one gross (144) of pencils." Well, the person in purchasing didn't know at one gross was 144, and thought she was supposed to order 144 gross of pencils. When the order came in, we had 20,736 pencils. They lasted us a good long time, and we reminded many people that if you needed help, all you had to do was ask one of us.

We don't have 20,736 pencils, but we do want you to know that if you need help, you should definitely ask one of us. Helping you is what we're here for, and sometimes we learn something ourselves in the process!



Tech Tips from Mr G is a publication of the Liverpool Public Library.

You can find more of them at www.LPL.org/computers-and-computing/tech-tips

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