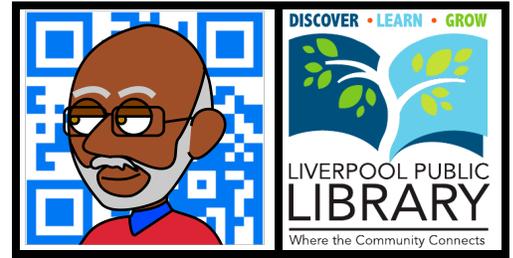


Tech Tips from Mr G

Placing Better Holds



Our **Polaris** online catalog allows you to not only find the materials you're looking for, but to place holds on them from the comfort of your own home...or wherever you're online from. However, there are a few tricks to making sure that you've placed a hold in such a way that you have the best chance of getting your hands on that book, CD, or DVD within a reasonable amount of time. The goal of this handout is to teach you those tricks.

Killing 73 Mockingbirds with 17 Stones

As I look through our catalog for Harper Lee's classic **To Kill a Mockingbird**, I see that we have 17 different entries for it for a total of 73 copies altogether. Why is this? Because each entry is for a different **edition** of the book, and even though it probably doesn't matter to the average reader, they get cataloged differently. One entry is for a 2006 paperback edition with 21 copies, another entry is for a 2010 hardcover edition with 6 copies, there's an entry for a large print paperback edition with 2 copies, and there are even two entries for editions with no copies at all.

What this means is that it pays to take the time to do a little checking on each edition that comes up when you do a search, and not necessarily pick the first one you see.

Home Court Advantage, Liverpool Style

In sports the home court advantage means that you usually do better playing on your own field. With placing holds it means that you usually do better placing them on an edition of the item that your own library owns copies of. That's because each library bumps its own patrons to the top of the list, no matter how many other patrons may have been in front of them. As a Liverpool Public Library user, you'll get bumped to the top of the list, behind any other Liverpool users, for items that we own. The reason for this is very simple: an item spends less time on the truck, being schlepped back and forth between branches if it goes to its own library's users first.

And what determines what library you're a user of? It's the library where you've decided that you're going to pick up the material. You could be registered with the DeWitt Community Library, but if you've decided that you're going to pick up an item here at Liverpool, then for the purposes of that hold, you're a Liverpool patron.

But I'm getting a little ahead of myself. Let's take a look at the holds process and how to use the two important pieces of information I've just given you.

How Many Copies and Who Has Them

Since I started out by mentioning **To Kill a Mockingbird**, let's continue using that as an example. I've done a search on that title in **Polaris**, our online catalog for it, asking only for **books** that **this library** owns. This should eliminate the movie or stage adaptations, but there are still a few commentaries. We just want the book. Here's a picture of one of those records.

A screenshot of a library catalog record for the book 'To Kill a Mockingbird' by Harper Lee. The record includes a small image of the book cover, the title and author, and buttons for 'Find It!', 'Full Display', and 'Place Hold'. The 'Place Hold' button is highlighted with a red box. Below the buttons, there is a small icon of a book and the year '2006'. At the bottom, there is a summary of the book and a box containing availability information: 'Local Availability: 0 (of 2)' and 'System Availability: 21'.

2. *To kill a mockingbird*
by Lee, Harper.

... *To kill a mockingbird* / Harper Lee. ...

Publisher, Date: New York : Harper Perennial Modern Classics , 2006, c1960.

Description: 323 p.
Edition: 1st Harper Perennial Modern Classics ed.
ISBN: 9780061120084 (pbk.)

Summary: A gripping, heart-wrenching, and wholly remarkable tale of coming-of-age in a South poisoned by virulent prejudice, it views a world of great beauty and savage inequities through the eyes of a young girl, Scout, as her father, Atticus Finch -- a crusading local lawyer-- risks everything to defend a black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime.

Local Availability: 0 (of 2)
System Availability: 21

At the bottom you'll see that I've circled the two lines where it talks about **availability**. **Local Availability** refers to how many copies Liverpool owns, and **0 (of 2)** means that we own 2 copies, but none are available at the moment. Below that, **System Availability** refers to how many copies are owned in the entire Onondaga County system. There we see that there are 21 copies and none of them are out...or does it?

If I click on the **Full Display** button on the right, I'll get a screen, like the one shown below, that includes information about the book's status. You may have to scroll down a bit in the top section, but eventually you'll see information about how many copies the system has and how many holds are on those copies. Looking at this example, I see that there are 21 copies, but there are 61 holds on them. With that many holds, there must be some sort of school project going on, and everyone picked the first entry that they saw. This is when checking the status of the next few items would be a very good idea.

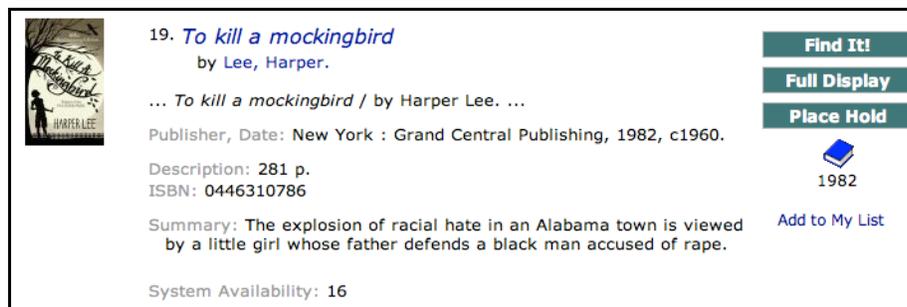


Notes: Originally published: Philadelphia: Lippincott; London: Heinemann, 1960.
 LCCN: 2001016794
 ISBN: 9780061120084 (pbk.)
 0061120081 (pbk.)
 Other Number: 69136213
 System Availability: 21
 Current Holds: 61
 # Local items: 2
 Control Number: 915525
 Call Number: 813/.54
 Course Reserves: 0
 # Local items in: 0
 # System items in: 0

[Expand All](#) | [Collapse All](#)

Before we do that, though, let's expand our search to **Books - All libraries**, so that we can see the holdings for all copies in the entire system. After all, even though you'd float to near the top of the list for the two Liverpool copies of the version we just looked at, there may be a lot of other Liverpool patrons ahead of you in the queue.

Having done that, and looking a few items down, I see the following entry with 16 copies:



19. *To kill a mockingbird*
 by Lee, Harper.
 ... *To kill a mockingbird* / by Harper Lee. ...
 Publisher, Date: New York : Grand Central Publishing, 1982, c1960.
 Description: 281 p.
 ISBN: 0446310786
 Summary: The explosion of racial hate in an Alabama town is viewed by a little girl whose father defends a black man accused of rape.
 System Availability: 16

[Find It!](#)
[Full Display](#)
[Place Hold](#)

 1982
[Add to My List](#)

Getting a **Full Display** on this item shows that none of the copies are out, and that there are no holds on them either. Apparently, everyone who wanted the book went for the first copy they saw...and will be waiting for quite some time. This is the edition to put a hold on.

To do that, click on the **Place Hold** button, and on the next screen enter your library **barcode number** and **PIN**. That will bring you to the screen shown below. When you get there, make sure that the **Pickup Library** is set to Liverpool, and the book will be delivered here a few days after it becomes available. At that point, you'll be contacted either by email or phone to come pick it up from our **Holds Shelf**.

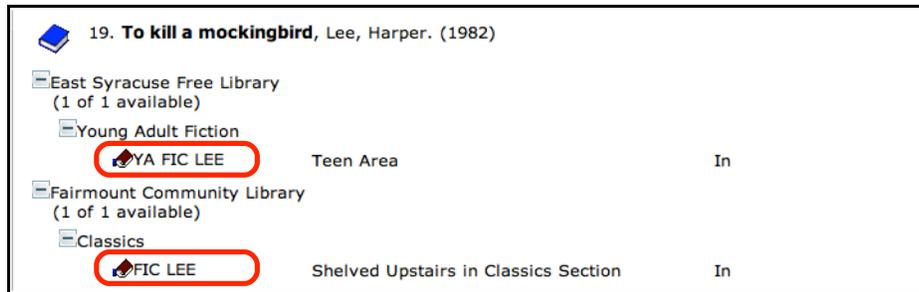
Barcode: *****3185

Pickup Library:

Activation Date:
 (ex: mm/dd/yy)

Don't Talk to the Hand...

You might have noticed if you clicked on **Find It** (which I didn't tell you to do), that there are little icons of a hand holding a book next to each item that a particular library owns (check the circled items in the example below).



Do not, and I repeat, do not click on one of those icons to place a hold request, even though the little tool tip for it says **Place Request**.

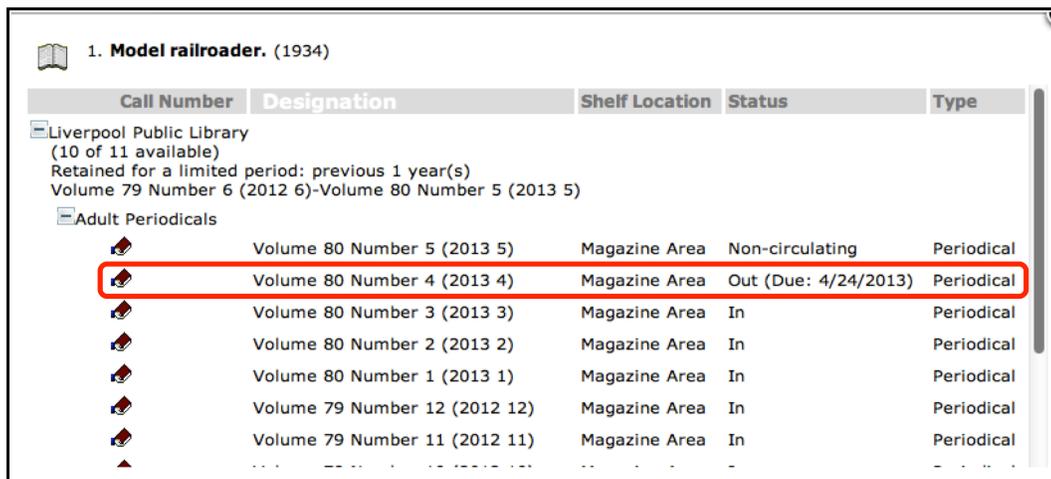
Why not? Because doing that places a hold on **that particular physical copy** of the item you're looking for. On the other hand, using the big green **Place Hold** button places a hold on **all copies of that particular edition**.

In other words, you're much better off not talking to the hand.

...Except When it Comes to Magazines

There actually is a time when you do want to talk to the hand when placing a hold on something. That's when you want a **particular issue** of a magazine.

If I'm looking on the shelves for the **April 2013** issue of **Model Railroader** magazine, I can place a hold on that particular issue by looking for the magazine in the catalog and clicking on the **Find It** button, where I'll get a screen like the one shown below (I've circled the issue that's out at the moment).



Now, if I click on that same "book in hand" icon that I told you to stay away from before, you'll be taken through the rest of the process for placing a hold that I talked about before.

Is it Taking Too Long?

Sometimes, despite all you've done, it may seem like it's just taking way too long for an item to come back in for you. When that happens, seek out a librarian for help. We might just have a few tricks to speed things along that aren't available to mere mortals.

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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