

Help Using TOPCAT, the SWITCH Online Catalog

Connect: <http://topcat.switchinc.org>
 TOPCAT tutorial: <http://caspien.switchinc.org/~tutorials/>.

WHAT IS TOPCAT?

SWITCH is a consortium of eight academic libraries in the Milwaukee, WI area that share a unified database for library materials called TOPCAT

The member institutions are:

- Alverno College (AC)
- Cardinal Stritch University (CSU)
- Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW)
- Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD)
- Mount Mary College (MMC)
- Sacred Heart School of Theology (SHST)
- Saint Francis Seminary (SF)
- Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC)

Welcome to TOPCAT

Search for Library materials using the following

Keyword Author Title
 Subject Heading Journal Title Author/Title

Other searches

Reserves by Instructor Reserves by Course
 Dewey Call Number LC Call Number

Additional resources

Online Databases Other Library Catalogs
 Library Information View Your Patron Record

TOPCAT Tutorial New Materials

Search for Library Materials
 Search for all types of library items owned by the SWITCH libraries using keyword, subject, title, author, journal title or author/title searches.

Search for Course Reserve Materials
 Perform a search for reserve items by a professor's last name or by course number. Or, search for materials by call number.

Search in Other Resources
 From here, link to online databases *by school*, other area catalogs, SWITCH library information, your patron record, a web [tutorial](#) on TOPCAT or a list of newly-acquired items in TOPCAT.

TOPCAT (the online public catalog) tell you what items (books, journals, videos, audiocassettes, etc.) are held or available from all the SWITCH libraries (*Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University, Concordia University Wisconsin, Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, Mount Mary College, Sacred Heart School of Theology, Saint Francis Seminary and Wisconsin Lutheran College*).

Title And her name shall be Demeter : an anthology of Fox Valley women poets / edited by Ellen Kort
 Pub/date Appleton, Wis. : Legend of the Unicorn Press, 1981

LOCATION	CALL NO.	STATUS
MIAD General	811.54 K84	AVAILABLE
MMC Main	811 An23	AVAILABLE

Each record in TOPCAT contains **LOCATION** information (which library owns the item), **CALL NUMBER(S)**, and the item's **STATUS** which indicates whether or not it's AVAILABLE to be checked out. So long as an item is marked 'available' you may check it out or request it from a SWITCH library.

If you locate an item, including journal articles, from a SWITCH library **other than your home library**, you may REQUEST it from TOPCAT by using the **REQUEST** button found at the top of each screen.

Previous Record Next Record Return to List Another Search Modify Search New Search Show Similar Records Save Record **Request**

(Search History)

KEYWORD wisconsin and authors
 Sorted by Date

Author [Rigney, Barbara Hill, 1938-](#)
 Title *Lilith's daughters : a novel* / Barbara Hill Rigney
 Pub/date Madison, Wis. : University of Wisconsin Press, 1982

LOCATION	CALL NO.	STATUS
AC General	813.54 R572	AVAILABLE
MMC Main	813.09 R44	AVAILABLE

Books are sent at no charge; journal articles cost 15 cents per page.
Monday-Friday delivery: YEAR-ROUND, All libraries
Saturday delivery: LATE AUG.-EARLY MAY at AC, CSU, CUW, MMC, SFS, and WLC.

SEARCHING TOPCAT

There are many ways to search TOPCAT to find the items you need. What search you choose often depends on *HOW MUCH INFORMATION* you have when you begin to search (e.g., you already know the author's name so you perform an AUTHOR search).

Author

EXAMPLE: morrison, toni

- Use when you know the **last name** of the creator of a work
- Authors include a person, corporation, government department, or organization. Artists, composers and directors are authors!
- Enter in the LAST NAME first. Spelling counts!

Title

EXAMPLE: raisin in the sun

- Use when you know the title of a work or the first words of the title
- Leave off initial articles (a, an, the, del, la, le)

Keyword

EXAMPLES: monetary donations

- Use to search for items **on a topic** using TERMS or PHRASES
- Use when you know PART of a title or when you don't know an exact subject heading
- TOPCAT looks in authors, titles, subjects and content notes to try & match up your term(s) or phrase
- Allows for [adjacency](#), [truncation](#), [operators](#), [proximity](#) or [field](#) searches.

Subject

EXAMPLES: charities - wisconsin

- Use to search for items **on a topic** when you know the correct subject heading
- When searching by subject, TOPCAT will supply **SEE ALSO** references connecting you to the correct subject heading to use.

LIMITING A SEARCH

You may want to limit a **Keyword** search at the **BEGINNING** of a search, when you have specific criteria you need to fulfill: (*i.e., you need items from a certain SWITCH library, or published after 2000, etc....*)

The screenshot shows the TOPCAT search interface. A search box contains the text "grant writing techniques". Below it are several dropdown menus: Language (ANY), Material Type (VIDEO/DVD), Location (ANY), and Year (After 1999 and Before). There is also a "Search and Sort" dropdown set to "Date" and a "Search" button. On the right side, there are buttons for "Keyword", "Author", "Title", and "Subject". A callout box with a blue border and white background contains the text: "At the BEGINNING of a Search Using a Keyword Search". Below the callout box are buttons for "Online Databases", "Other Library Catalogs", "Library Information", "View Patron Record", and "Main Menu".

You may also limit **AFTER** you perform **any other type of search**. This allows you to view your results before restricting how many were retrieved. First perform a search, then select either the **LIMIT/SORT** or **MODIFY SEARCH** button found at the top of your TOPCAT screen.

The screenshot shows the TOPCAT search results page. At the top, it says "You searched: SUBJECT: Proposal writing for grants" and "19 entries found". There are buttons for "New Search" and "Previous Screen". Below this, it says "Please select criteria to limit by:". There are several dropdown menus: LANGUAGE (ANY), MATERIAL type (ANY), BOOK/SERIAL (ANY), Words in the AUTHOR (a dropdown menu), WHERE Item is located (W > Wisconsin Lutheran College Library), and YEAR of publication (After 2001 and Before). There is also a checkbox for "Sort results by year" and a button for "Limit/sort items retrieved using above data". A callout box with a blue border and white background contains the text: "OR ... AFTER You Perform a Search & View The Results".

Be careful not to LIMIT too soon. Anytime you limit a search you **NARROW** the amount of total items that can be potentially retrieved. The more limits, the fewer the results. The less limits the greater the results.