

Library Catalogs / Lesson plan

Objective: Compare the *Catalogue of the Library of Female Authors of the Rev. J. Fr. Stainforth* to other types of library catalogs. The goal is to have students learn that library catalogs are the products of the social, political and technological forces that define culture. They are constructed from different perspectives and organize knowledge through a particular lens depending on mission and scope.

Students will examine the Stainforth manuscript (in person or online) and describe how it works as a library catalog by paging through the online surrogate. They will then compare Stainforth's catalog to (a) a card catalog, (b) the university's integrated library management system, (c) a search in Google Books Ngram or Hathitrust, (d) a research center's library such as the Schomburg, or (e) the 1793 catalogue of Ann Yearsley's public library through ECCO.

INTRODUCTION:

Libraries are products of social, political and technological forces. These organizations exist to serve a particular constituency and different levels of financial support drive their collecting scope. The goal of this assignment is to teach students a brief history of library catalogs using the Stainforth manuscript as a guide, how print and online catalogs differ due to collecting scope, and literary works in different types of libraries.

The instructor of record provides a brief introduction to library online public catalogs (OPACS) and integrated library management systems (ILMS). Using Reverend Francis Stainforth's catalog of women writers, students will conduct a search and examine results for any of the following writers:

- ✓ Anna Laetitia Barbauld
- ✓ Lydia Maria Child
- ✓ Mary Birkett
- ✓ Sarah Hoare
- ✓ Phillis Wheatley Peters
- ✓ Ann Yearsley

The writers were selected because they are known literary figures whose works are held in various libraries and accessible online. Students may also select any name from Stainforth catalogue and search the online resources listed below.

DISCUSSION

Libraries have different reasons to exist and different collecting scopes. In class, ask students to describe the types of reading materials or films they like to access for pleasure. Do they use their local public library? Did they use their school library or media center? If so, discuss the titles and types of formats they checked out. If not, ask students to discuss their sources of recreational reading or video materials. This sets the stage to introduce students to online library catalogs that have different collecting scopes:

Online library catalogs

- American Alpine Club (AAC) Library, located in Golden, Colorado, exists to support the climbing community and holds materials that are international in scope. Their catalog is accessible at: <https://americanalpineclub.org/catalog> and materials may be checked out online and mailed to the patron's home address.
- Dibner Library of the History of Science and Technology at the Smithsonian Libraries, <https://library.si.edu/libraries/dibner-library-history-science-and-technology> and their online catalog is available at <https://sirix-libraries.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=>
- The National Indian Law Library, located in Boulder, Colorado, is a law library devoted to Indian law. <https://www.narf.org/nill/about/index.html> and https://www.narf.org/nill/about/collection_policy.html
- The Schomburg Research Center in Black Culture is a branch of the New York Public Library system and collects and preserves print, media and visual culture materials that document the history and experience of people of African descent. The online catalog is available to search: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/schomburg>
- The National Food & Beverage Culinary Library is a special subject collection of culinary history housed at the New Orleans Public Library and does not circulate. However, researchers can identify early English recipes and cookbooks by searching the online catalog (scroll down to "browse the collection." : <https://natfab.org/sofab-culinary-library-and-archive/>
- *Chinook* is CU Boulder's ILMS: <https://www.colorado.edu/libraries> and provides access to resources that support campus teaching and research. [*Or insert home institution*]

Internet sites of full text source materials

- Google books and Google Ngram, <https://books.google.com/ngrams>. Google Ngram is the free version of Nineteenth Century Collection Online (NCCO).
- HathiTrust, https://www.hathitrust.org/digital_library is a digital corpus of materials managed by a consortium. It has unique content in addition to that from the *Internet Archive* and *Google*. Women writers will be searched for comparison to *Chinook* results.
- Internet Archive
- Project Gutenberg

DISCUSSION

The class will reconvene and discuss their experience. Did they search well-known writers or did they select an unknown writer? What were their findings? Did results depend on the type of library catalog or website? Discuss the differences in search results.

Ann Yearsley's library catalogue is small and available to download as a pdf file for class discussion. What did students observe about her library's holdings? Did she have the works of women writers in her collection? Any notable male writers?

Glossary:

- Catalog: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_catalog An example is Chinook, www.colorado.edu/libraries
- Private library: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_library See the London Library, <http://www.londonlibrary.co.uk/about-us/historyofthelondonlibrary>
- OPAC stands for online public access catalog.
- ILMS is the acronym for an integrated library management system and provides access to resources and content held elsewhere, such as digital collections and supports access to electronic resources.

Exploring library catalogues

In-class worksheet or homework assignment

The following are proposed in-class exercises or can be a small group homework assignment that encourages students to work together and make observations about search results.

1. You will be given the name of a writer in the Stainforth library to look up in the library catalog. What does the catalog tell you about this writer? Describe your observations in detail.
2. Zoom out from the writer. How does the whole catalog work? Describe how one navigates the catalog, e.g. what you see and how information is displayed. Notice any patterns or themes?
3. Zoom out again. What does the catalog tell you about Francis Stainforth's library? Try to be specific.
4. You will now be assigned another library catalog to explore online. Your job is to find a record that interests you in this library.
 - a. Write down or copy/paste that record to describe to the class (or write in a homework assignment.)
 - b. What did you find?

- i. What does the record tell you about this book, author, or item?
 - ii. Are there parts of the record that you don't understand? Write down everything you observe including questions that you may have.
5. Zoom out from the record. How does this particular library catalog work?
 - a. How does it differ from the Stainforth library catalog?
 - b. Describe the scope of the collection or the mission of the library
6. Zoom out again. What does the electronic library catalog tell you about the library you're exploring? Hint: look for an "About" page on the website, but don't stop there. How would you compare this library to what you imagine Stainforth's library to be like?
 - a. For example, have students look at the John & Bonnie Boyd Hospitality & Culinary Library catalog's "about" web page. They will understand the size of the library, scope and see that it is a non-circulating library.
 - b. Why does this matter?
7. Search the Science Library catalog at the Smithsonian Library. To be specific, use this link, <https://siris-libraries.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=> and search "Hoare, Sarah." What does the resulting bibliographic record tell you?
 - a. This bibliographic record allows you to segue into the next class discussion about provenance. Find this lesson/discussion is here https://docs.google.com/document/d/14ZMQ9BQ4QOHXGt6cCawNd-SKMFf_8H1EzdcE_vYZK4k/edit