Library How-To:

Search for Books and Media in the Library Catalog.

The library catalog provides a way to easily search for books, media, articles, and other sources using a simple ‘Google-like’ search box. This is known as ‘basic’ or ‘keyword’ searching. Using this method, you will need to give some thought to how broad or specific you should be with your choice of search terms. Additionally, in order to find sources that best meet the needs of your assignment, you will need to take steps to narrow your search.

To make the best use of the ‘basic search’ feature, follow these simple steps:

1. From the library home page (http://www.eastfieldcollege.edu/library), click on ‘Books, Media and More (Catalog)’ under the ‘Find’ heading:

Once you are directed to the library catalog, you will need to change the ‘search scope’ setting using the drop-down box to the right of the search bar:
2. For most basic keywords your search will return far too many results for you to be able to accurately find sources relevant to specific aspects of your topic. Notice, below, that our search for ‘global warming’ returned over 500 results.

3. There are a few simple ways we can narrow our search. First we will need to consider what type of resource will best meet our current research need. For this example, let’s say that we are looking for a print book located at Eastfield College Library. On the left side of the search results screen, you’ll see a number of ‘facets’ under the heading “Refine my results.” In order to narrow our search down to just physical items in the library, click on “Available in the Library” in the section labeled “Show Only.”

By limiting our search to only items physically in the library, we eliminated a significant number of results!
4. Libraries don’t just have books— we also have DVDs, maps, periodicals and more! Since we are looking for a **print book**, it will be helpful to narrow our results to only this type of resource. In order to see only books, we’ll select “Books” from the facets under the label “Resource Type.”

5. Since all of the schools in the Dallas County Community College District share a library catalog, some of the remaining items will not be located at Eastfield College Library. If you are currently a student, faculty, or staff member of any DCCCD campus, you are welcome to check out items in-person from any of the college libraries. You can also request items from other DCCCD colleges via the catalog—to learn how to do this, see the how-to guide on requesting items from other colleges. In order to see only the items physically available at EFC Library, return to the facets on the left side of the screen and click on “Eastfield College” under the section labeled “Library.”
6. Many college-level research assignments will require you to find only recently published sources. (e.g. from the last ten years) The catalog also lets us filter results by Publication Date. Since our search results contain at least one item published as far back as 1984, we should change the date under the ‘from’ heading. For this example, we will use 2007 as our ‘from’ date.

The catalog keeps track of all of the filters you apply to your search. These filters are displayed at the top left of the search results screen under the heading “Active Filters.” You can easily remove filters and re-apply them in order to adequately refine your search.

7. After applying the above filters, the remaining results should be only books located at Eastfield College Library. Now, we will need to gather a few important details in order to find the book on the shelf and check it out.

In order to learn more about the book, we’ll need to click on the title.
8. In order to find the book on the shelf, take a look at the “Get It” section under “Request Options.” You’ll want to take note of the following things before attempting to find the book: a) library (e.g. Eastfield College) b) location (e.g. Main Collection) and c) Call # (e.g. GF 75 .B368 2009) – Think of each piece of information like parts of a street address: Eastfield College would be the city, Main Collection would be the street, and the Call # is the actual address. Call #s will always be arranged alphabetically by the letters in the front and numerically by any numbers.

**Things to keep in mind:**

- Basic searching will only get you so far. To learn how to employ a more accurate search strategy, see the how-to guide on Advanced Searching.
- *If at first you don’t succeed*... Searching for information is a process of trial and error. Remember that your first search will rarely lead to the best results.
- If you need help, always ask a librarian!