A GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS FOR STUDENTS

abridged
Many books and articles are published in a shortened or condensed version known as an abridged version. The purpose of this is either to simplify the content for easier reading or to fit it into another publication.

abstract
A summary of the main points of a journal article, report etc. Some bibliographic databases are limited to abstracts.

academic
Related to an institution or tradition of higher learning.

acronym
Word formed from the first letter of other words eg. AIDS is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

act
Abbreviation for "Act of Parliament" which is a formal record of a law passed by the parliament.

address
In Internet terminology, "address" is another word for the URL, while in e-mail terminology an address is the location to which a message can be sent electronically using e-mail software.

agenda
Pre-determined list of tasks. In a meeting an agenda is set list of topics to be covered.

almanac/s
A publication containing concise facts and statistical information which is usually published annually.

alphabetical
In order of the alphabet (A -Z). Most dictionaries, encyclopaedias and list of names are in this order.

appendix
An extra section of a book or document usually found at the end of the main text. Appendices (plural of appendix) often contain more in-depth explanations of the topic than the main text. and often contain tables, graphs, statistics etc.

assessment
A teacher's grading or marking of work done by a student.

auditory
Connected to the sense of hearing.
author
The writer of a text. This can be published or unpublished and in any format including web pages.

authoritative
An accepted or legal source of information.

biased
Leaning towards a particular point of view and usually unable to look at every aspect of an issue in an objective or non-prejudiced way.

bibliographic
Relating to written materials such as books or journal articles.

bibliography
A list of all books, newspaper and magazine articles etc. used when researching a topic and organised according to a particular style or a list of books, articles, etc. on a particular topic.

blogs
Personal web pages which are regularly updated by their creators. They tend to look like diaries and are in reverse chronological order with the latest entry first. The word is a shortened form of “web logs” which most people now use

Boolean operators
The words AND, OR and NOT are used in database searching to narrow, widen or limit searches. These words are known as Boolean operators as they are based on the algebraic logic principles known as Boolean logic.

call numbers
All items in a library are assigned a number for shelving and retrieval purposes. This number is prominently displayed on the item. Call numbers allow items with the same topic or in a particular format to be shelved together.

catalogue
A list of records showing the full bibliographic details of all items held in a library including their call numbers.

CD ROM
Acronym for a "Compact Disc Read Only Memory" which is a round plastic disc which is formatted to save data which can be "read" by a computer.

chapter/s
Main sub-divisions or sections of books.

chronological
In date order - oldest to latest dates.

citation/cite
The bibliographic source details of books, articles etc. from which quotations have been used or information extracted.
**classification**: The grouping together of items which have similar characteristics

**cognitive**
relating to the active mental process of gaining and using knowledge

**collection**
All items acquired by libraries, museums etc. are known as collections and particular groupings of items within the larger collection are known as special collections.

**consecutive numbering**
A numbering system where the numbers follow each other in an uninterrupted sequence.

**concepts**
The general themes or ideas

**content**
The information contained within the text

**copyright**
The right by law to have control over the reproduction or copying of a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work.

**coverage**
The spread of information on a topic.

**credentials**
Evidence of someone's right to be an authority on a subject. Often credentials are in the form of formal qualifications such as university degrees.

**criteria**
A standard or rule for testing the value of something.

**currency**
Used to refer to the up-to-date status of information.

**data**
Factual information in written numerical, symbolic or graphical formats which can be organized and made accessible

**database/s**
Data organised into a logical structure of records. Databases are often in electronic format and records can be searched electronically.

**deductive**
Obtaining understanding by making a mental link from general principles or concepts to particular examples - opposite of inductive

**descriptors**
Terms that are authorized for use in indexing records. They may also be used for searching these records.
Dewey Decimal System
A classification scheme used by libraries based on the assigning of particular decimal numbers to particular subjects. The original scheme was devised by a librarian called Melville Dewey. Call numbers usually include the decimal number assigned to items.

directory
An alphabetical or numerical list which points out further information which can be followed up.

document
Text which is written by individuals or groups (printed, hand-written or electronic formats) to convey information or thoughts. A document can be used as legal evidence.

domain
That part of a URL or web address which shows whether the web site is a commercial (.com), organisational (.org), educational (.edu) or government web site (.gov). The country/state of origin of the site is also part of the domain. For example .vic denotes Victoria and .au denotes Australia.

dot
A full stop in a web address (URL) is usually called a dot. Internet companies are known as “dot coms”

DVDs
Acronym for Digital Versatile Discs which are round plastic optical (able to be viewed) discs which can be played on specialized equipment attached to a television set or in computers containing DVD playing hardware. Movies are produced now in DVD format rather than video format.

electronic
A word frequently used to describe computerised technology and computerised formatting of information.

e-mail
Electronic messaging system which utilises particular e-mail software such as "Hotmail" so messages can be sent and received via the Internet. Computerised files in various formats such as text documents or digital images can be attached to these messages.

emotive
Pertaining to emotions. Writers are said to be using emotive language when they choose particular words aimed at arousing certain emotions in their readers.

endnote
A bibliographic citation at the end of a number of pages of text such as an essay, book chapter or article indicated in the body of the text by superscript.

entry
Information recorded in a list.

et al.
Abbreviation of the Latin term "et alia" meaning "and others".
fiction:
Imaginative or creative writings usually in the form of novels and stories. Some works of fiction are based loosely on facts but are mainly imaginative while writings based strictly on known facts are known as non-fiction.

field/s
A distinct component of a record containing specified information. Databases are made up of units of information called records and then each record is further subdivided into fields. Examples: Title, Author, Publisher fields.

focus groups
Focus groups are used for qualitative research. These sample groups of people answer specific questions and discuss opinions, products, idea, issues to provide data for the research being done.

font
Particular design for typed characters used in printing and on computers which includes appearance and optional sizes, colours, italics etc.

footnote
A bibliographic citation at the bottom of a page of text indicated in the body of the text by superscript.

formulae
More than one formula which is a numerical/symbolic instruction or calculation

graphics
Visual representations such as diagrams and pictures.

glossary
An alphabetical list of specialised or difficult words used in a text giving the meaning of these words.

hard copy
A printed version of an electronic document

hardware
Term used to describe the physical parts of a computer.

Harvard system
An author/date referencing system developed at Harvard University.

hemispheres
Halves of a round object.

highlight
To put a coloured background behind text on a computer.

hit
A record retrieved as the result of an electronic search.
**hitlist**
A list of records retrieved as the result of an electronic search.

**hoax**
Something which is designed to deceive other people. Some websites and written materials may be "hoaxes'.

**homepage**
The first page you see when viewing a web site, - designed as the starting point.

**HTML**
Hypertext Markup Language: A programming language used to create pages on the WWW. HTML creates links between WWW pages and defines how text and graphics will appear on a page.

**humanities**
The study of literature, history, art, philosophy and other non-technical or non-scientific subjects.

**hyperlink/s**
Links to other related sites or URLs, other pages or documents, or to another section of the current page or document, allowing you to jump between related sites and topics.

**icon**
A graphic symbol on a computer screen which provides a direct link to a web page or software program.

**index**
A detailed alphabetical or numerical key to names or topics that allows for information retrieval.

**inductive**
Working out a general principle or concept from particular examples or pieces of information - opposite of deductive

**Internet**
A global information delivery and retrieval system which transfers HTML documents across a variety of computer systems. Often the Internet is known as the World Wide Web or the Web though strictly speaking the Web is only part of the Internet.

**interpersonal**
Understanding concepts and gaining knowledge primarily by interacting with other people.

**intrapersonal**
Having the ability to work out concepts and solutions by yourself drawing on your understanding of your own skills and knowledge.

**issues**
Copies of periodically published journals which are published (issued) on particular dates.
**italics**
A type format whereby the letters are sloped to the right. Italics are used to make certain words more distinctive as they stand out from the rest of the text.

**item**
A term used for sources of information such as books or video recordings or even database records.

**journal articles**
Journals are scholarly publications, published at set intervals, which contain distinct pieces of writings or articles on particular topics by different authors. These articles often contain bibliographies on the same topic and in turn are cited by other authors. Sometimes journals are known as magazines, periodicals or serials.

**keyword/s**
The most important words in speech or text which are the keys to the meaning of a concept, topic or sentence.

**kinaesthetic**
Related to the instinctive understanding of how the body works and interacts with the immediate environment.

**limiters**
Words used in a computerised search which would limit or cut down the number of records retrieved resulting in a shorter hit list.

**listservs**
A computer generated mailing list which allows discussion threads to be followed amongst other features. Spam can be generated from improperly used listservs.

**manuscript**
A hand-written document. Many historical documents are in manuscript form.

**Microsoft Word**
Software produced by the Microsoft company to produce text documents such as letters, essays, resumes, reports etc.

**mnemonic**
Designed to jog the memory. For instance rhymes, acronyms, numbers and 'flash cards" are common mnemonic devices.

**multidisciplinary**
Relating to a number of different subject areas of study and teaching.

**multimedia**
Information presented in a variety of formats including film, video clips, computer animations.

**neurophysiology**
Study of the workings of the nervous system including brain function.
online
Accessible through the use of a computer on the Internet or through a local network.

OPAC
Online Public Access Catalogue - a computerised library catalogue which can be searched online.

oral
Relating to speech. An oral presentation is one where the presenter speaks to an audience although aids such as computer slides may also be used for more visual impact.

Oxford system
A system of referencing using footnotes developed at Oxford University.

pagination
The listing of page numbers in a text. This is usually done as consecutive numbering (eg. 1, 2, 3, 4 etc.) but sometimes other formats are followed including the use of Roman numerals or letters of the alphabet or a combination of these.

paraphrase
To use someone else’s ideas but to put them into your own words.

patent/s
Legal right to the ownership of new products or processes.

phrase
A group of linked words.

PIN - Personal Identification Number
Used as an electronic security device.

plagiarise
To present someone else’s words or ideas as your own.

PowerPoint
Software produced by the Microsoft company which allows you to produce computerized slides.

prefix
The beginning part of a word attached to the main part (stem) of a word to change its meaning. An example is the prefix "un" which if added to the stem word "kind" changes this word to "unkind".

primary source/s
Original information items such as diaries or log entries, letters, eye-witness accounts, interviews etc. which have not been reworded, interpreted or otherwise changed.

punctuation
Marks used to organise and separate written words so that their meaning is better understood. Common punctuation marks are commas, full stops and question marks.
**qualitative**
Analysis based on observable qualities or components of complex entities or situations which does not involve measurement or numbers

**quantitative**
Analysis based on measurement and numeric calculations

**quotation**
The exact repetition of words written, spoken or published by others. In text documents, these words have punctuation marks at each end to show they come from another source

**record/s**
In computer terminology a record is made up of individual pieces of information called fields. A record more generally is factual information which is preserved in permanent form

**reference**
Books and other resources which are factual and are used to find information quickly are known as reference resources.

**reference list**
A list of bibliographic resources cited throughout the text which is placed at the end of the text.

**referencing**
Another word used for citing your sources of information.

**relevancy**
The appropriateness and usefulness of information. If information "fits" the purpose for which it is intended it is relevant information.

**reserve**
Items are kept "On Reserve" or at the "Reserve Desk" in a library because a large number of students will need to use them at the same time. These items are kept in a special section of the Library and may only be borrowed for a short time

**resources**
Another term for sources of information.

**scholarly**
Information which has a learned or intellectual content is known as scholarly information. Scholarly text is usually written by authors with academic credentials

**search engine**
Software that allows a search for topic related information on the Internet.

**search query**
The combination of words and/or symbols typed into "search boxes" in databases in order to retrieve matching records.
search string
Another term used for a search query specifically relating to the way keywords and phrases are stringed together to form the query.

secondary sources
Items of information which summarise or interpret original research or give background information or points of view on a subject. Examples are textbooks and encyclopaedias.

semester
The academic year is usually divided into two six-month periods called semesters. Each contains two terms with breaks between the terms.

serials
A library term for items which are published at regular or irregular intervals such as magazines and yearbooks. Also known as "periodicals", “journals” “magazines”, “annuals”, “quarterlies” etc.

software
Computer program designed to perform a particular task which can be installed on computer equipment which is known as hardware.

source/s
The actual place from which information was taken, which could be a primary source or a secondary source.

spam
Nuisance or “junk” e-mails which arrive in your e-mail inbox and unwanted advertisements or messages which appear on your computer screen.

spreadsheet
Computer software which allows words and/or numbers to be entered in columns spread across a web page or pages. Often arithmetic calculations are included. Microsoft Excel is the most commonly used software.

spiders
Computer programs that retrieve web pages. Spiders are used to feed pages to search engines. This term is used because they crawl over the Web. Another term for these programs is webcrawler.

standard/s
Detailed technical instructions and descriptions agreed upon by industry bodies and government for the manufacture and use or products..... or agreed procedures for various workplace operations eg. safety standards. "Standards Australia" publishes most Australian standards.

statistics
The collection and analysis of numerical data to provide factual information eg the number of people who get lung cancer every year in Australia.

stylized
Sticking to a particular chosen style
subject heading
A term used by Libraries to describe what an item is about. Each item is assigned one or more Subject Headings when it is acquired by the Library. Most Libraries use the same set of Subject Headings, so once you're familiar with the Headings for the subjects you're interested in, you can quickly locate resources in different Libraries.

suffixes
The end part of a word attached to the main part (stem) of a word. An example is the suffix "ly" attached to the stem "quick" to make the word "quickly".

superscript
A word, number or symbol written above normal text to indicate the presence of footnotes or endnotes. Often consecutive numbering such as 1,2,3,4 etc. is used.

synonym
When words have the same or similar meanings they are called "synonyms".

tabloid
A newspaper emphasising pictures and short articles designed to appeal to all. Tabloids and some weekly magazines make up what is known as the "popular press".

template
A pattern for the layout of words and/or graphics on a printable or web page often in the form of a "dummy" document which allows personal changes. Microsoft Word software contains numerous templates for commonly used documents.

terminology
Words which name something. Words used in particular subject areas or branches of knowledge are called the terminology of that area eg. "computer terminology"

text
The wording of anything written or printed. Books are sometimes called "texts" and databases which contain the full wording of printed articles are called "full-text" databases.

tilde
A tilde looks like this ~. It is a special typographic character found on most computer keyboards. Web addresses (URLs) sometimes contain tildes.

title
In library or bibliographic terminology the "title" of an item is the name of that item such as "Alice in wonderland" or the name of a chapter, section etc.. Sometimes the word "titles" is used instead of the word "books".

transcripts
Written or recorded copies of spoken words eg. radio broadcasts.

truncation
Shortening a word to its main component or stem without prefixes, suffixes or plural forms.
**underscore**
An underscore looks like this _. It is a special typographic character found on most computer keyboards. Web addresses or email addresses sometimes contain underscores.

**URL**
Uniform Resource Locator - the address of an Internet site. Follows certain standard formats in its layout and use of domains. An example is http://www.vicnet.net.au/

**value**
Estimate of worth. A 'value' judgement is one where you judge something by your own estimate of its worth or importance.

**virtual**
Existing as a concept or representation but not as a physical reality. Computers are said to have "virtual" memories and computer software allows people to see "virtual" scenes on computer screens.

**visual**
Related to the sense of sight.

**Web 2.0**
Term now in use to describe the newest web based technologies which allow for the development of interactive web content with an emphasis on user generated data and the creation of on-line communities.

**web browser**
Software used for viewing and accessing information on the World Wide Web. Netscape and Microsoft Internet Explorer are the two main browsers.

**webpage**
A document designed for viewing in a web browser on the Internet.

**website**
The "home" of information found on the Web which comes from the same source and has an individual Web address.

**wiki**
A type of website which allows anyone to create and edit entries. An example is Wikipedia.

**World Wide Web (www) or just Web**
Total set of Internet linked HTML documents. Many Web documents on the Internet would have www in their URL.