

INTRODUCTION TO WORLDCAT¹

By Marvin Hunn

The WorldCat database is a key resource. It includes metadata for millions of items in an enormous range of subjects. It provides comprehensive coverage of books and significant coverage of journal articles. Thousands of libraries catalog their collections in WorldCat. Our local version of WC is <https://dts.on.worldcat.org/>.

The Advanced Search Screen

Figure 100: Advanced Search Screen

The Advanced Search Screen lets you select fields and combine terms with logical operators (AND, OR, NOT). You can also type operators manually, but they must be uppercase. Terms can be grouped with parentheses like this: << (abraham OR isaac) AND (promise OR blessing) >>.

Two-letter field codes can be used before terms like this: << AU:Calvin AND TI:institutes >>.

The main field codes are AU: for author, TI: for title, SU: for subject, SE: for series. Note the colon.

¹ This introduction assumes you are **already familiar** with “Basic Concepts for Database Searching” (<http://library.dts.edu/basic-concepts>) and with the EBSCO search engine. Sample search statements are typographically distinguished like this: << search statement here >>.

WC automatically stems many words in English to compensate for plurals, grammatical inflection, etc. So << believe >> also matches believer and believing for example. But WC's impoverished version of stemming does not match word roots, so << believe >> does not match the noun belief. Use quotes to turn off stemming.

search (DTS Libraries only)	results 7/6/2021	note
believe	417,208	
believer	417,208	
believing	417,208	
"believ*"	419,749	approximates stemming
"believe"	197,296	use quotes to turn off stemming
belief	496,807	shows not true stemming above

As you would expect, quotation marks around multiple words search for an exact phrase. Thus << "infant baptism" >> matches the exact phrase. Be sure to use double quotes ("infant baptism"), not single quotes ('infant baptism'). In addition, WC supports left-anchored phrase searches.² The WC search engine does not provide any other proximity operators. However, proximity plays a role in relevancy ranking (explained below in the section on The Search Results Screen).

Use an asterisk (*) for truncation. Type at least the first three letters of a term followed by an asterisk to match terms that begin with those letters.

In 2020 the list of stopwords consisted only of the English articles: a, an, the. Use quotation marks to search for them.

So searching WC would appear to be conventional and typical of many search engines. But there are problems. WC is growing and diversifying. Although US libraries were originally the only source for WorldCat metadata, WC now receives records from many other sources including international libraries, publishers, book sellers, and database vendors. It is becoming a database of databases. This complicates searching.

As WC grows, duplicate records proliferate.

As WC grows, it declines in consistency. Because there are so many different sources of records, you can't count on a single consistent controlled vocabulary.

² Left-anchored means the match begins with the left-most word in the field or subfield. Left-anchored phrase searches are expressed by a field code plus an equals mark, like this: << ti=infant baptism* >>. This example (with truncation) would match any title that begins with the phrase "infant baptism." Left-anchored searches are a good way to search for a one word title or for a last name that is also a common first name, like Wesley or Craig. (Names in WC are usually in this order: Firstname Lastname.)

As WC grows, it declines in metadata quality. Some sources, especially publishers and book-sellers, supply sparse metadata (author, title, source, no subject headings or abstracts). WC records are labeled with a database name under View Description. Don't be misled. These are usually abridged metadata, not the complete records used in the famous-name databases. Vendors are trying to protect sales of the unabridged databases, so they don't supply metadata to discovery systems. **Because WC records for articles often lack subject headings, you should use EBSCO, ProQuest, etc., to search specialized databases like Atla.**

The Advanced Search Screen (Figure 100) lists databases on the right and search limiters in the lower left corner of the screen. We recommend that you accept the default selections to find items at DTS. After you have executed a search, the Search Results Screen (Figure 200) will give you opportunity to refine the result set in a variety of ways based on information about the initial search results—information you don't have before the search.

The Advanced Search Screen is the only screen from which you may select a particular database to search. However, because of the sparse metadata and even the exclusion of whole records, selection of database xxx should be thought of as meaning “search abridged metadata corresponding to some large portion of database xxx.”

The Search Results Screen

The search results page is divided into two columns. On the right, books, articles, etc. are listed. On the left, filters and limiters are available.

The screenshot shows the DTS Libraries search results page. At the top, the search bar contains the query "encyclopedia of ancient christianity" and shows "7 results in DTS Libraries". The left sidebar contains filters for "Group This Search" (checked), "Refine This Search" (unchecked), and "Held By Library" (checked for DTS Libraries). The main content area displays the first result: "Encyclopedia of ancient Christianity" by Angelo Di Berardino (Editor), published in 2014 by InterVarsity Press. The result includes a book cover image, a summary, and an "Access Online" button. Below the main result, there are sections for "Other Editions and Formats at DTS Libraries" and "Worldwide Editions and Formats".

Figure 200: Search Results Screen

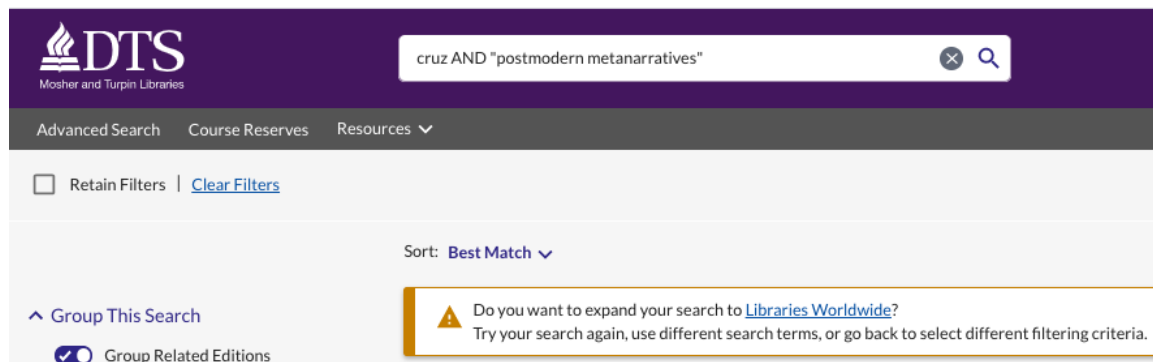
Concerning the Left Column of Figure 200

Changes made in the left column will apply to subsequent searches if you check Retain Filters at the top of the column.

By default, results in the right column of Figure 200 are ranked by the number of libraries that hold an item.

Filters on the left include Held by Library, Format, Content Type, Publication Year, Author/Creator, Subject, and Language. Filter categories may display an incomplete list of options; click “Show More” to see the complete list of options within a category. Each filter has a default value. Change the filter settings as you wish, but know that some filters can give unexpected results.

The default Library setting is to search only the holdings of "DTS Libraries." Select "Libraries Worldwide" to get much more comprehensive search results. If you search DTS Libraries for an item DTS does not own, you may see a screen that offers to expand the search to Libraries Worldwide. Here is an example.



The “Held by Library” filter can limit results to DTS Libraries or to a specific campus. If you limit to a specific campus like Dallas or DC, results will be limited to physical items stored at that campus location; there will be no indication of which online resources are available for use.

Under the Content Type category, the “Peer Reviewed” option will limit results to peer reviewed journal articles. Since books are not subject to peer review, selecting this option will exclude books. Content Type also provides a “Full Text” option. This is a useful way to limit results to items with clickable links, but the filter does not produce 100% complete results; it sometimes excludes some online content (for a number of complex reasons).

The Subject category on the left is not a list of Library of Congress subject headings but of topics based on the ARL Conspectus mapping of call numbers, and call numbers are assigned commonly to books but rarely to other formats. So if you pick any of the topics, you will be limiting the results to books (mostly).


Concerning the Right Column of Figure 200

The right-hand column of Figure 200 displays brief information about items. Click the title of an item to see complete information.



[Encyclopedia of ancient Christianity](#)
 Authors: [Angelo Di Berardino](#) (Editor)
 eBook 2014
 Downers Grove, IL : InterVarsity Press, 2014.
 Summary: The Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity covers eight centuries of the Christian church. 3,220 entries by a team of 266 scholars from 26 countries representing a variety of Christian traditions such fields as archaeology, art and architecture, biography, cultural studies, ecclesiology, geography
[Show More](#)
[Access Online](#)
 Available
 DTS Libraries

Other Editions and Formats at DTS Libraries

[Access Online](#)  © 2014 Print Book edition [Details](#)  DTS Libraries has v.1-v.3 [Available at 3 Locations](#)

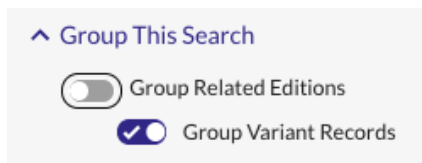
Worldwide Editions and Formats [View All \(7\)](#)

If there is online access, there will be a button at the bottom left-hand side of a short record saying Access Online or View full text. Access Online means there are multiple options for viewing the full text. Click Access Online to see and choose an option. A View full text button will take you directly to the full text of an item.

WorldCat has clickable links to most of our ebooks and to many of our online journal articles. The links usually work as you would expect, but you may encounter the following problems.

- Some links are wrong, especially links to older public domain works.
- A small but irritating percentage of links connect to the host/parent publication, not to the specific portion. For example, a link for a journal article might take you to the whole journal. It might require a few more steps to get to the specific article.

A print book record will state the number of print volumes available at the bottom of the record. Click it or click the title and scroll down to see locations and call numbers.



^ Group This Search
 Group Related Editions
 Group Variant Records

The brief display is potentially misleading because of the matter of record clustering. WC usually has a separate record for every variation of a work: a record for 1st edition, another record for 2nd edition, another for a translation, an ebook, a print book, an audio recording, etc. On the Search

Results screen it **often shows only one record to represent the entire cluster**. OCLC attempts to pick a record for the most recent edition DTS owns. To see all the separate records, either click Worldwide Editions and Formats on the short record or uncheck the Group Related Editions checkbox on the top left under Group This Search. You might also have to uncheck Group Variant Records under Group This Search.



 Cite  Share  Save

Note three adjacent icons in the record. The “Cite” icon provides a way to display the bibliographic information formatted according to

a citation style you choose from “Select a citation style”. **The formatting is not perfect**. The “Cite” icon also allows you to export records to your citation management software (e.g. End-Note). The “Share” icon provides a permanent link to the record and allows you to email a citation. The “Save” icon adds the record to “Saved Items” for subsequent emailing or exporting.

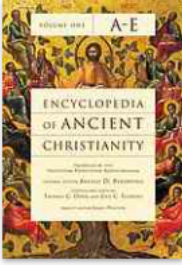
Pick the “Saved Items” menu choice at the top right corner of the screen to email or download the list. See “Using Zotero” (<https://library.dts.edu/zotero>) for instructions on exporting WC records into Zotero.

Detailed Record Screen

Click any title on the Search Results Screen to see the Detailed Record.

1

Cite
Share
Save




Encyclopedia of ancient Christianity

Authors: [Angelo Di Berardino](#) (Editor)

Summary: The **Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity** covers eight centuries of the Christian church and comprises 3,220 entries by a team of 266 scholars from 26 countries representing a variety of Christian traditions. It draws upon such fields as archaeology, art and architecture, biography, cultural studies, ecclesiology, geography, history, philosophy,

[Show More](#)

 eBook 2014
Downers Grove, IL : InterVarsity Press, 2014.

More Author/Title Info:

Uniform Title:

Physical Description:

Subjects:

general editor, Angelo Di Berardino ; consulting editors, Thomas C. Oden, Joel C. Elowsky ; project editor, James Hoover ; principal translators, Joseph T. Papa, Erik A. Koenke, Eric E. Hewett.

[Nuovo dizionario patristico e di antichità cristiane. English.](#)

1 online resource

Faceted Application of Subject Terminology
[Church history](#)
[Christian literature, Early.](#)
[Church history Primitive and early church.](#)
[Dictionaries.](#)
[30-600](#)

Library of Congress Subject Headings
[Christian literature, Early Dictionaries.](#)
[Church history Primitive and early church, ca. 30-600 Dictionaries.](#)

Figure 300: Detailed Record Screen

The description begins with item details. This is where you see subject headings and possibly more publication information. The subject headings are clickable, but it is often better to copy and paste them into the search box to modify the search terms before executing the next search.

Scroll down to see Availability of this Edition at DTS Libraries and find locations and call numbers. If a volume is checked out, the system will indicate when the volume is due and will display

Availability of this Edition at DTS Libraries

Library Has: V.1-V.8

Dallas Campus ✓ 8 Available		
Shelving Location	Call Number	Status ↑
Reference	LB15 .E47 2003	✓ V.1 Available

Note: Located on first floor of Turpin Library.

a “Notify me when item is available” button. In the image at left, the volumes are “available”; nothing is checked out. Volumes in a multi-

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volume set are not necessarily sorted in the correct order. This is important when you view a periodical with scores of volumes attached.

Other Availability & Holdings

[Other Libraries Worldwide \(1,097 Libraries\)](#)

After this comes Other Availability & Holdings. It includes Access Online and Libraries Worldwide if available. Access Online may list multiple links, and some links may be more reliable than others.

▼ **Access Online**

The list of Other Libraries Worldwide is handy for distance education students. It indicates which libraries own the item and how far they are from a reference location. You can specify the reference location by a zip code or by an exact address. Click the arrow beside the distance to display

Other Libraries Worldwide, 2,083 Libraries

Showing libraries near 3909 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, US-TX

3909 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, US-TX

▼ DTS Libraries		
	Turpin Library	0 mi
▼ Southern Methodist University Library		
View Catalog	Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology	3.18 mi

Google maps and a route to the library. Remember that there can be multiple records for the same work. The Other Libraries Worldwide list is reporting only libraries that have used one particular record. Check all the records to see all libraries represented in WC.

The next section, Explore Editions & Formats, lists other records clustered with the displayed record. For the example title, seven records are listed, but all seem to represent the same intellectual work. 1100 libraries used the first record, and 363 used the second. At least these two records are needed (one for print version, one for online version). But why are there seven? Some records were created by booksellers, others by ebook aggregators, and still others by libraries. OCLC is working on software to detect and merge duplicates.

The screenshot shows a library catalog interface with the following elements:

- Header:** "Explore Editions & Formats" and "7 Editions & Formats".
- Left Sidebar:**
 - Held By Library:**
 - Libraries Worldwide
 - Houston TX area
 - Washington DC area
 - DTS Libraries
 - Dallas Campus
 - Houston Campus
 - Washington, DC Campus
 - Format:**
 - [All](#)
 - [Book \(7\)](#)
 - Book (7)
 - eBook (4)
 - Print Book (3)
- Main Content:**
 - Sort:** Library
 - Table Headers:** Edition, Format, Year, Language, Library
 - Result 1:**
 - 1** (row number)
 - Encyclopedia of ancient Christianity**
 - Authors: [Angelo Di Berardino](#) (Editor)
 - Downers Grove, IL : InterVarsity Press, 2014.
 - Format: eBook
 - Year: 2014
 - Language: English
 - Library: DTS Libraries and 1,100 Libraries Worldwide
 - Result 2:**
 - 2** (row number)
 - Encyclopedia of ancient Christianity**
 - Authors: [Angelo Di Berardino](#) (Editor), [Thomas C Oden](#) (Editor), [Joel C Elowsky 1963-](#) (Editor), [James Hoover](#) (Editor), [Istituto patristico Augustinianum \(Rome, Italy\)](#)
 - Downers Grove, Illinois : IVP Academic, [2014]
 - Format: Print Book
 - Year: 2014
 - Language: English
 - Library: DTS Libraries and 363 Libraries Worldwide

Searching for Bible Passages

Bible passages present special problems. The Atla Religion database has a dedicated Scripture Reference index to deal with the problems. To retrieve material in Atla on Matthew 4:4, just search for << SR Matthew 4:4 >>. WorldCat has no comparable index. And when we search WC we must distinguish between how to match library metadata about the Bible and how to match vendor metadata about the Bible.

US library records in WC use a consistent standardized way to cite bible passages; just search like this: << SU: bible matthew >>. Searching for a specific chapter or verse can be difficult. Chapters are designated with Roman numerals, like this: Bible Matthew VI. Sometimes a heading refers to a range of chapters or verses, like this: Bible Matthew V–VII. A search for << SU: bible matthew VI >> would not match this heading because chapter six is hidden in the reference to chapters five through seven.

Vendor records often lack subject headings and do not use a standardized way to refer to books of the Bible, so there is no reliable way to indicate the “matthew” you are searching for is the book of the Bible and not a modern author named Matthew, for example. However, a quoted search for a passage may (if you are lucky) match vendor metadata. So “matthew 4:4” can succeed. Occasionally there will be a mismatch like “James 1” referring to King James the 1st, not chapter one of the NT epistle.

Search statement	Likely result	Correct?
SU: bible matthew	mostly library records for books	correct & recommended
KW: kingdom AND SU: bible matthew	mostly library records for books	correct & recommended
SU: bible "matthew iv 4"	mostly library records for books	correct but not recommended because very few books are written on a single verse and

		because a number can be hidden in a range of numbers
KW: "matt 4:4" OR "matthew 4:4"	mostly vendor records for articles	correct but not recommended for searching for articles. Recommend use of Atla instead
SU: "bible matthew"	few results	incorrect because phrase operator does not cross subfield boundary

Subfields and Phrase Searching

Above we noted the search << SU: "bible matthew" >> is incorrect because the quote phrase operator can't cross subfield boundaries. Confused? Fields consist of subfields. Subfields appear in all types of subjects, not just bible entries. [Bible. Matthew V-VII Criticism, interpretation, etc.](#) has three subfields: \$a Bible, \$p Matthew, V-VII \$x Criticism, interpretation, etc. Here and below we see subfield \$p used for "part of Bible", \$x for topic, \$y for chronology, and \$v for genre.

Subfield a	Subfield p	Other subfields	Comment
\$a Bible		\$x Publication and distribution \$x History.	About the history of the publication of the Bible
\$a Bible.	\$p Old Testament	\$x Criticism, interpretation, etc. \$x History \$y 20th century.	About the history of 20th century interpretation of the Old Testament
\$a Bible.	\$p Matthew		
\$a Bible.	\$p Matthew IV, 1-11	\$x Criticism, interpretation, etc.	Note Roman numerals for chapters and Arabic numerals for verses.
\$a Bible.	\$p Matthew	\$v Commentaries.	Subject + genre (commentary). It IS a commentary ABOUT Matthew.

At present a phrase search cannot cross a subfield boundary. We hope this limitation will be removed in the future. A search for << SU: "bible matthew" >> should fail totally but will retrieve a few records that have been incorrectly coded. At present there is no way you can see subfield boundaries. (Staff can see them.) What you need to know is this: if a phrase search retrieves nothing or almost nothing, consider the possibility that the search is attempting to cross a subfield boundary. Eliminate the quotes or quote less. For example, if an initial attempt of << SU:"bible Matthew v—vii" >> fails, move the quotes like this: << SU:bible "Matthew v—vii" >>, or eliminate them like this: << SU:bible Matthew v—vii >>. (The dash or hyphen is converted to a space; it is not needed.)

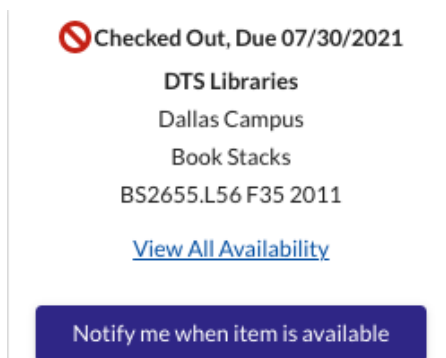
Searching for Theses and Dissertations

Many masters theses and doctoral dissertations are included in WorldCat. You will find a book Format filter on the left that limits search results to theses and dissertations. However, you will have more flexibility if you do the following. Use material type code MT:deg to limit results to theses and dissertations. Use the note field (code NT) to specify the name of the degree granting institution if you wish to limit to one institution. Use the keyword field to specify the degree (e.g.,

PhD). So you could search for DTS DMin dissertations like this: << KW:"d.min" AND NT:"dallas theological" AND MT:deg >>.

Placing Holds

Library policy permits current faculty, students, and staff to place holds on items that are checked out or otherwise not available for immediate use. If you place a hold, the library will notify you by email when the item becomes available and will keep it for you up to a week. If a book is available in the stacks, then WC should not allow you to place a hold on it, and library staff will not retrieve the book for you from the stacks. (But we do retrieve books for distance education students.)



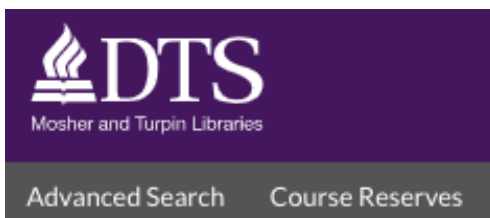
⊘ **Checked Out, Due 07/30/2021**
DTS Libraries
 Dallas Campus
 Book Stacks
 BS2655.L56 F35 2011
[View All Availability](#)

notify you by email when the item becomes available and will keep it for you up to a week. If a book is available in the stacks, then WC should not allow you to place a hold on it, and library staff will not retrieve the book for you from the stacks. (But we do retrieve books for distance education students.)

A “Notify me when item is available” button will appear on the right-hand side of the Detailed Record Screen if an item is holdable. Click the button. What happens at this point depends on whether you are signed-in, and on whether it is a multi-volume work. If you are not signed-in, the system will ask you for ID and password. The system will then prompt you to specify one or more volumes to be held and to choose a pick-up location. When you attempt to place a hold, WC will reply by verifying the hold has been placed for you or will inform you why the hold attempt failed.

Searching for Course Reserves

Don’t confuse course reserves with holds. Course reserve is a system of sharing scarce resources. Materials are placed on reserve at the request of an instructor when that instructor is requiring



students to use those works to fulfill specific assignments in a given course. The reserve collection is not a collection of “best books,” and it is not intended to provide textbooks or other materials students are required to purchase. Use of course reserves has declined dramatically as instructors upload more pdfs

to Canvas, the DTS online Course Management software. But course reserves are still needed for some courses. The Course Reserves button is always visible in the upper left corner of WorldCat. Clicking the Course Reserves button will take you to Figure 400.

 Course Reserves

Search Course or Instructor:

[Back to Item Search](#)

192 courses sorted by: Status:

Figure 400: Reserves Search Screen

To search for a course instructor list, type one or more of the following in the search box:

- The name of the course in whole or in part
- The first and/or last name of the professor
- The name of the department, e.g. Old Testament
- The course number, two letter department code that precedes the course number, or both, e.g., << wm >> or << 5101 >> or << wm 5101 >>

Four fields are available for sorting course reserves: Course Name, Department, Instructor, and Start Date. Choose the field you wish to sort on from the drop-down list.

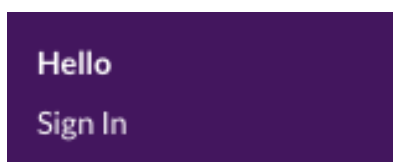
Logical operators and quotation marks do not work for reserve searching. The software will “AND” words together. For example, a search for <<new testament>> will retrieve any records with “new” AND “testament.”

A search displays a list of courses. If a course has library reserve books or media items associated with it, it will say “x course materials.” Click the title of the course to see the list of associated reserves. Click the title of a reserve item to check availability. Use the browser goback button to return to the list of reserves. A record that says, “0 course materials,” means that the professor has not requested that library books or media items be placed on reserve. However, the professor might have photocopies or personal items on reserve. They are not listed in the library catalog. Check your syllabus for them. Check Canvas for ereserves.

If you have a book title and wish to know whether that title is on reserve, look up the book in WorldCat as you would any other. Under Availability in the detailed record, it will say whether the book is in the book stacks, on reserve, or elsewhere.

Your Account and Password

Your WorldCat account enables you to renew books, place holds, view due dates, etc. For detailed information about your WC account, see: <https://library.dts.edu/account-wc>



Click the Sign In link in the upper right corner of any screen to access your account.

DTS FACULTY/STUDENTS/GRADS USING ONELOGIN

DTS COMMUNITY USERS/OTHERS

DTS faculty and students should pick the OneLogin option to authenticate for WorldCat and all other databases. Community Users still use native WC authentication for WC. Passwords are discussed at

<https://library.dts.edu/password-onelogin> and <https://library.dts.edu/password-wc>.

Note: The Select All option selects only items that are visible, and only those items will be renewed. Therefore if you wish to renew all items, check the Select All box above the list of check-outs. Then click Show More at the bottom of the screen to select the other books if some books checked out that do not show. Then click Renew Items. Look at each record to see which items were renewed. If someone placed a hold on a book you checked out, it will not be renewed.

Non-English Language Issues

Menus and field labels can be displayed in several different languages including Spanish and Chinese. See the Language options at the very bottom of any page. The language choice does not affect what is retrieved by a search; it only affects language of menu choices and labels.

The language search limiter in the left column of the search results page does limit results to works written in the selected language. However, the metadata for many journal articles lacks language codes. Records with no language code will be excluded if you limit results by language.

The metadata for many non-English language books was created by English language libraries, so author and title are often in the original language, but subject headings are often in English. Further, many non-English records have transliterated titles and author names rather than native script. When you are searching for a subject, use both English language terms and terms in the native script of the target language. When you are searching by author or title, use terms in the native script of the target language as well as transliterated equivalents.