



MassCat Musings - April 2014

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Select All

In cataloging, when you search for a title (or ISBN or author or anything) in the MassCat catalog and do not find what you need the next step is to click on the button that says “**Z39.50**”. Here are a few tips for making the most of that search.

If you’ve used an ISBN search, the 10 or 13-digit number will automatically be filled into the ISBN box. If you see the number in the Title box instead, that means there is something wrong and it is not a true ISBN. A digit may have been added or left out, or two digits may have been reversed. Regardless, you won’t be able to find what you’re looking for with that number. Try a title search instead.

It’s important to click the button “**Select All**”, especially when searching for sound and video recordings. The Library of Congress does not catalog much media and the National Library of Medicine only owns items in the medical field. If you search using only the default settings (National Library of Medicine and Library of Congress), you’ve greatly reduced your chances of finding a bibliographic record.

Admittedly, the Z39.50 search can sometimes be slow. The more libraries you search simultaneously, the slower it can be. After clicking on “**Select All**”, speed up your search by unclicking National Library of Medicine unless you are searching for an item in the medical field. Also unclick Avi Chi Catalog and Israel Union List unless you are searching for an item in the religion field. If you are searching for an audio or video recording, unclick Library of Congress as well.

If you don’t have an ISBN to work with, a title or author/ title search is the way to go. Given the proliferation of formats, when you search by title you may end up with a long list of “matches”, most of which you don’t want. The “**Raw (Any)**” box can help narrow your search. Anything can go in that box; it is for a keyword search. Adding the publisher is a quick way to eliminate lots of unwanted hits.

The **Raw (Any)** box is extremely useful when searching for DVDs. Enter the barcode (UPC) into that box. You don’t always find a match, but sometimes you do. Try it!