ORCA

A Guide for Using Northwest ORCA
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ORCA, which is short for Online Records and Collections Access, is a digital database of collections held by the Northwest Room at Tacoma Public Library. With it, you can explore descriptions of the Northwest Room's holdings and access both digitized and born-digital content!

This short introductory guide was created to show you how to navigate the homepage, search the collections, and download material, along with advanced search tips.
ACCESSING ORCA

To make your way to the ORCA homepage you can type the URL https://northwestroom.tacomalibrary.org/ into your favorite browser, or to locate the homepage from the library's homepage, https://www.tacomalibrary.org, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click "Northwest Room" then click on the ORCA banner.

Below is an image of the ORCA homepage. You will always know you are here by the banner image and the text "Welcome to ORCA".

https://northwestroom.tacomalibrary.org/
The homepage gives you access to many different ways to begin searching for material. You can either browse or search. To browse by a certain category you can select one by clicking on the browse dropdown and clicking on your selection.

Searching can be done by typing a keyword or search term in the top bar and pressing enter or clicking the magnifying glass button.

Browsing allows you to look through different categories and keywords to help you narrow down your results. These different categories organize items in the collection differently.
To browse by a certain category you can select one by clicking on the browse dropdown and clicking on your selection.

You can browse by different categories such as **Collection**, which is exactly what it sounds like, a collection of related material.

A visual example of a collection
**Creator**, which we define as the specific person or organization that created the material in the collection. For example, the photographer Virna Haffer is the creator of all the photographs and documents in her collection.

**Place**, which is similar to subjects but connects certain materials across collections to a specific place name or address.
**Subject**, which is a specific subject term assigned to certain items in a collection to better help you locate related material across collections.

**Digital object**, which means either a digital scan of a photograph or any other digitized item. The term digital object also includes born-digital, or material that was originally created digitally.
Repository refers to the different locations that certain materials are stored. Another way to think of repositories are containers that hold specific collections.

For instance, we have the Northwest Room's repository and the Community Archives Center's repository. All the Material created for the Community Archives Project is stored in the Community Archives Repository and all the material in the Community Archives Center's repository is stored in the Northwest Room repository.

One way to think of repositories is as separate drawers of a cabinet. Both repositories are housed in the same place but divided into their own sections. As ORCA continues to grow new repositories will be added.
To search you simply type in a keyword or search term into the search bar at the top of the page and press enter, or click the search button to the right.

To search for Virna Haffer, the photographer, I am going to first type her name into the search bar and press enter.

Success. I see a lot of results here. Let's take a look at the first result, the Virna Haffer Collection. As I mentioned earlier a collection is a "collection of related items" so as we can see this is the Virna Haffer Collection so this will take us to a collection of materials created by Virna Haffer.

I am going to click on the title and it will take us to that collection.
You may have noticed that in the Browse dropdown bar you can select to browse by collection. However, when you select it and open the browse by collection page more than just collections are listed. You will see the terms project, photographs, records, and papers used alongside the word collection in the results.

The reason for this is that the term "collection" is being used in a broad sense. Even though a group of materials may end in papers, records, photographs, projects, et cetera they are all collections.
We see at the top of the page a graphic organizational diagram of how the collection is organized. At the top, we see a box image and the title The Virna Haffer Collection. Then below the box, we see four folders attached to that box. The box is a representation of the whole collection and the folders are representations of sections in the collection.

Below the organizational diagram, you will find the carousel. This is a scrollable display of a portion of the digitized items in the collection. Note, this is not a representation of everything in the collection, only the digitized items.

Under the carousel, you will find the Identity elements. Information about the physical collection can be found here.
Each folder contains material organized by that folder's specific label. To make this more clear let's take a look at the folder titled Albums.

If we click the + icon left of the folder that will expand the contents of that folder. Now we see two more folders, Album One and Album Two.

If we select album one we will be able to see the contents of that album. ORCA will display each item below the folder and display digitized objects below the diagram and in the carousel. These are just two ways of looking at the same material. It may be easier for you to use the carousel to find a certain image or if you knew the title of the image already it may be easier to look through the diagram to find it. Once you have found an item you are interested in you can click it to see that item's specific record.
One important detail to keep in mind when looking through the diagram is that every item is only a representation of an actual item. If you come across an item that does not have any accompanying digital content it only means that isn't available digitally.

This also applies to the file-level descriptions. As you can see above there are no items nested below the file level. This does not mean that this is an empty file, it only means that isn't available digitally.

If you are curious about accessing an item or file contact us at nwr@tacomalibrary.org or (253) 280-2814.
I'm curious about the photograph "Hard Rock Randall" so I will click on either the photo in the **carousel** or the title in the **diagram** to see its record. To see the full item you need to click on it, that will open it in full resolution in your browser.

One thing to note is that depending on what type of item you are looking at be it a photo, a PDF, or an audio file it will appear differently in ORCA.
Let's take a quick look at a PDF. Below we are at the item's page. Just like the Virna Haffer photograph we were looking at before we see the organizational diagram above the item and the record below. If we click this PDF it will open up in the browser where you can see it in its entirety.

The next chapter of this guide will detail how to download items to your computer.
DOWNLOADING ITEMS

Once you have found an item you would like to download you do that by opening the image or PDF in full resolution in your browser and right-clicking on it and selecting "save as". On an Apple computer, you control-click and select "save".

If the item you want to download is a video all you need to do is click on the download movie below the item.
ADVANCED SEARCH TECHNIQUES

When looking for certain kinds of items or information in ORCA there are different ways of narrowing down specific results. Below are a few strategies that can help you.

SEARCHING WITHIN A COLLECTION

Once you have found a collection of interest you have the ability to search within that collection. To do this use the quick search bar below the main bar at the top of the screen.

Quick search allows a user to, yes you guessed it, quickly search the collection you have open. For example, if I wanted to see if the Tacoma Public Library Records collection contained any advertisements I would first find the Tacoma Public Library Records collection. Then in the Quick search bar type "Advertisement".

Once you have typed your search term into the Quick search bar press either enter or click the magnifying glass button to the right of the Quick Search bar.

If your Quick search has returned any results they will display in the quick search dropdown.
When looking for certain kinds of items or information in ORCA there are different ways of narrowing down specific results. Below are a few strategies that can help you.

By clicking on the Advanced search ORCA will open up a new window which will display the advanced search options.

When you click in the standard search bar at the top of the page you will see a Advanced Search Dropdown option appear below the search bar.

These advanced search options include Boolean search options, limiting results to a certain repository, filtering results by level of description, file, and date range.
For example, let’s say you are looking for a photograph you remember seeing in the collection previously. The photo was of two men in military uniform playing tubas. There are a few ways to go about finding it again.

**FIELD SEARCHING**

You could of course try to search for the keyword "Tubas" in any Field.

**Fields** are the different categories of information in a record. You can find the fields below any item in ORCA in the Elements area.
Field searches will default to any field but you can select a specific field by clicking on the drop-down and selecting a specific field.

By limiting my search to the "Scope and Content" field and searching tubas I was able to find the image I was looking for.

The search was successful since ORCA found the word "tubas" in the "Scope and Content" field.

Now, what can you do if your search term is not found? There are a few other ways to narrow down search results.
If you remember the collection where you saw the image of the men playing tubas you could jump to that creator and begin looking through the collection produced by that creator. To do that you click on the relevant collection in the "CREATOR" column on the left-hand side of the page. This will allow you to jump to all the collections produced by that creator. For example, if I knew it was the "Richards Studio Photographic Negatives Collection" that I previously saw the tuba photo in, I would want to click on the creator "Richards Photographic Studio". Then I could search through all the collections Richards created. They will appear at the bottom of the page.
Another way is to use Advanced Searching is to use the date range search.

This allows you to narrow down items by date or dates. This can be extremely helpful if you can remember the collection or institution and have a recollection of when the photo was taken or the item was created. Be sure to type in the date or dates in the preferred format: YYYY-MM-DD.

Note, if the item you are looking for does not have a date entered in the date field it will not show up since the field is blank.

As I mentioned earlier in the guide, a Repository refers to a certain location that materials are stored. Another way to think of repositories is they act like containers that hold specific collections. You can select a specific repository to search by limiting results to a specific repository.
Subject Access Points are terms organized hierarchically that relate to the content of an item. For example, if we look at the tuba photo we can see that this item has been tagged with the subject "Military -- Army".

Most subject Access Point terms have broader and narrower terms. For instance, the broadest term is "Military" and the narrower term is "Army". If we look at the tuba photo we can see that this item has been tagged with the subject "Military -- Army". Why? Because the men in the photo are dressed in army uniforms and are most likely in some sort of military band. These Subject Access Points are just terms to group related content together spread across other collections.
These Subject Access Points can also be browsed by clicking the "Browse" button at the top bar. Then click on "Subject". This will send you to a new page that lists all of the subjects.
The Subject Page organizes the same subject terms in two ways, **listed** and **nested**. **Listed** just means that the terms are laid out alphabetically on the page. **Nested** means that the subjects are organized by broader terms that open dropdowns of narrower terms.

**Nested**

Click on any subject term and the narrower terms related to that term will open up.

Subject terms make browsing easy since you can navigate related subject matter across collections and find related content quickly.
That concludes this training manual on ORCA. If you have any questions about using it please contact us.

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