

## RTC Library Search Tips: Searching Using Keywords and Subject Headings in KOHA, our Online Catalog for Books and Other Printed Items in the Library

When you know the title or an author of a book, finding it is generally quite straightforward in Koha. The main problems tend to come from our misremembering names or titles, rather than with the database itself.

**Keyword** searching – when you simply want to know what we have in a given subject – can be a bit trickier. When you do this, you make an educated guess about what terms are most likely to be associated with the book. Librarians add **subject headings** to books to classify them, but generally library users are becoming less and less familiar with these, due to the power of keyword searching. However, basic familiarity of how they work can help you to refine your results.

Case study: You are seeking books about the process of looking for a job. You make an entirely sensible guess, *job search*, and type it into the search box. Let's look at the results. First we'll look at a screenshot, to help you become more familiar with Koha's appearance, and then we'll discuss these results.

The screenshot shows a list of search results in the KOHA system. The first result is highlighted in blue. The second result is highlighted in yellow. The third result is highlighted in light blue. The fourth result is partially visible at the bottom.

- 1. **Guerrilla marketing for job-hunters : 400 unconventional tips, tricks and tactics for landing your dream job / Jay Conrad Levinson, David E. Perry.**  
by Levinson, Jay Conrad | Perry, David, 1960 January 12-.  
Material type: Text; Format: print; Literary form: Not fiction  
Publication details: Hoboken, N.J. : J, Wiley, c2005  
Availability: **Items available for loan:** [Call number: 650.14 LEV] (1).  
[Place hold](#)
- 2. **Eat, pray, love : one woman's search for everything across Italy, India and Indonesia / Elizabeth Gilbert.**  
by Gilbert, Elizabeth, 1969-.  
Material type: Text; Format: print; Nature of contents: ; Literary form: Not fiction  
Publication details: London : Bloomsbury, 2006  
Availability: No items available : **Checked out (1)**.  
[Place hold](#)
- 3. **Kahaani : A mother of a story / Pen India Pvt. Ltd. & Boundscript motion pictures pvt. Ltd. Present Kahaani, Directed and by Sujoy Ghosh, Produced by Sujoy Ghosh, Kushal Gada.**  
Material type: Film; Type of visual material:  
Publication details: India : Pen. India Pvt. Ltd & Boundscript Motion Picture Pvt. Ltd., 2008  
Availability: **Items available for loan:** [Call number: DVD KAHDESK] (1).  
[Place hold](#)
- 4. **Doctor Sleep / Stephen King.**  
by King, Stephen, 1947-.  
Availability: **Items available for loan:** [Call number: DVD KAHDESK] (1).  
[Place hold](#)

#1 is highly relevant – it is called Guerilla Marketing for Job Hunters: 400 Unconventional Tips, Ticks, and Tactics for Landing Your Dream Job. Great start! However, almost none of the subsequent results have what you are looking for. For example....

#2 is called Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India, and Indonesia. The word 'search' in the title helps to explain why it showed up in her results (and this also explains why this word is highlighted in red in our search results), but while the subtitle suggests the author

was searching for 'everything', that probably didn't include a new job: she already had a large book contract. Summing up, this book is a personal memoir, not a guide to help you find new employment.

#3 is the DVD Kahaani: A Mother of A Story. This is a Hindi thriller film, so why did it show up in our search? There is a seven sentence summary of the film in our cataloging record, and it includes the word 'job' and 'search' within it. Basically, we learn that Vidya Bagchi's husband started a new job, but when he disappeared, she didn't give up the search for him.

And on it goes, for the remaining 11 items in the search list! Should we give up our search, and conclude that RTC only has one book about searching for a job? No! One solution is to look carefully at the record for result #1 (see screenshot 2). There are three **subject headings**, and the best one for our purposes is *job hunting*. Click on the hyperlink, and you will find five additional books that are very similar. In addition, when you go to see the books and browse in that **call number**, you will see more books on related topics, such as how to write a resume and cover letter.

To understand this better, let's look at a screen shot for the book in result #1:

image available



**Guerrilla marketing for job-hunters : 400 unconventional tips, tricks and tactics for landing your dream job / Jay Conrad Levinson, David E. Perry.**

By: Levinson, Jay Conrad

Contributor(s): Perry, David, 1960 January 12-

Material type:  Text

Publication details: Hoboken, N.J. : J, Wiley, c2005

Description: xv, 270 p. : ill. ; 23 cm

ISBN: 0471714844 (pbk.); 9780471714842 (pbk.)

Subject(s): [Career development](#) | [Job hunting](#) | [Vocational guidance](#)

As indicated above, 'job hunting' is probably the best hyperlink for you to click on, but you might want to consider the other ones also.

Let's look at just one more example to understand how subject headings work. Think of an everyday technology that many of us use, but which often goes by different names: *thumb drive*, *flash drive*, *USB drive*, *memory stick* or, more formally, *USB flash drive*. Librarians need to choose **one** of these terms if they are classifying a book on the subject, otherwise things will become quite confusing. As above, if the term you choose doesn't match what's in the system, you will come up short. However, there's no need to feel intimidated: just understanding the general concept is an important first step. And if you are still having difficulties, don't hesitate to contact a librarian.

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