The Library Catalog

Libraries aren’t like book stores. Wandering around the shelves will only give you exercise. If you really want to find something, you need to use the library catalog. Ours is on the UWF Libraries’ homepage. The library catalog is a database that tells you what books and other physical items we have, and most importantly, where you can find them.

Say you want to find a copy of Beowulf, the Old English poem. Searching with Beowulf as a keyword, which is what this "anywhere" option means, will bring up everything we’ve got that mentions the word Beowulf anywhere: translations, criticism, history. Right now, though, we just want a copy of the poem, so we’ll search by selecting title in the drop-down menu and click “search.”

If you get too many results, you can narrow them down using the options in this left-hand column. But we only retrieve a little over a hundred results, so we’re fine. Okay, say you like this result, Beowulf: an edition with relevant shorter texts.

To get your paws on it, you start with the information in the gray line at the bottom of the entry. The first part tells you what library the book is in, because UWF has three libraries—and next to it is the name of the collection, because each library has multiple collections. In the center is the call number, which tells you where exactly in that collection the book can be found.

This particular book says it is in the UWF Library, which means the John C. Pace Library. It's located in the Book Stacks, and its call number starts with PR. This is when you consult the floor map button next to the call number. It shows that call numbers starting with PR are on the third floor. Once you’re up there, you’ll see signs that will guide you the rest of the way. Don’t worry, call numbers seem more complicated than they are. The P section here runs through the alphabet. PA, PB, PC, up through PQ, PR, PS, and so forth. PR lives between PQ and PS. Once you’ve found the PR section, 1583 will be after 1000 and before 2000.

Now, before you run off looking, it pays to check the last bit of info on the far right. It tells you whether or not the book is actually sitting on the shelf. If it says "available" in green, we’re good to go. Just get it off the shelf and check it out at the Circulation Desk. If you’d like some help, you’re welcome to stop by the information desk and ask a librarian. We know things can be hard to find. That's part of why librarians have jobs.