

Transcript: Finding a book in SOLO

Hello and welcome to this video on using SOLO to find a book.

SOLO stands for Search Oxford Libraries Online and it is the main resource discovery tool for Oxford University libraries. You can find SOLO online by searching 'SOLO Oxford'.

Anyone can use the SOLO catalogue to find out what resources the libraries have, and to use resources that are Open Access, as in, freely available online. However, to use most of our collections, you will need to either have a Bodleian Libraries reader card, or be an Oxford University member.

If you are an Oxford University member or a Bodleian Libraries card holder, the first thing to do before you start searching is to sign into SOLO at the top right of the page.

Once you have signed in, you'll see your name in the top right corner.

Using the simple search

You can see that in the middle of the page there is a single search box. This is the quickest way to start a search in SOLO. You can enter any relevant keywords into this search box and SOLO will look for those keywords in any order, and in all fields of the catalogue records. Keep the search query simple to begin with. It is best to use a few well-chosen keywords rather than copying and pasting in a reference complete with unnecessary punctuation. That can confuse SOLO and limit your results.

I'm going to look for a book called 'Research Methods in Education' by Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison.

For this, I will just use three keywords. An author's surname, Cohen, and a couple of key words from the title. So, 'education' and 'research'.

To search you then click the magnifying glass or press enter.

After submitting the search, SOLO shows you a list of results with a brief display of each item. Selecting a title opens a full display with more information and options to request items where relevant.

Now, I'm not seeing the title I want straight away, I could start scrolling through the six hundred thousand plus results. Or I could try more keywords in my search. However, to the left of the search results, you will see a list of options to sort and filter your results. SOLO defaults to sorting by relevance. This usually works really well, but you can also sort by date or alphabetically by author or title if needed.

Below this are lots of options for filtering by or excluding various categories from your results. Librarians refer to these options as facets. The top facet 'Show only' is very useful if you only want to see results that we have as 'online resources', say, or, if you are not a library member to only see Open Access results.

Depending on how many results you have and what you're trying to find, you might want to refine your search. In this case, as I know I want to find a book rather than a journal article, I'm going to filter by resource type so that it only includes books. This option can also be useful for removing articles that are book reviews of the title that you're interested in, as sometimes they can clutter up your results. To do this you hover the cursor over 'Books' and select the tick box that appears on the left of it. You can also see that to the right, an orange crossed out tick box has appeared. This is how you exclude a particular type of result.

But right now, I want to limit my results to just books so I will tick the box on the left.

Then I will 'Apply filters'.

Now, it may be that I'm planning on visiting a particular library and I just want to see the results that that specific library holds. So, I'm going to pick the Education Library.

Now, any active filters that you've applied will show up here and can either be removed individually or all reset at once to get back to your original results list.

So, we've searched Cohen education research. We've filtered by library to Education Library and resource type to books. And look, our top result is now the title we were looking for.

Clustered results

Notice that the brief display indicates that there are multiple versions of this title. This is a feature called clustering. SOLO will cluster together items that are related in some way. So that's usually different editions of a work or different formats of the work, such as a print and electronic version of the same book. There are 15 versions of this record. Clicking on the title will unpack the cluster and show the individual records.

Here we see the different records for the book we want. The first thing to note is that SOLO will show records 10 at a time. If I scroll to the bottom I can load more results. Now I can see all fifteen.

The next thing to be aware of is that, although SOLO can cleverly cluster records together like this, it's not so great at putting them in order within the cluster. So, you need to pay attention to things like the edition number and the date of publication, so that you don't end up reading an old out-of-date edition by accident. For example, this top record is from 2003 and it is the fifth edition. But the third is the rather more recent eighth edition from 2018. So, do watch out for that.

You may also have noticed that these top four records all say that they are an electronic resource and have a green online access link. This indicates that these are all e-books. Even if I filtered my results list to only see a specific type of resource such as such as physical resources, if a cluster of records contained that particular type of resource as well as others, you will see all the resource types within the cluster when you unpack it, that's just a feature of clustering.

SOLO will also try and get e-book records to appear at the top of the cluster for ease of access. I will come back to them shortly. First, let's take a look at the print book records.

Print books

I'm going to scroll down a bit further. Now the results that say Find & Request are the physical books. Again, let's try and find the most recent edition. So we've got fourth ... second ... third ... Oh, here we go. Right down at number 13, we have the eighth edition from 2018. So, we're going to click on Find & Request and see where we can find a print copy of this book.

Underneath Find & Request, we see a list of locations that hold the book. So, look down the list for a library that you have access to. Remember, generally, if you see college libraries on the list, you can

only use a college library if you are a member of that particular college. If you're not sure if you have access to a library, click the little info button next to it to find out more.

Now we're going to look at the Education Library, so we'll click on that.

Here we see a list of all the copies that the Education Library holds. The first column tells us the location of them within the library. LB 1028 COH is the shelfmark of this book, which will help you find it on the shelves.

Underneath the shelfmark, it tells us which room in the library it is in. In this case, the main room, but not all libraries do that.

The second column tells you the status of each copy. Look here to find out if a book is currently in the library and if it can be borrowed. You will need to be a university member in order to borrow books and you won't be able to borrow from all libraries. The Weston, the old Bodleian (with the exception of the History Faculty Library) and the Law Library, are the main libraries that do not lend any books, while some specialist ones only lend to their own faculty or department members. However, many of the Bodleian Libraries are a mix of lending and reference to all current university members.

The Education Library is one that lends a lot of their books. The top copy is one that can be borrowed. It has this status normal loan. At the Education Library this means that it can be borrowed for the standard loan period. Again, this standard loan period can vary between different libraries.

If a copy is currently out on loan to someone, you will see a due date in this column. As we can see here. So, this copy is out at the moment. If the book is on the shelves, it says available. Sometimes a library might operate more than one loan period, such as a short loan period for high demand books. You can see an example of this here for this second copy. The status column says it is a one day loan and that it is available on the shelf. The fact that it is a short loan is also indicated in the shelfmark where it says overnight.

The final copy, however, cannot be borrowed. This is indicated by the fact that in the status column it says 'library use only' and that the item is confined to the library. This is also indicated in the shelfmark.

Unfortunately, as all the libraries in Oxford have developed individually over the years, not all libraries use the same conventions. Some may use terms like 'books' or 'reference' instead of 'library use only', and might not say that they are confined to the library, but rather that they are available on the shelf. This can obviously be very confusing.

If you are planning to go to a library that you're unfamiliar with in order to borrow a book do check with staff beforehand if the information on SOLO is unclear to you, and they will be happy to help.

If you wish to return to the list of locations again, click on back to locations and filters.

To get back to the brief display, we click this big X to the left.

Now let's take a look at those e-book records.

E-books

So, I scroll back up to the e-book records at the top. SOLO operates a traffic light system for access to electronic resources. Where you see the green Online Access link - Green means Go.

Sometimes you come across an orange traffic light. That means access to full text is not guaranteed. If the traffic light is red, you will not be able to access the resource that way at all.

If you have difficulties accessing resources, do contact staff for help.

What you see and what it is possible to do with the resource after you click online access for a green labelled item varies depending on what type of item it is, and on the provider from whom we access it. You are connecting to different third party providers, so their platforms, although broadly similar, will all look different. And the extent of the access possible varies depending on what the provider allows in general or perhaps on the type of licence that we have purchased.

I'm going to click through to the eighth edition e-book so you can get an idea. There should usually be information on the landing page that tells you what the limits are (if there are any) for things like copying pages for pasting and downloading or printing chapter pdfs. But all e-books will have the option to read online and that is the quickest way to get reading with the least amount of hassle.

There are often options to download entire e-books for offline reading, but these usually require you installing free third party software, and the book will disappear from your device after a set amount of time.

If you are having difficulties with e-books, get in touch with staff or consult our e-books LibGuide for advice.

Let's return to SOLO.

There is another type of book that you may sometimes see in your results, and that is an electronic legal deposit book or 'eLD'.

As you can see, the fact that it is an eLD item is made very clear with the note on the brief record. Now, although eLD items are online resources, they are very restricted. They operate similarly to a print copy that cannot be borrowed. They can only be accessed by one person at a time on a library PC and they cannot be downloaded or copied from. It is possible to print from them within copyright limits i.e. one article or one chapter or 5 percent.

Often, we have another more accessible copy which will better suit your needs. Usually you will find any alternative versions when you unpack a record cluster just as we have here. But sometimes eLD records don't cluster as well in SOLO, so do double check your results list just in case if the title you want only seems to be available via eLD.

I hope that this video on finding a book in SOLO has been helpful. Thank you for watching.