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## Introducing: RefWorks

Refworks is a web-based bibliographic management tool that allows users to create personal citation databases and use them for a variety of research activities. RefWorks will facilitate your research by automatically generating parenthetical notes, endnotes, and works cited lists in the style of your choice. Because RefWorks is web-based, you can get to your account from any

location where you have Internet access.

In addition to the creation of personal reference databases, RefWorks allows users to share parts of their databases as well as specific folders for collaborative purposes.

To sign up for a RefWorks account, simply go to <http://refworks.ua.edu> and select the

link for either "On Campus" or "Off Campus".

It's free for UA students, staff, and faculty so why not give it a try today?



## Why Use Library Resources?

Librarians recognize that many students feel their research needs are met adequately by Google and other Web search engines. And hey, who can blame a student for using the Web? It's fast, easy, and offers a wealth of information on almost every topic under the sun. Library Web pages, on the other hand, can be confusing, difficult to navigate and bewildering to search. But have you considered what kind of information you're getting when you use something like Google to fulfill your research needs? While a good bit of the information you retrieve from a Google search will be unbiased and reliable, a lot of it will be untrustworthy, perhaps promoting someone's

personal agenda or simply giving you a sales pitch. In worst-case scenarios you may even find pages full of offensive or hate-filled rhetoric. Why is that? Well, unlike a library database which contains only copyrighted articles that were originally published in mainstream or scholarly journals, magazines and newspapers, *anyone* with Internet access and little know-how can publish a Web page and have it say whatever they want. Some publishers of Web pages are clever, disguising misinformation with academic writing. Distinguishing between authentic, verifiable information and that which is suspect can be tricky. Using a library database will allow you to actually shorten the amount of time you spend

on your research since the results of your search will only contain licensed, copyrighted materials from reliable sources. Many students are frightened away because they don't know how to access library databases, and truth be told, we know that it can be initially intimidating. But that is precisely why librarians are here to help you! If you need help starting your research, don't hesitate to contact us. We can work with you to put your research efforts on the fast-track to success.

To learn more about obtaining research assistance, contact Maryellen Allen, Distance Learning Librarian at [mallen@ua.edu](mailto:mallen@ua.edu) or visit the following web page: <http://www.lib.ua.edu/distanced/>.

## Did You Know...?

That Alabama distance learners enrolled in degree-seeking programs at the University of Alabama are eligible to use their Action Cards (Student IDs) to check out materials at other state universities? Schools that have reciprocal agreements with UA include:

- Alabama A&M
- Auburn University
- Beville State Junior College
- Huntingdon College
- Judson College

- Selma University
- Shelton State Community College
- Stillman College
- UAB
- UAH
- University of Montevallo
- University of West Alabama

If you live far from Tuscaloosa, but closer one of the schools listed above, you can check out books and other materials from a reciprocal borrowing institution.



*“Plagiarism is easily avoided. If you use the words or ideas of another person, simply cite them properly and you’ll have nothing to worry about.”*

## Plagiarism

You may have heard the word tossed around before, but do you know what plagiarism is? Many students don’t. The Oxford English Dictionary defines plagiarism as “The action or practice of taking someone else’s work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one’s own; literary theft.”

Plagiarism is definitely something to take seriously. In fact, The University of Alabama regards

plagiarism as academic misconduct, and those who engage in it are subject to penalties ranging “from a reprimand to a penalty as severe as suspension for a designated length of time or even indefinite suspension.”\*

Plagiarism is easily avoided. If you use the words or ideas of another person, simply cite them properly and you’ll have nothing to worry about. If you need assistance

determining whether or not something you’ve written contains plagiarized text, the University offers a service called Turnitin.com that will check your papers and give you a report showing how much of your paper matches already-published text. Your instructor will enable Turnitin assignments through your eLearning course.

\*<http://catalogs.ua.edu/catalog06/12600.html>

## Fall Online Research Workshops

Join us for a brief webinar on how to efficiently conduct research and use the Libraries’ online resources...all from the comfort of your own home! Participants in the introductory workshop will learn how to access the Libraries’ online resources (databases and electronic journals), assess a research topic, formulate efficient online research strategies, and obtain full-text

materials.

Fall workshops will be held on the following days/times:

**Sunday, October 19, 3:00 pm**

**Tuesday, October 21, 6:00 pm**

**Wednesday, October 22, 7:00 pm**

Please note: All times reflect Central Standard Time.

To sign up for one of these workshops, please contact Maryellen Allen ([mallen@ua.edu](mailto:mallen@ua.edu)) or call 205-348-8432.



# Research Assistance

The Libraries want to assure all off-campus users that doing research at a distance doesn't have to be an insurmountable challenge. Research help is available from a variety of online locations. Contact the Distance Learning Librarian via phone at 205-348-8432 or email [mallen@bama.ua.edu](mailto:mallen@bama.ua.edu). During nights and weekends, you can contact the Gorgas Information Services desk at 205-348-6047 or use the [Ask-A-Librarian](#) service located under the "Services" column on the Libraries homepage:

<http://www.lib.ua.edu/>



## Additional Assistance

Do you need more help than a short phone call or online chat can provide? Are you conducting in-depth research? You may wish to

schedule a one-on-one session with the distance learning librarian for more specialized assistance. Call Maryellen Allen at 205-348-8432 or email [mallen@ua.edu](mailto:mallen@ua.edu) to make arrangements. We can accommodate you with a variety of technologies including phone, live chat or instant messenger.

**Distance users can have both UA Libraries print and ILL materials mailed to them directly.**

# Materials Delivery Using Interlibrary Loan

If you are a student registered with the University of Alabama's College of Continuing Studies or if you are a registered University of Alabama graduate student outside Tuscaloosa, the library will check out books to you and mail them through the postal service.

Many off-campus users are reluctant to make use of interlibrary-loan (ILL) services

because they believe they'll need to drive to campus to pick up materials. Not so! Distance users can have both UA Libraries print and ILL materials mailed to them directly.

When requesting materials through interlibrary loan, simply make sure you set your status to "Distance Ed".

If you have additional questions about obtaining print materials or using the interlibrary loan service, please contact the Distance Learning librarian at 205-348-8432 or email [mallen@ua.edu](mailto:mallen@ua.edu).

In addition, you may view our brief online tutorial located at:

[http://www.lib.ua.edu/tutorials/ill/ILL\\_Tutorial.htm](http://www.lib.ua.edu/tutorials/ill/ILL_Tutorial.htm)

# Loan Periods for Distance Users

Now that you've gotten the books you need from the UA Libraries, how long can you keep them? Our loan periods are quite generous and every student has the ability to renew their materials online unless the material has been recalled by another user. Loan periods vary by your classification. The chart below outlines the loan periods for various types of materials and patron statuses:

Books and government documents:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undergraduate students - 30 days, 3 renewals; 50 items total</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faculty, Retired Faculty, Administrative Staff, Graduate Students - Fixed due dates of January 31, May 31, and September 30; all items due May 31 must be brought into the library for renewal; 200 items total</li> </ul>

\*Distance patrons are responsible for shipping materials back to the libraries within the allotted loan period.

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA**  
LIBRARIES

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## Mission Statement

In support of the UA Libraries mission to strive for excellence in advancing the University's teaching, research, and outreach programs, the University of Alabama Libraries provide its distance learning students with resources and services equivalent to those provided to on-campus users. Services extended to UA affiliated distance populations include such things as access to and use of both on-line and print-based information sources, library instruction, reference services, and limited technology assistance.

## Eligibility for Service

All students, faculty and staff currently enrolled in a degree-granting distance program offered by The University of Alabama are eligible for distance learning library services

## Keep In Touch!

Since the libraries are always changing, we encourage our distance users to keep in touch with us. Here are some of the ways we can stay in contact:

### Phone

Reference & Information Services:

205-348-6047

Distance Learning Librarian

Maryellen Allen

205-348-8432

### Email

Ask-A-Librarian

<http://www.lib.ua.edu/forms/refchatquest.htm>

Distance Learning Librarian

[mallen@ua.edu](mailto:mallen@ua.edu)

### Chat (Ask-A-Librarian)

<http://www.lib.ua.edu/forms/refchat.htm>

### Instant Messenger

Email the name of your IM client and your handle to [mallen@ua.edu](mailto:mallen@ua.edu)

### MySpace

<http://www.myspace.com/bamalibrarian>

### Facebook

Search for [mallen@bama.ua.edu](mailto:mallen@bama.ua.edu)

View profile and then click "Add to friends"

### At A Distance Blog

<http://distancelibraryservices.blogspot.com/>

### Blog RSS Feed

<http://distancelibraryservices.blogspot.com/atom.xml>

### UA Libraries Homepage

<http://www.lib.ua.edu/>

