

# Searching for Foreign Language Titles

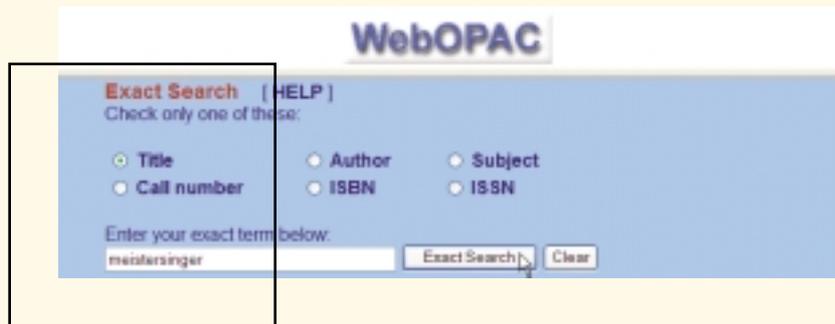
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In the previous issue of *ACIS Plug-In*, we carried an item on how to search for Chinese-language titles in the library database. In this issue, we would like to pass on some tips about searching for foreign-language (e.g. German or French) materials. We can already hear people asking, “Do you really have that many books in French and German?” Well, not really many books, but you must remember our substantial collection of operas and sound recordings. The operas especially can be accompanied by thick texts in three languages.

In most cases, there will be an English translation, but if for some reason it is not there or you happened to know the title only in the original language (or perhaps you want to impress or irritate someone), then you would need to know how to search for it in the library OPAC (Open Public Access Catalogue).

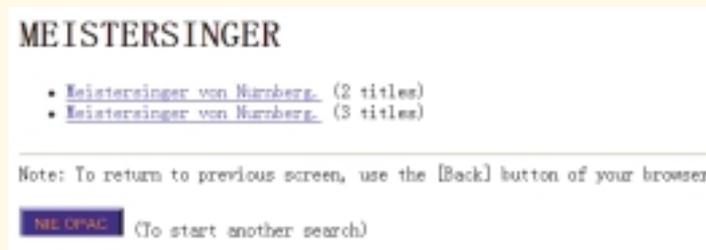
When searching English-language titles, you would know that the definite/indefinite articles (“A”, “An”, “The”) have to be omitted if they are the first word in a title. For example, if you were looking for “The Oxford companion to food”, you would key in “Oxford companion to food” and omit “the”. The same principle applies to other languages that have definite/indefinite articles. A few better-known examples would be “das”, “der” and “die” in German, and “la”, “le” and “les” in French.

For example, if you were searching for the opera, “Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg” (The mastersingers of Nuremberg), you would need to omit the first word “die” (pronounced “dee”, here it means plural “the” in German) and key in as follows:



The screenshot shows the WebOPAC search interface. At the top, it says "WebOPAC". Below that, there is a section for "Exact Search [HELP]". It asks the user to "Check only one of these:" and provides six radio button options: Title (selected), Author, Subject, Call number, ISBN, and ISSN. Below the options, there is a text input field with the text "meistersinger" and two buttons: "Exact Search" and "Clear".

You should get this result:



The screenshot shows the search results for "MEISTERSINGER". It lists two entries: "Meistersinger von Nurnberg. (2 titles)" and "Meistersinger von Nurnberg. (3 titles)". Below the list, there is a note: "Note: To return to previous screen, use the [Back] button of your browser." and a button labeled "WEB OPAC" with the text "(To start another search)".

But this is what will happen if you ignore instructions:



The screenshot shows the search results for "DIE MEISTERSINGER". It displays a message: "Not found or no more entries match key". Below this, there is a note: "Note: To return to previous screen, use the [Back] button of your browser." and a button labeled "WEB OPAC" with the text "(To start another search)".

You could try the same with Victor Hugo’s *Les Miserables*, i.e. doing an exact title search with and without the “Les” to compare results. Of course, if “the” appears somewhere in the middle of the title, it must still be keyed in. The definite/indefinite articles are omitted only if they appear as the first word in a title.

Hope all that helped, and happy searching!