

Organize Your Book Chaos

Of course, I'm assuming that your bookcase is in the same disarray that mine had slipped into over the years. Do you organize your books by ... alpha by author? topic? alpha by Title? Or, just fling them onto a shelf and hope for the best? Over the years, I had organized my quilting books by author but that didn't mean I could ever find anything since I couldn't remember the author's name.

After a particularly frustrating hunt for books containing star blocks, I decided it was time to find a computer database that would allow me to search for anything and find it/them in a FLASH.

What to look for?

- user friendly, in color with a photo (as opposed to the old dbase appearance - anyone old enough to remember dbase?);
- able to scan the ISBN number and have it automatically pull in the associated info to save typing it in;
- user could set the search criteria; and
- available as a mobile app for the smart phone so that I can check to see if I already own a book before I purchase a second one by mistake.

An online Google search plus a trip to the online App Store quickly turned up an assortment of database possibilities when using the term "book inventory." The search provided several good options that were especially for books and worth exploring, plus a few bad ones that didn't warrant a second look. I also read the consumer reviews for each to learn more from real world users. In all, I purchased five apps before I found **the winner: CLZ Books**. Other systems tried were Book Buddy+, Bibliophilia, and LibraryThing. The fifth system locked up immediately (just as one of the reviews had indicated) and, unfortunately, I deleted it before jotting down its name.

The Mechanics

First, using your Smart Phone, go to <http://www.collectorz.com/book>, purchase CLZ Books mobile app for either Apple or Android for \$14.99 or check out their free trial.

Prepare your books for scanning with your Smart Phone camera - Most books have a bar code on the back. Unfortunately, many of the bar codes are covered with the fabric store's price label. If some length of the bar code is visible, it will probably scan just fine. Otherwise, the price sticker can be removed with a straight razor blade.

Purge Alert: No sense scanning a book that you'll never use again. Start a box of books to take to the DIY Garage Sale at the Quilt Show.

Getting Started

- Touch the "+" symbol to add a book.
- Choose ISBN, or Manual. Follow the instructions. Tip: Pencil icon allows editing.
- Don't forget to click ADD.

Defining the Search Criteria

This is ACTUALLY fun because it gives you a chance to revisit your gorgeous quilting books for a purpose. I did this over 26 evenings of mostly mindless television ... one evening for each letter of the alphabet. The search categories that the ISBN number pulls in are too general

(quilt, craft, etc.) to be of any real use to a dedicated quilter. You can delete most of them and add your own. For instance: applique;, star block, hexagon, art quilt, landscape, design, traditional, etc. Whatever search words you choose, just make sure that you type them in the same each time.

Organize by Book Title: When reshelving, organize by alpha title simply because that font size is larger and easier to find and read on the book spine than is the author's name.

Timeline - It took most of a day to scan an entire book case and that included label scrapping and hand entry of those books without an ISBN number. Plus 26 evenings to enter the search criteria.

Now that you can find all your books, you will be so re-inspired in a big way. Remember how excited you were when you first bought that book and your plans to try new things? Now's your chance to finally give it a try.

Claudia Sammis, Web Manager
especials@sbcglobal.net, 408-219-5758