

QUT Library Collection Development Manual

3. Practices

3.2. Subscriptions

3.2.1. Electronic Books

Identification block

QUT Library Collection Development Manual	
3.2.1 Electronic Books	
Contact Officer	Associate Director, Library Services (Information Resources)
Approval Authority	Library Management Group
Approval Date	8 January 2008
Date of Next Review	14 December 2010

Policy statement

Table of contents

1. Purpose and scope
2. Background to existing collection
3. Description of existing collection
4. Scope of current collecting

3.2.1. Electronic Books

1. Purpose and scope

Note: Although ebooks may be one-off purchases and subscriptions, for convenience this policy is located in the section covering subscriptions.

An electronic book (ebook) is an electronic representation of a monograph, usually a parallel publication of a print copy. Ebooks can also be “born digital” (i.e. there is no print equivalent).

Ebooks are expected to comprise a growing proportion of the monograph collection over the next few years. Publishers are becoming more willing to make electronic versions of their books available (with the exception of textbooks), and there are signs that user acceptance of ebooks is increasing.

There is a range of purchase models for ebooks. They can be purchased title by title, or as bundled aggregations (covering a diverse range of subject matter) and subject-specific collections. Title by title purchases are one-off payments, whereas bundled

products may be subscriptions or one-off payments. Some models allow titles to be swapped for other titles at the end of the subscription year, provided the overall subscription purchase value is maintained. The unmediated, demand-driven model offered by Ebook Library (EBL) is likely to become more common in the future.

Aggregators of ebooks sold as one-off purchases may also require the payment of an annual platform fee, although this is usually a small amount.

The Library evaluates new ebook products and models as they become available. The advantages of the ebook format, such as increased accessibility, are seen to balance the disadvantages associated with ebooks, such as screen reading and navigation issues.

Electronic reference resources are not considered ebooks for the purposes of this policy. For guidelines on electronic reference resources, see the policy: [3.6.4 Reference Collection](#).

2. Background to existing collection

The Library has been slowly building its collection of ebooks through both subscription and one-off purchasing. The Library has chosen not to invest in the purchase of large collections of individual titles, preferring instead to select them on a title by title basis. The high cost of many bundled subscription databases has placed them out of the Library's reach. However, it is continuing to acquire small, subject-specific collections.

In 2007, the Library trialled the Ebook Library (EBL) demand-driven model, which enables the unmediated lending and acquisition of titles in the EBL collection. Following a five-month trial, a decision was made in November 2007 to continue with the model in 2008. The initial load of 50,000 records for non-owned EBL titles into the catalogue resulted in greatly increased exposure of ebook content, and users responded by making heavy use of titles in the collection on short term loan. A steady growth in titles acquired through auto-purchase will increase the Library's total collection of owned ebooks.

3. Description of existing collection

Ebooks accessed via the catalogue are in three categories: owned ebooks for which the Library has perpetual access, leased ebooks available on subscription, and non-owned ebooks available for short term loan from the EBL collection.

As publishers are not generally making textbooks available in ebook format, the ebooks in the Library's collection are not for required or recommended reading. They are being used as supplementary reading by undergraduates, for research purposes by academic and research staff, or as reference material.

In general, the ebooks selected for the collection are closely focused on the learning, teaching, and research needs of the University. The non-owned EBL ebooks accessed via the catalogue have broadened the scope of available titles considerably.

As the ebooks have been acquired from a range of different publishers and aggregators, access is provided through several different platforms via the web. Most platforms require the use of the Adobe Acrobat reader. Ebooks that require special hand-held readers are not acquired.

4. Scope of current collecting

4.1 Sources of funding

Databases of ebooks purchased on subscription are selected according to the guidelines in the policy: [3.2.2 Serials Including Electronic Databases](#). Proposals

for purchase may be submitted annually to the Information Resource Management Group (IRMG) for consideration as eTrials. Alternatively, the Branch Library Managers may make allocations for ebook subscriptions out of branch coursework monograph allocations, taken “off-the-top.”

One-off purchases of monographs are paid from individual monograph funds.

4.2 Ordering one-off ebooks

Both EBL titles and Blackwell's ECHO titles are available for one-off purchase on Blackwell's Collection Manager. Bennett's Etitles, currently available on James Bennett Online, will also be available on Collection Manager in 2008, when the two databases are merged.

There are alternative workflows for ordering ebooks from other vendors, such as NetLibrary or individual publishers. As these workflows are less convenient, ordering on Collection Manager is preferred if there is a choice.

4.3 Purchasing EBL ebooks

As access to non-owned EBL titles on short term loan is available via the catalogue, Liaison Librarians should only purchase EBL titles in the following cases:

- High use is expected (initial purchase is more cost-effective than the combination of short term loans and subsequent auto-purchase);
- Long term use is expected (initial purchase ensures enduring access, in the event that the records for non-owned titles are removed from the catalogue in the future).

4.4 Choice of vendor/platform

The over-riding principle is that the Library should try to minimise the number of platforms available for accessing ebooks. Where there is a choice of platform for one-off purchases, the predominant platform in use should be preferred. As EBL is currently the predominant platform, EBL titles should be preferred over others, including Blackwell's ECHO titles.

If there is no EBL title available, the following factors should be taken into account:

- Simultaneous use vs one user at a time;
- Restrictions on downloading and printing;
- Availability of perpetual access rights;
- Ease of use and overall functionality;
- Availability of MARC records;
- Acquisitions workflows.

4.5 Selection of electronic and print versions

For titles where both electronic and print versions are available, the following guidelines apply:

- For high use titles, both print and electronic versions of titles should be purchased.
- For titles that are expected to have light use, the ebook only should be purchased.

4.6 Licensing

The general principles for database licensing also apply to ebooks. (See policy: [3.2.2 Serials Including Electronic Databases](#).)

5. Access

Wherever possible, full catalogue records are obtained for ebooks in subscribed databases, with links to the full text. If full catalogue records are not available, brief records are created from lists on vendor databases for loading into the catalogue.

Owned ebooks purchased title by title are always fully catalogued.

Vendor-supplied records for non-owned EBL titles are loaded into the catalogue. When a title is auto-purchased, the EBL record is replaced by a fully catalogued record.

The URLs in the catalogue records are edited to provide access via EZProxy.

Access to ebook collections and aggregations is also provided via the Database page on the Library website.

Modification history

Date	Sections	Source	Details
16May 2006	Appendix: Guidelines for selecting e-books.	Associate Director Information Resources via IRMG. Approved LMG 16/5/06	Appendix added
13 Dec 2007	All sections	Associate Director Information Resources via IRMG.	Includes EBL demand driven model of selection. Selection preference for ebooks only for light use; ebook and print for high use titles.