

QUT Library Collection Development Manual

3. Practices

3.2.2 Serials including Electronic Databases

Identification block

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Policy statement

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3.2.2. Serials Including Electronic Databases

1. Purpose and scope

Serials provide current scholarly and professional information and are used extensively to inform research and teaching/learning at every university. While serials may be electronic or print, paid subscriptions or donations, the Library strongly prefers to provide serials in electronic format.

This policy deals with electronic and print serials obtained as individual subscriptions as well as electronic databases. For the purposes of this policy, databases include collections of full text journals, indexing and abstracting services, other reference resources, table of contents and alerting services, annual reports and company information, standards, images, datasets and interactive databases available on vendor servers or networked on local servers..

The transition from publishing in print to publishing in electronic format (e-publishing) for serials is close to completion in the marketplace. The next wave of e-database

publishing is likely to include born digital products with no pre-existing print equivalent. Current examples include interactive databases, image datasets and other primarily non-textual datasets.

The following information resources are not included within the scope of this policy:

- Electronic resources such as DVDs, CDs and computer discs designed to be used on individual PCs (these are dealt with in the [Non Book Policy](#)) http://www.library.qut.edu.au/pubspolicies/colldev/documents/POL_CDM_3.3.2.Non-books_FIN.pdf
- E-books (these are dealt with separately under the [E-book Policy](#)). http://www.library.qut.edu.au/pubspolicies/colldev/documents/POL_CDM_3.2.1.Ebooks_FIN.pdf
- Freely available databases, electronic journals and websites (these are dealt with separately under the [Internet Resources Policy](#)) http://www.library.qut.edu.au/pubspolicies/colldev/documents/POL_CDM_3.5.2.InternetResources_FIN.pdf
- Open access journals

2. Background to existing collection

As electronic serials become the norm, and because of the improved access to library clients associated with electronic publishing, the Library has replaced most print serials with their electronic equivalents. As a result, the Library's print acquisitions have reduced to less than 10% of current serial subscriptions and the number and variety of electronic serials and databases available to clients has grown exponentially.

Indexing and abstracting services were among the first electronic database products held by the Library and were purchased initially as standalone CDROMs. Later, networked versions were acquired. Journals in electronic format became available singly and some were available as CDROM databases. Soon after, they were available on the Web.

At first, the majority of products available in the marketplace related to science, technology and engineering, law and business. Since then, relevant products in the social sciences and humanities have been acquired.

Because of the relative expense of serial subscriptions and their high maintenance costs, the Library monitors its serials subscriptions very closely. Expenditure on subscriptions to databases and serials is normally kept to a limit of around 70% of the LRA as a whole. Purchase of new subscriptions often involves the cancellation of other subscriptions.

3. Description of existing collection

The Library maintains a wide collection of databases in every subject area relevant to the University's programs.

All current indexing and abstracting, table of contents and alerting services are available electronically. Most electronically available full text journals are in databases and the remainder are single electronic journal subscriptions or single electronic journals accompanying print subscriptions.

The diminishing remainder of current print subscriptions are normally bound to ensure that issues are not lost (see the [Binding and Repair Policy](#)). http://www.library.qut.edu.au/pubspolicies/colldev/documents/POL_CDM_4.1.Bindingr_FIN.pdf

4. Scope of current collecting

QUT Library prefers to purchase journals and reference resources in electronic form to maximise staff and student access. This has the added benefit of reducing the handling and maintenance costs associated with print issues. Web-based access is strongly preferred. Networked CDROM databases are generally not acquired due to technical difficulties and stand alone CD-ROM format is the least preferred method of mounting databases due to poor accessibility.

Journal databases are often bundles of full text journals from individual publishers or aggregations of full or partial full-text titles from various publishers compiled and sold by vendors.

Reference databases are usually the product of single publishers. Non-text databases are evaluated and selected according to their relevance to QUT learning and research.

The Law Library subscribes to and/or accesses the major Australian legal reference works, law report series, statutes and loose-leaf services in both print and electronic database format. Although this requirement is diminishing with the proliferation of electronic publishing, the nature of the law requires that the Law Library retain print versions as the permanent and unchangeable archive to certain of these works.

Additional detail regarding the Law Library collection is provided in the [Law Library Policy](#).

http://www.library.qut.edu.au/pubspolicies/colldev/documents/POL_CDM_6.5.Law_FIN.pdf

4.1. Selection

Paid E-trials

Each year an amount is allocated in the LRA to fund trials of new electronic products. These are usually databases, but may include e-journals if no other funding is available.

Liaison Librarians and academics propose products for consideration by the Library Information Resources Management Group (IRMG) and approval by the Library Consultative Committee on E-Trials.

The Library Consultative Committee on E-Trials meets annually. It comprises most members of IRMG and nominees of each faculty's Dean. The Committee evaluates products trialled in the previous year to select those worthy to add to the Library collections. It also approves new trials of selected products.

This annual selection process enables the University to take a considered approach to the range of new products available in the market. However, the mechanism is dependent on annual funding increases to the LRA sufficient to fund approved trial products.

Any print equivalent subscriptions are usually not cancelled until the e-trial product has been approved for continuation as an ongoing subscription.

Freely available e-trials

Freely available e-trials are also used to evaluate potential electronic database selections. These trials can be organised at any time suitable to Library staff and faculty stakeholders.

Individual Subscriptions

New individual serial subscriptions including inexpensive databases not suitable as paid E-trials are selected when there are funds available for purchase.

If there are sufficient funds in the LRA for an allocation for new Coursework or Reference serial purchases, either electronic or print serials may be selected by Liaison Librarians based on the teaching, learning and research needs of the University community. In these cases, proposals are considered by the Information Resources Management Group (IRMG).

If there are sufficient funds for new serial purchases in the Specialist Resources Faculty allocations, Liaison Librarians may order journals with the orders signed by the Dean, Branch Library Manager and Associate Director Information Resources.

Funds freed through voluntary cancellation of individual serials or electronic databases may be used by Liaison Librarians to order other serial titles, signed by Branch Library Manager and Associate Director Information Resources.

Duplication of print subscriptions in different branches is minimal and instances should be justified to Branch Library Managers

4.2. Licensing

All database and individual electronic journal licensing agreements are examined by the Library Resources Services Deputy Manager and signed by the LRSDM or the Associate Director, Library Services, (Information Resources), Director, Library Services, or Pro-Vice Chancellor (TILS) according to the QUT hierarchy of authority based on the expenditure amount. (see [MOPP G/5.1 Expenditure of University Funds.](#))

The following aspects of licensing are considered when a database or e-journal is considered for purchase:

Site licence

As a multi-campus university, QUT requires the licence to define it as a single site.

Definition of users

QUT prefers unlimited simultaneous user access, although the Library may negotiate lower usage limits for a price advantage, based on demand, as appropriate. Access from within QUT libraries by QUT alumni and members of the public is desirable.

Definition of use

QUT prefers definitions that allow for normal university teaching, learning, research and administrative use, as well as document delivery and Course Materials Database (CMD) use.

Conditions of use

QUT does not sign licences which have indemnity clauses that render QUT liable for damages due to breaches by its clients.

QUT does not agree to unilateral cut off of access by the vendor without notice.

Authentication

QUT prefers IP authentication. Institutional username/password is acceptable if available. Client specific passwords are not normally acceptable.

Content

QUT prefers the vendor's licence to describe the content and to offer QUT a refund for the loss of considerable content during the licence period.

Term

One year licences are strongly preferred, as these suit the Library budget cycle. Multi year terms are only considered when they are required under consortial agreements, and when considerable cost savings are offered. Opt out clauses are inserted into multi year licences wherever possible.

4.3. Perpetual Access

Perpetual access (archive) rights are very important to QUT's electronic resources policy. Where print and electronic formats are provided as one subscription, or where no perpetual access to the electronic format is available, and where the backset is essential to QUT teaching and research, QUT will continue to acquire and retain the print backset as an archive

Perpetual access in electronic form is always highly desirable in the selection process but it is not a mandatory requirement. The costs associated with acquisition and retention of print format serials are considered alongside the ongoing importance of the back issues to QUT teaching and research and the suitability of access to older issues via Document Delivery

QUT supports collaborative endeavours to ensure libraries have ongoing access to published electronic resources and these resources are preserved in cases where publishers go out of business eg PORTICO, CLOCKSS, LOCKSS.

4.4. Hosting

QUT strongly prefers remote hosted perpetual access from the publisher or an approved institution's server rather than locally hosted DVD or CDROM based archiving. Local hosting is only acceptable when the data is presented within a database structure.

Local hosting of networked CD-ROMs or DVDs is only acceptable where:

- No remote host option is available
- Low usage is predicted, and local hosting offers a cost saving
- A searchable number of documents are involved.
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4.5. Fund codes

The Library tracks expenditure on electronic and print subscriptions separately through its fund codes. Each current subscription is assigned to a fund code in the LRA:

Cross Faculty Database Pool

Bundled fulltext databases whose content covers more than one faculty or is relevant to one of the University's multidisciplinary institutes are paid for from this Pool. ETrials are also funded from this Pool for the 1 year duration of the trial.

Central Reference Pool

Electronic reference services are paid for from the electronic reference fund codes. Print reference serials are subassigned to the relevant branch library fund codes.

Coursework Pool

Coursework serials are generally high use and are required to support coursework students in their learning. Coursework serials are sub assigned to faculty fund codes.

Specialist Resources Pool

Specialist resources serials are required by a specialist group usually to support current research. They are subassigned to faculty fund codes.

4.6. Orders

All orders or contracts are authorised according to the QUT hierarchy of authority based on the expenditure amount (see [MOPP G/5.1 Expenditure of University Funds](http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/G/G_05_01.jsp)). http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/G/G_05_01.jsp

Gratis subscriptions must be authorised by Branch Library Managers.

Where possible, the Library seeks to obtain the best possible deal by joining CAUL consortia offers. However, e-trial subscription periods are timed to fit with the Library Consultative Committee processes.

CAUL deals may be taken up at the time of the trial if this provides significant cost advantages. Arrangements to approve and fund these will be made by IRMG.

4.7. Backsets

The Library only buys backsets of current subscriptions in electronic format except in rare cases where only print is available. Backsets are usually paid for from monograph fund codes. Where perpetual access is provided in electronic format, duplicating print backsets are generally discarded.

The Liaison Librarian will advise the Library Resource Services Deputy Manager of the need to retain backsets of cancelled print serials.

4.8. Usage statistics

The Library monitors and records usage statistics for each product and employs this data in reviewing the continuing provision of products.

Title level usage statistics are also reviewed for significant publisher collections where the ability to substitute and cancel individual titles is provided and/or to assess the most cost-effective purchase model.

4.9. Annual review of database subscriptions

IRMG reviews all the Library's database subscription products on a rolling basis prior to renewal each year considering unique content, usage, value for money and the needs of client groups.

Databases valued at >\$100,000 per annum are annually reviewed as part of the Library's adherence to the Qld. State Government's Purchasing Procedures Guidelines to ensure that the University is continuing to get value for money from these expensive investments.

4.10. Cancellations

As a result of the annual review process for databases or changed client needs the Library may cancel subscriptions. The Library may also be forced to select subscriptions for cancellation due to LRA budget pressures arising from serials inflation, adverse exchange rates or requirements to build resources in a new area without additional funding.

Liaison Librarians and Branch Library Managers (as required) consult and negotiate with relevant academic staff.

Cancellations should be notified to the Library Resource Services Deputy Manager as soon as possible and by the deadline of mid August to enable vendors and agents to be notified prior to renewal. Renewal of database subscriptions may occur at any time during the year, and it is imperative that databases identified for cancellation are not inadvertently renewed.

Electronic journal subscriptions

Electronic journal subscriptions are considered for cancellation or reduced access based on unique content and availability of alternative products, usage, ongoing relevance of material to QUT community, perpetual access, cost.

Print serial subscriptions with electronic equivalents

Print serial subscriptions with electronic equivalents are normally considered for cancellation, **except** where:

- The print version contains substantially more information
- The information is more comprehensive in the print than the electronic equivalent
- The electronic version is embargoed and access to current issues is critical
- The quality of the graphics or images is important (eg architecture, design science) and these are superior in the print version

Print serial subscriptions with no electronic equivalents

Print serial subscriptions with no electronic equivalents are considered for cancellation based on:

- Unique content and availability of alternative products
- Light usage
- Ongoing relevance of material to QUT community
- Cost
- Availability on document delivery

4.11. Transfer of holdings

A print serial and its backset may be transferred to another branch library if the bulk of its potential users have relocated to that campus or the holdings are rationalised. Fund codes and catalogue records are adjusted accordingly. Transfer to Store is covered by the [Central Store Policy](#).

http://www.library.qut.edu.au/pubspolicies/collddev/documents/POL_CDM_4.11.Store_FIN.pdf

5. Access

Wherever possible, electronic journals are fully catalogued in the Library catalogue with a link to the full text, whether they are sourced from electronic databases or subscribed to individually from publishers' Web pages.

Print serials are fully catalogued in the Library catalogue. Therefore, the Library catalogue contains a full listing of all serials in the Library.

Access via IP address on the WWW is strongly preferred. EZProxy is used to facilitate access for QUT clients seeking access from their own Internet provider.

Databases are arranged alphabetically and by subject on the Library Webpages with descriptive information on their content, characteristics and access. They are also available through the Library catalogue.

Individual full text e-journals from the databases are only listed in the Library catalogue.

The Library enhances QUT client access to its serials wherever possible eg:

- **Google Library Links program** which enables QUT clients who find article references in Google Scholar to link through to the full text of the article in the library database
- federated search solutions
- resource discovery platforms

Modification history

Date	Sections	Source	Details
8 Dec 2005]	[4.2 Licencing. Term	Associate Director, Information Resources via IRMG	Updated
29 Nov 2007	All sections	Associate Director Information Resources via IRMG	Complete revision of policy combining former policy 3.2.3 Serials with 3.2.2 Electronic databases into a new 3.2.2 Serials including electronic databases.
