The British Library Refines Print Acquisition with ProQuest's OASIS

**THE CHALLENGE:**
**MAXIMISING EFFICIENCY IN THE BOOK SELECTION AND ACQUISITION PROCESS**

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and the second largest library in the world by number of items catalogued. So it’s safe to say that the Library, a national institution with a more than 40 years, has goals and needs that stand apart from the average public or academic library.

David Lofthouse from the Content Development and Implementation Department at the British Library works with selectors, acquisition staff and budget holders at the Library to help the organization maximize its budgets, streamline existing processes and devise new processes while building relevant collections.

The Library follows public procurement policy to ensure it obtains value for its money and as a member of LUPC (London Universities Purchasing Consortium) has access to the SUPC (Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium) Book Framework agreement. In 2015, the Library awarded the English Language Print Books contract to ProQuest (Coutts) via this agreement. The British Library looks to continually review processes with suppliers to make the most of all opportunities for further efficiencies both at the implementation of the contract and also through a schedule of regular service review meetings.

**THE SOLUTION:**
**OASIS BOOK PLANS FROM PROQUEST**

With the contract in place, David’s team at the British Library worked with ProQuest to put into place the plans and processes that best met the Library’s needs. The Library decided on two main book acquisition workflows:

- **Approvals Plan via OASIS** for selecting a broad range of titles from a wide variety of publishers and subjects. Acquisitions records are loaded to the Library’s ALEPH system and integrated with EDI processing of invoices for maximum efficiency. According to David, “For the Library, approval plans are a resource efficient process that gives a steady supply of relevant content with minimal staff intervention once established.”

- **New Title Alerts Plans via OASIS** for areas where the Library needed to be more selective and mindful of budget (titles from specific geographical or subject areas, for instance). Several Alert profiles were developed for different collection areas. Orders resulting from Alerts are processed as regular firm orders via EDI from the Library’s ALEPH system with EDI invoicing.
“ProQuest staff from IT and Selection met our needs and reacted promptly to help us refine our profiles and react to changes.”

**Fine-tuning profiles with data**

The efficacy of an Approval or New Title Alert plan depends upon the accuracy of its profile. The British Library worked closely with ProQuest in fine-tuning the initial profiles:

- A profile draft was supplied by the Library based on its own selection criteria.
- ProQuest provided data of profile matches over the previous 6 and 12 months, which the Library’s staff used to refine profile parameters before “going live” with the profiles.
- Profiles are not static; periodically, the Library monitors approval book content supplied and provides feedback to further refine the profile. For Alert plans, the Library analyzes not only the alerts supplied (downloaded periodically from OASIS) but also the orders resulting from the alerts. Both are used to refine the profile to ensure that selection staff see only the most relevant content.

**RESULT: A SMOOTH TRANSITION AND A STREAMLINED PROCESS**

The transition to ProQuest for English-language print books, said David, took place rather smoothly, and any kinks “were ironed out quickly.” He points to a more streamlined process in place that frees up time for the selectors.

New Title Alerts are expected to create a more steady and predictable spend pattern. Going forward, David sees opportunities for making even better use of OASIS workflows to add greater efficiency to the print acquisition process to meet the Library’s growing needs.

In all, refining the print acquisition process with ProQuest OASIS has been a positive experience, said David. “ProQuest staff from IT and Selection met our needs and reacted promptly to help us refine our profiles and react to changes.”

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**About the British Library**

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world’s largest libraries. Its collections include more than 150 million items, in over 400 languages including books, magazines, manuscripts, maps, music scores, newspapers, patents, databases, philatelic items, prints and drawings and sound recordings.

[www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)

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**PROQUEST SOLUTIONS USED:**

- OASIS Approval Plan
- OASIS New Title Alert Plan
- OASIS Firm Orders

To learn more about OASIS, contact your ProQuest account representative or visit [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com)