One Size Does Not Fit All for University of Leicester

Over the last 100 years, the University of Leicester’s David Wilson Library has built an extensive and impressive collection of print and digital resources. Though overall the Library relies on the Dewey Decimal System to organize this collection, librarians are faced with organizational inconsistencies across subjects.

“We often have faculty members request classification scheme adjustments to more accurately reflect the nature of the collection. For example, the Dewey Decimal System doesn’t place all titles about Picasso together. If the subject of the title is Picasso’s sculpture, the book is housed in a different area of the library than books that focus on the artist’s paintings. Faculty deemed it would be easier to locate art titles if they were physically close to each other, so we reclassified this subject to meet this need,” shared Paul Holland, Metadata & Content Services Manager.

Because Art History is not the only subject in its own local classification scheme, it’s “been quite tricky” according to Holland. “We also have an extensive Law collection and if we relied on Dewey, it would be organized based on American Law, which wouldn’t meet our researchers’ needs.”

Special local schemes for certain subjects, paired with the fact that some of the subjects in the Library’s collection have been migrated to newer versions of the Dewey Decimal System and others have not, means a one-size-fits-all approach to buying content and preparing it for the shelf won’t accommodate this large and growing collection.

How could the Library manage these inconsistencies to thoroughly meet needs of the University’s researchers? Through a partnership with the leading content provider that has the technology that facilitates management of special schemes and a team that’s willing to work closely to meet their needs. They found this partnership with ProQuest.
A Hands-on Approach Accommodates Special Schemes and Unique Needs

“For the last five years, we’ve bought all the content that we can through OASIS and we only go elsewhere — direct to publishers or to another supplier — if we can’t get the content through OASIS. We prefer to have the consistency of process that’s possible with this acquisition system,” added Paul.

Consistency is a comfort because librarians can focus on the many special schemes that they have to manage, but what’s most important is ProQuest’s response when that consistent process doesn’t quite fit. According to Holland, the Library’s ProQuest account manager is very responsive to emails and calls and she’s quick to escalate over to the more technical team if necessary to get questions answered promptly.

“We’ve had a personal rapport with the ProQuest team from the very beginning, which helped when we were setting up our initial streamlined processes and is still useful when we have to pivot to handle unique situations as well,” added Joanne Dunham, Head of Collections & Information Systems.

Ordering is simplified and the additional shelf-ready and cataloging services that OASIS offers carry through the rest of the acquisition process as well. “We have quite strict cataloging requirements,” said Holland. “The OASIS cataloging team first attempts to source records to meet our criteria. If it’s not possible, they produce a customized record for us. They’re quite accommodating since they offer multiple levels of cataloging support.”

About University of Leicester

Currently ranked in the top 1% of universities in the world by Times Higher Education, the University of Leicester is a leading UK University that serves over 20,000 students, with over 12,000 of those being undergraduates. The University community’s research needs are met by the David Wilson Library on the main University campus, which offers borrowing, scanning and photocopying, study space, document supply from other libraries, Digital Humanities, copyright advice and more.

KPIs Met — and More Easily Tracked — with ProQuest

Working with ProQuest, print books are shelf-ready and more quickly on the Library’s shelves. Ebooks are more quickly discoverable in the Library’s discovery platform. Detailed analytics make it possible to prove that the Library’s key performance indicators (KPI) around content acquisition are met.

“We’ve publicly committed to 90% of print books being available within six weeks of order. Because this has been a public-facing KPI, we had previously tracked it—but not easily. Once we migrated to ProQuest’s platform, it became possible to run a quick report that showed our percentage, which we’re proud to say is consistently 97-98%,” shared Holland.

“In addition to proving return on investment, these detailed analytics offer financial benefits to the Library as well. Specifically, we’re a member of a consortia that offers discounts if we place a certain percentage of our orders with one supplier. We’re able to do this since ProQuest accommodates our workflows, and their detailed reporting makes it possible to prove it in order to receive the discount,” added Dunham.

The University of Leicester Library is excited about how the current workflow flexes to meet their needs, and is looking forward to other updates on the horizon that will facilitate meeting additional KPIs and reporting progress towards them as well.

“Specifically, I’m excited to migrate more of our content to ProQuest Ebook Central since the platform makes it quite easy to report our title licenses. We have a public commitment to hold multi-user licenses for all essential readings on our reading list. Ebook Central makes it easy to see that we’re fulfilling this commitment and flexible licensing models like Demand-driven Acquisition (DDA) help us to provide this instant access on our budget. OASIS and Ebook Central are both built with a focus on customers’ needs and both ProQuest platforms facilitate showing our faculty and researchers the value that our Library provides to our University community.”

PROQUEST SOLUTIONS USED:

- OASIS, including ordering, cataloging and shelf-ready services
- Databases and Journals, including Dissertations and Theses
- Print books
- Ebooks (DDA, Subscriptions and Firm Orders)
- Ebook Central