Demand-Driven Acquisition Supports Freie Universität Berlin in Building its Primary Source Collection

German academic library chooses access-and-build model to support immediate and long-term access

Freie Universität Berlin was founded in 1948 by professors and students who were no longer willing to put up with the political repression in the Soviet Occupation Zone. That year also marks the beginnings of what is today Freie Universität Berlin University Library, one of the largest university libraries in Germany. With nine cooperating library units at 13 locations, it provides Freie Universität members with access to a wide range of resources to support their academic endeavors. The library's collection includes a variety of formats, from print to electronic resources, making it a vital hub for research and learning.

Photo: Philologische Bibliothek of Freie Universität Berlin. Image Credit: David Ausserhofer
with information and information infrastructure. In addition to the Central Library and the department libraries, the University Archive and the Center for Digital Systems (CeDiS) are also part of the University Library.

In a major organizational development project since 2019, development and change processes were set in motion to ensure that the university library is optimally positioned to meet future requirements. All organizational aspects were addressed: strategic orientation, structure, processes, culture, and service portfolio.

One Library, 13 Locations

The Freie Universität Berlin Library has a strong focus on research, teaching and learning. In addition to overseeing collections, the library is also in charge of the implementation and configuration of IT services. Responsibilities include:

• Supporting 36,000 students and 2,500 to 3,000 teaching staff
• 8.5 million items
• 400 library staff
• 9 library units in 13 locations
• Institutional repository / dissertation archiving
• University bibliography
• Competence center for e-learning, e-research and multimedia
• Digitization services
• 1.7+ million ebooks
• 54,000+ electronic journal
• 2,000+ databases
• 500,000+ open-access resources

A Tailored Solution for Comprehensive Primary Source Resources

The current library team set out to find a way to provide a comprehensive collection of high-quality resources that would be easily accessible to faculty, researchers and students. The objective was to enhance services by expanding the collection with a range of content that could be easily managed in one place.

“Evidence-based selection is a valuable method because it allows you to make a large variety of databases accessible for your university at a reasonable price.”

(Mario Kowalak, Head of Acquisitions)

It was important to the library that the resources could be tailored and selected to cover the requirements for different subject areas. In 2020, during the run-up to choosing a product, different subject teams were involved to gather input and outline source recommendations.

“All library units were involved in the process of selecting the databases for the program: The Central Library provided a list to the subject librarians so they could allocate priorities to the available sources.”

(Sean Nowak, Electronic Resource Management Team)

Starting from their long-standing connection in the supply of electronic resources, the library chose to work with ProQuest, Part of Clarivate. It was decided that the Select Access and Build model should be used to add ProQuest primary sources to the library’s resource collection.
“Every librarian knows that it has been and still is critical that we provide resources that are needed. With the PSBM model we expect to be able to serve our patrons even better in so-called niche segments.”

(Andreas Brandtner, Executive Director of the University Library)

Select Access and Build Model

The Select Access and Build model helps libraries find the right balance between providing access to an extensive range of content and owning content in perpetuity.

ProQuest Primary Sources

ProQuest Primary Sources helps users:
- Develop critical-thinking skills
- Interpret secondary sources
- Inspire new thinking
- Improve academic results

This database contains more than 380 primary source collections spanning more than 350 million pages of content.

The positive impact of Select Access and Build

In the ever-changing research landscape, it is more essential than ever to provide high-quality sources that faculty, researchers and students can access wherever they are. The Select Access and Build

For more information on ProQuest Primary Sources and other databases from ProQuest, visit the ProQuest website www.proquest.com