

CHOICE connect

A publication of the Association of College and Research Libraries | A division of the American Library Association

October 2017 Vol. 55 No. 2

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global Database Review

The following review appeared in the October 2017 issue of CHOICE:

General

55-0449 [Internet Resource]

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global Database (PQDT Global). ProQuest, 2017. Contact publisher for pricing (based on FTE, Carnegie Classification, and other factors); annual academic subscription begins at about \$15,570.00. Internet Resource. <http://www.proquest.com/>

[Visited Jul'17] Even though a growing number of universities make their theses and dissertations freely available via open-access platforms, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global Database, last reviewed in 2008 (CH, Sep'08, 46-0008), continues to be the largest single database to amass the record of graduate research work. Covering the range of disciplines, the database provides access to abstracts describing more than four million theses and dissertations from more than 3,000 institutions worldwide (the earliest dates back to 1637, from the University of Groningen, Netherlands). Full-text PDFs are available for approximately half of the records, from as far back as 1743 (from the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, Germany). ProQuest updates the database with more than 130,000 records annually, and the recent addition of 270,000 works from China expands international coverage significantly.

ProQuest database subscribers will find the familiar search interface, providing both basic and advanced search options. The hierarchical arrangement of the Subject or Location browse sections—by Country > State (where applicable) > Institution > Subject—is intuitive and usefully tallies the number of documents under each heading. The basic search option allows limiting to full text or doctoral dissertations, but more powerful advanced-search options offer many user-friendly features: field-specific searching with "look up" indexes of entries for authors, advisors, universities, subjects, and keywords. Some users may have difficulty differentiating between subjects and keywords, but online help provides clear descriptions of field codes. Users can also narrow searches by manuscript type, master's theses versus doctoral dissertations, language, and publication date. Responding to the growth of multimedia theses and dissertations, ProQuest began in 2008 including in the database supplemental files submitted by the author. Accessible from the search results and record displays, these multimedia files may consist of video, audio, or other file types; searching requires use of the appropriate field code.

The search results display is cleanly organized and highlights search terms. Users can toggle between brief or detailed views and narrow searches by full text, publication date, subject, keyword, institution, location, or language. The bar graph feature is a useful tool that segregates the returned search results by decade and helps visualize publication trends. Formats available for displaying the search records include the bibliographic record with the abstract, and either a preview of the first 24 pages or the complete document. The files sizes for both these formats are conveniently noted. Users have the option to email, print, save, or download records in a wide variety of citation styles. Overall, most academic librarians will find PQDT Global a beneficial, powerful database that provides significant advantages to users of all levels who need to discover and search these specialized materials.

--T. M. Owen, University of Maryland

Summing Up: Highly recommended. Beginning students through professionals/practitioners