



Using Evidence to Build Better Collections: Why the University of Manchester Library Switched to ATO for Ebooks

As one of the most well-respected academic libraries in the United Kingdom, the University of Manchester Library prides itself on building collections that meet the diverse needs of its patron population. Beginning in 2012, the library embarked on a journey to grow its ebook content with input from patrons using Demand-Driven Acquisition. In the years that followed, Manchester continued to tweak its strategy, ultimately becoming an early adopter of Access-to-Own (ATO).

Des Coyle, Content Purchasing Manager for the University of Manchester Library, spoke to ProQuest about his experience with ATO – and why his library continues to use it.





Des Coyle
*Content Purchasing Manager,
University of Manchester*

The University of Manchester Library: Serving a Strategic Need with Ebooks

One of only five National Research Libraries in the UK, the University of Manchester library is resourced with more than four million printed books and manuscripts, more

than 41,000 electronic journals, several hundred databases, and more than half a million ebook titles. The library aligns with the university's key strategic goals: providing the means for world-class research, creating an outstanding learning and student experience, and acting with social responsibility.

Coyle leads the library's team responsible for monograph acquisition, managing the budget for both demand-driven and traditional acquisition. His team looks closely at trends and hot topics when building and refining its strategy.

"Our current priority in terms of student experience is to support the university's emphasis on digital learning," Coyle said. "Ebooks have a key role to play in this area, as they support our aim to provide a friction-free service with 24/7 access."

Manchester's Initial Adoption of DDA

Manchester's key driver for ebook acquisition is ensuring patrons have access to titles at their "point of need." This need is evidenced either by specific student or faculty requests, or meaningful usage of titles already in the library's collection. The library uses a combination of acquisition models to build its ebook collection, including title-by-title purchasing, subscription, outright purchase of collections or packages, approval plans, DDA, evidence-based acquisition (EBA), and ATO.

Usage-Based Ebook Acquisition Models

Demand-Driven Acquisition (DDA) allows libraries to acquire ebooks based on usage. With a DDA program, when a patron uses a title in a meaningful way – including extended browse, download or print – the library receives a trigger notification to loan or purchase the book.

There are several different types of DDA, including:

- **Conventional DDA**, where triggers lead to a purchase
- **Short Term Loan (STL)**, where triggers lead to a loan
- **Access to Own (ATO)**, where triggers lead to a loan that is credited towards purchase

In an effort to build an ebook collection that better addressed the needs of its users, Manchester adopted DDA in 2012 working with another ebook vendor. In 2015, they moved their DDA program to ProQuest – in part because the ProQuest Ebook Central platform offers Patron Analytics, giving them greater insight into their users' behavior.

Manchester's initial DDA goal was to expose as much content as they could within the parameters of their profile, significantly increasing the availability of titles at the library. This scheme was extremely popular with users and lasted just under a month in duration. Subsequently, they narrowed their DDA parameters to exclude content where the STL price was greater than 25% of the purchase price, which resulted in the pool of exposed titles shrinking but the schemes lasting for longer.





At the same time as Manchester refining their DDA program, many publishers were reevaluating their participation in STL and many instituted higher prices or withdrew from STL altogether. This led to further reductions in the pool of available titles. And that's when Manchester requested a move to ATO.

Making the Switch to ATO

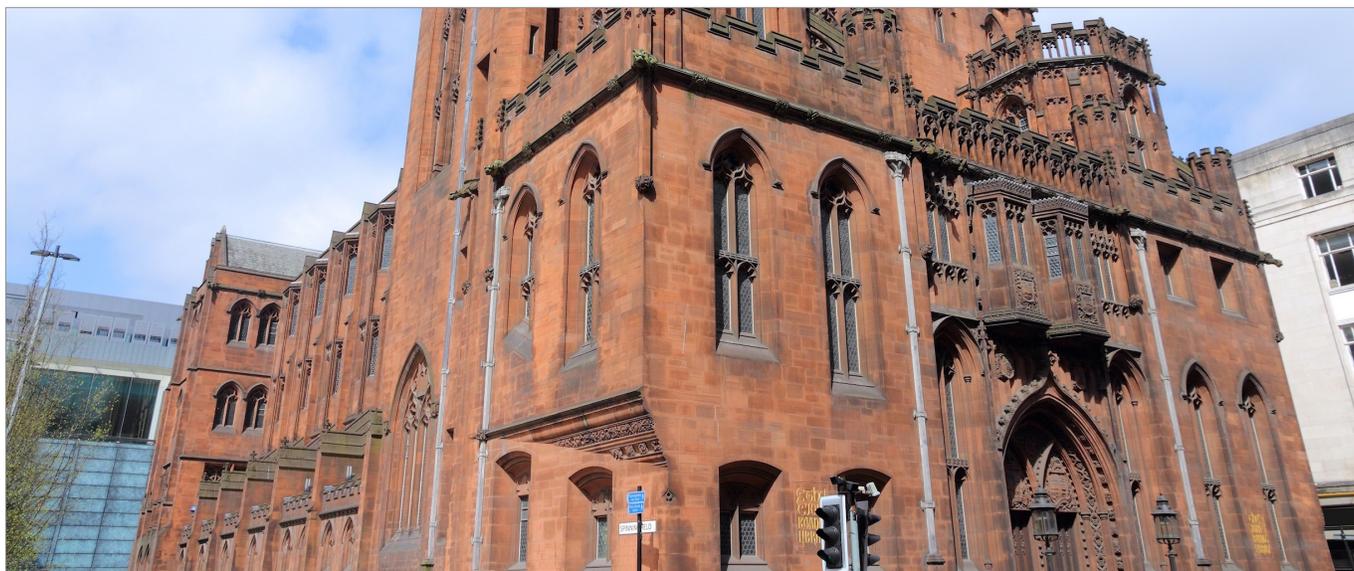
ATO, launched by ProQuest in 2016, enables libraries to grow their ebook collections by applying spend on loans toward perpetual purchases, so they're able to expand their owned collections rather than just spending money on access. ATO also brings back frontlist content that may have been previously embargoed from STLs by publishers.

To facilitate Manchester's move to ATO, ProQuest completed necessary development work, ensuring items purchased through ATO were not automatically removed by Ex Libris Alma – the cloud-based library services platform also used by Manchester – at the end of the ATO scheme. Once that development was complete, Manchester made the switch to ATO in 2017.

The benefits of ATO for the University of Manchester library included:

- The availability of a broad range of titles, including key frontlist content that was previously excluded based on the library's previous STL cap criteria (less than 25% of the purchase price)
- Better value for their money, with the ability to purchase frequently used titles at close to the original purchase price – 105% of purchase price for backlist items, and 110% for frontlist items
- A credit towards previously used titles from past STLs
- Streamlined purchasing workflows
- Detailed patron analytics

Coyle said that Manchester's current ATO profile is tailored to include materials at undergraduate level and above, covering most academic subjects and some non-English literature titles. "We exclude publishers who provide mostly non-academic content, and set our profile to only include recent publication dates so we're ensuring that we provide students with up-to-date material," he said.



Using ProQuest's title-matching capabilities in combination with Alma, the library is also able to de-duplicate its ATO profile with other titles already in the library to prevent paying for materials twice. "We needed to make sure students got access to the content they wanted," said Coyle. "ATO offered us a real value for our money."

Measurable Outcomes from Usage-Based Acquisition

Overall, Coyle said that Manchester's experience with ATO has been positive, and that it supports the library in its aim to provide "a friction-free experience for our customers, and access to content at the time they need it." With ATO, "the evidence of previous loans will build up to trigger a purchase, so we know if something is purchased, it has meaningful evidence behind it," he said.

If a requested title isn't available through ATO, the library can still purchase it through a different acquisition model. In addition, Manchester uses ProQuest's Extended Access model to prevent turnaways – a model that lets libraries choose to upgrade to a multi-user access model if it's available, take a STL, or purchase another copy if a user tries to access an ebook already in use. Extended Access has resulted in a reduction in queries related to ebook access and has streamlined our purchasing workflows significantly.

"I would recommend that libraries give ATO a try," said Coyle. "If you're happy with the value you get from conventional DDA, then that's fine. But if you are looking for additional value, then explore the ATO model. It can deliver key content and value for money that may not be available through traditional DDA."

For more information on ATO and other ebook acquisition models from ProQuest, visit the [Ebook Central website](#).