ADVISOR REVIEWS—STANDARD REVIEW ProQuest Academic Complete

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Composite Score: ★★★★ 1/6

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Abstract

ProQuest Academic Complete is an ebook collection that is designed to serve as a foundation for libraries wishing to grow their ebook collections and/or provide access to titles in areas that the institution may not want to purchase in print because demand might not be high enough or the program may be completely online. This collection contains content that academic researchers will want to use, and it is easy to search and navigate.

Pricing Options

Pricing was unavailable for this review. To determine pricing, contact the publisher either through your institution's representative or through the ProQuest website (go to https://about.proquest.com/en, click on Contact Us, and select Sales from the drop-down menu).

Product Overview and Description

ProQuest Academic Complete is a comprehensive ebook package designed specifically for undergraduate students and faculty; however, it also contains content that is useful for graduate students. Academic Complete contains almost 250,000 titles from a variety of publishers, more than 170 of which are university presses. A welcome aspect of Academic Complete is that all ebook titles are available with unlimited access, meaning that users will not encounter turnaways when accessing the ebooks in the collection. Many (around 32,700) titles do not have digital rights management (DRM) attached to them. While the vast majority of the ebooks are in English, Academic Complete does include access to approximately 19,300 non-English titles in more than 40 different languages. The website description of Academic Complete notes that content territory restrictions apply to the number of available titles, to the number of DRM-free titles, and to the number of titles available in languages other than English. To get exact numbers for the content, ProQuest recommends that institutions check with their book specialist for the full details of their subscription.

ProQuest Academic Complete allows downloading of full books as well as of chapters; however, to actually download a full book, users need to first download and install Adobe Digital Editions. Users who do not wish to install Adobe Digital Editions can still read a book online; they just cannot download it.

User Interface, Navigation, and Searching

The interface for Academic Complete is the same one used for ProQuest Ebook Central. It contains a simple Single Search bar on the home page, with options for Advanced Search and for browsing the available subjects (Figure 1). Advanced Search allows the user to choose from among the following fields: Keyword and Full Text, Title, Series Title, Author, Publisher, ISBN, BISAC Code, BISAC Subject Heading, LC Subject Heading, LC Call Number, Dewey Decimal Number, and Ebook Central Subject. While it is doubtful that most users will choose to search such specific fields beyond Title and Author, it is helpful to be able to search them if needed. In Advanced Search, users can also specify whether the results should contain their search terms or whether they should match the search terms. The Advanced Search screen defaults to two search boxes, but more can be added if needed. This screen is also where users can limit their searches using facets such as Date, Language, and Download Format (PDF or EPUB).

The browsing screen provides a list of subject areas covered by Academic Complete (Figure 2). These broader subject areas can be further divided into more specific subjects if necessary. Once a subject is chosen, the user can further refine their search with facets such as Year Published, Subject, Language, and Author.

Navigating the ebooks themselves is a user-friendly process. When the user retrieves a title, they see a page with the book cover, the title of the book, options to read online or download, options for sharing, number of pages remaining for copying and number available for copying, pages remaining for PDF download, the number of copies the subscribing institution has access to, a description of the book, the table of contents, and the bibliographic information (Figure 3).

 If a user is not interested in downloading an ebook, they can click the Read Online button, which opens the online reader (Figure 4). The reader provides plenty of options for navigating the book and for saving and sharing the content; in fact, there are more options in the online

FIGURE 1 Advanced Search screen

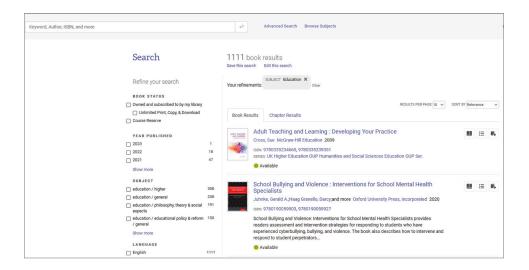
FIGURE 2 Results from a search for the subject "education"

reader than in Adobe Digital Editions. From the online reader, the user can access the table of contents in two places, retrieve the book details, search the book in two places, and annotate the book. At the top of the book screen are options to download the full book, download a book chapter, copy parts of the book, print pages, add the title to the user's bookshelf, share a link to the title, retrieve the citation (formats include APA, MLA, and Chicago, but the editions used are not listed), highlight passages, add

bookmarks, and zoom. It would be helpful to have words under the image for each action, as not all the icons are obvious.

Downloading a complete book is a bit more complicated, but once the user chooses to download a book, a helpful pop-up screen appears that walks them through this process, including the downloading of Adobe Digital Editions (Figure 5).

Once Adobe Digital Editions has been installed and/or the user indicates that they are done with this step, the option to download



appears. At this point, the user must choose a loan length and a format. Once they click on Download Your Book, the book will download and then open in Adobe Digital Editions. When the loan period is over, the title will still appear in Adobe Digital Editions, but it will not be accessible to the user.

ProQuest (n.d.-b) states that the company is committed to accessibility, and it provides general statements on accessibility both for ProQuest products and for specific platforms through its Accessibility Directory (ProQuest n.d.-a). The general accessibility page

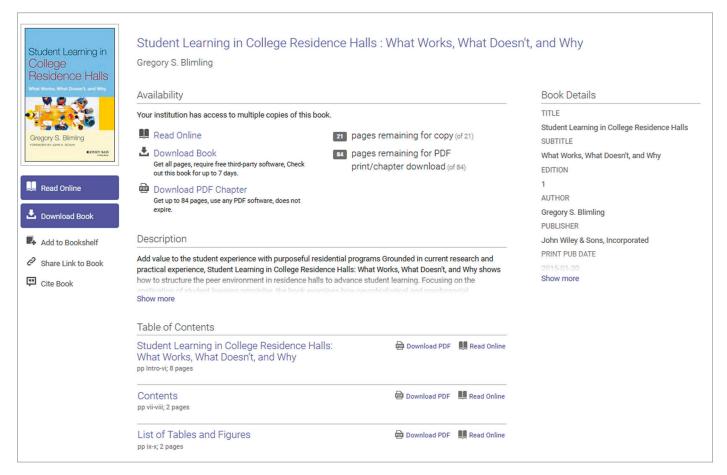


FIGURE 3 Detailed information for a selected ebook

describes the company's testing and what ProQuest is doing to improve accessibility. The Ebook Central Accessibility Statement (ProQuest 2020) indicates that ProQuest designed the Ebook Central Platform to meet Level AA of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) and Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act for features and functions. The full compliance report is available as a PDF (ProQuest 2022). Nothing that is labeled a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) is provided on the ProQuest accessibility pages, but the company provides Accessibility Conformance Reports (ACRs) that are based on the VPAT and on information from the Revised Section 508 Standards and the WCAG.

The company notes that not all Ebook Central content is fully accessible, including images where alternative text has not been

provided by the publisher. It also notes that if headings and labels within an ebook have not been supplied by the publisher, then using screen readers will be difficult; the EPUB format should be used in these cases. An issue with skip-link navigation was also noted, and ProQuest says that it is working on this problem.

Critical Evaluation

ProQuest Academic Complete provides a variety of ebooks on a wide range of topics from reputable publishers, such as Taylor & Francis, Wiley, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, and Bloomsbury. The company has not artificially beefed up the number of ebooks in its product by providing filler content

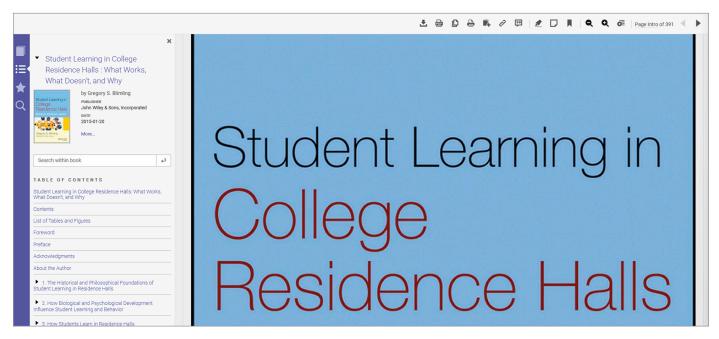


FIGURE 4 The online reader interface

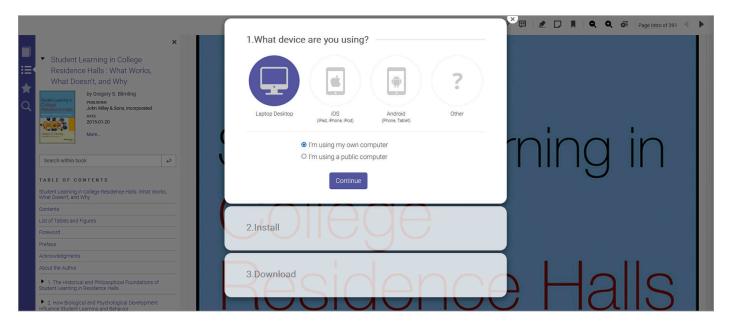


FIGURE 5 Pop-up screen guiding ebook download



ProQuest Academic Complete Review Scores Composite: ★★★ 1/6

The maximum number of stars in each category is 5.

Content: $\star \star \star \star \star 1/2$

Content is appropriate for and focused on an academic audience.

User Interface/Searchability: $\star \star \star \star$

Interface and search capabilities are very user-friendly, but including text as well as icons would make the interface even more user-friendly.

Pricing: N/A

The vendor must be contacted for specific pricing.

Purchase/Contract Options: $\star \star \star \star$

None of the provisions in the contract are onerous to the user. Interlibrary loan is allowed, but text and data mining, along with metadata harvesting, are not permitted.

that would not be useful to an academic audience. ProQuest appears to have fully researched its intended audience and geared the content specifically toward that audience. The subject areas covered, such as business, education, arts, health and medicine, engineering, social sciences, and history and political sciences, are all topics of interest to an academic audience.

The search engine for ProQuest Academic Complete and the navigation tools provided are straightforward and user-friendly. Labeling the icons used with words, though, would make the interface even more user-friendly, as not all users adapt quickly to images; some users prefer text. An aspect of ProQuest Academic Complete that makes it preferable to other ebook providers is the ability to download a complete book using one button. It is possible to download full books from other providers, but they must be downloaded chapter by chapter, which is extremely inconvenient and cumbersome.

ProQuest makes it simple to provide remote access to patrons of an institution, as they work with almost all authentication methods. They do require, however, that users whose institutions use EZproxy authenticate whether on or off campus, making their products unavailable to walk-in users, unless the institution has asked ProQuest to implement "anonymous access."

Free Text Keywords: ebooks | academic | academic disciplines | unlimited use | DRM-free | university presses | academic publishers

Primary Category: Multidisciplinary (or interdisciplinary)

Type of Product Being Reviewed: Ebook collection

Target Audience: Undergraduate (including community colleges); Graduate/Faculty/Researcher

Access: One-time purchase; Subscription

Similar Products

The product that is the closest to being a competitor to ProQuest's Academic Complete is EBSCO's similarly titled Academic Collection, which is available as a subscription. It contains approximately the same number of titles from academic publishers and makes the titles available for unlimited user access. As in the ProQuest product, in Academic Collection full books can be checked out and downloaded and some titles are DRM-free.

Purchase and Contract Provisions

The contract provisions for ProQuest Academic Complete do not differ significantly from the standard contract that most academic libraries encounter with other subscriptions and purchases. Authorized users are currently enrolled students, faculty, staff, and visiting scholars. Use is allowed by walk-in users while they are on-site. With Academic Complete, such use is difficult, however, because users must authenticate on campus if their institutions use EZproxy. Remote access through a secure network is allowed, and the terms for such use are not egregious; ProQuest (n.d.-c) simply states that the "Customer will strictly limit any remote access to its Authorized Users through the use of secure methods of user verification. Customer will promptly notify ProQuest if Customer believes security has been compromised." Posting and/or sharing passwords is not allowed. Interlibrary loan and scholarly sharing are permitted as long as the loans and sharing are not so widely used as to replace a library's subscription to the product. Electronic reserves, intranet use, and coursepack use require the use of durable links to titles, rather than downloading and reuploading a title to reserves or to the institution's learning management system. Text mining, data mining, and metadata harvesting are not allowed, although ProQuest may need to rethink this position given the increased importance of such activities.

Authentication

ProQuest Academic Complete can work with all methods of authentication, including EZproxy, OpenAthens, Shibboleth, SAML,

patron login hosted by Ebook Central, IP authentication, VPN, and barcode hosted by Ebook Central. The company recommends using single sign-on options as opposed to ones that force the user to log in more than once. EZproxy authentication is simple because ProQuest reconfigures the institution's site configuration to include EZproxy, so the proxy URL does not need to be added before a link to a title. ProQuest, with EZproxy, will also implement anonymous access, so on-campus users will be able to browse without having to sign in.

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 $ProQuest.\ n.d.-b.\ ``ProQuest\ Accessibility."\ https://about.proquest.com/en/about/proquest-accessibility$

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Producer URL: https://about.proquest.com/en

Product URL: https://about.proguest.com/en/products-

services/Academic-Complete

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About the Author

Kathy Wheeler recently retired as the Assistant University Librarian for Collections at the University Libraries of the University of South Alabama (USA), a position she has held since 2018. Ms. Wheeler worked at USA for 26 years, first as the Electronic Resources Librarian, then as the Head of Reference, and finally as the Assistant University Librarian for Collections. She has previously written articles for JSTOR and AnthroSource as well as a comparison review of Sociological Abstracts and SocINDEX with Full Text for *The Charleston Advisor*.