

E-resources Glossary

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Abstract – A brief summary of a journal article outlining the content and the aims of the research.

Abstract index – a database of abstracts and citations which can be useful for researchers finding out who is researching in their field and for building literature reviews.

Accessibility – UK law requires that websites from UK public sector websites are accessible. WCAG 2.2AA is the minimum standard. The law applies to e-resources

purchased for use as well as websites maintained by your institution. There should be a lead for accessibility within your organisation, often this is within the IT department. You can find out more on the [.gov.uk website](#)

Agent – a company that provides a 'one stop shop' for purchasing journals both in print and online. Prenax and EBSCO are two big agents within the UK.

Aggregator – a big company that reproduces a variety of e-journal content on its own platform, such as Ebsco, ProQuest and Gale.

Authentication – The way a user proves they belong to an institution and are approved for access. There are various methods, such as IP recognition, Shibboleth, Open Athens, Single Sign On or username and password.

Backfile – Online Archives of a journal. When you subscribe to a journal or package you will often get historical access included, back to a certain point in time which will be specified in the licence. You can often purchase older archive content as a one off purchase.

BIBFRAME – An alternative way of cataloguing library metadata developed by the Library of Congress in 2011. It aims to make library data more accessible as linked data on the world wide web. It uses Resource Description Framework (RDF) as it's underlying principle. [BIBFRAME Frequently Asked Questions](#)

COUNTER – is a non-profit organisation that provides the Code of Practice that enables publishers and vendors to report usage of their electronic resources in a consistent way. This enables libraries to compare data received from different publishers and vendors. The current version is Release 5.1 which has been required for compliance from January 2025. More information is available on the [Counter website](#)

Database – A searchable collection of resources, often journals, but can be ebooks, archives items or a mixture of resources. The search links may be to the abstract or the full text of an article or resource. Some databases have a mixture of levels of access with some full text and some abstract only.

Deals – in the UK, these are generally negotiated by JISC or other organisations representing the HE or FE sector as a whole and covering packages of content. A deal usually lasts for several years, but can also cover single year or one off purchases.

Transitional Agreements (TA) (also known as Read and Publish deals (R&P)) – Historically libraries have purchased packages of journals from big publishers for read access for their users. With the advent of Plan S and the growth in Open Access publishing, many of these deals now split the cost of the deal between read access and open access publishing fees. The aim is to keep the overall cost comparatively the same for the purchasing organisation. JISC [published a review of TA agreements](#) in March 2024 and

is currently negotiating '[Next generation Open Access](#)' agreements with major suppliers.

Digital Archives – Access to digitised content from national, local, university or societies archives. Often available as a one off purchase, although subscription access is increasing.

Discovery Layer/System – A system that allows users to search for and link directly to all of a libraries resources, both physical and online. This may be integrated into the LMS or may be a separate system.

DOI – Digital Object Identifier (DOI). A unique web address to link to a particular article. The DOI is guaranteed not to change, even if the platform web address does.

E-book models

- **Perpetual purchase** – a licence that gives access to a book as if owned. Usually sold as 1 user, 3 user or unlimited concurrent users.
- **DDA – Demand Driven Acquisition** – Access is given to a large pool of e-books, but payment is only made for each book when a trigger of usage is reached. Triggers vary publisher to publisher.
- **EBA – Evidence based Acquisition** – Payment is made up front for access to a large pool of e-books for a defined period of time. At the end of that time the library can choose ebooks to the value of the original deposit for perpetual access, usually based on the usage evidence.
- **1-1 model** – usually applied to e-textbooks. The library purchases a licence for each user. Access is either for 1 year or can be perpetual, but is restricted to one specific user. The most expensive model and the library has no ownership of the title.

E-resource – an online resource that the library provides access to. Can be paid for or open access. Often replicates a traditional library resource, such as an e-journal or e-book instead of physical items, but can be website resources behind a paywall, or an app, or video content etc.

EZProxy – is a commercial product from OCLC. It is an online proxy linker that authenticates access using the university's login procedure. Once users have authenticated from the University system the end site recognizes the EZProxy IP address as an authenticated user, without passing on users personal information.
<https://www.oclc.org/en/ezproxy.html>

Full text – The full published article from a journal.

IP address – the unique online address of a PC or WiFi system. Your IT Department should be able to provide you with the range of IPs which are unique to your institution.

JISC – An organisation that provides digital solutions for UK Education and research. JISC Collections negotiates library deals with major publishers and manages subscription services. [Licence subscriptions manager \(jisc.ac.uk\)](http://jisc.ac.uk)

LMS – Library Management System. A system that helps manage the functions of a library from user management to purchasing of books and circulation management. Most will provide an online catalogue. Some also manage the discovery of online resources.

Disambiguation – LMS can also be used to refer to Learning Management Systems also known as Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) such as Blackboard, Canva or Moodle.

Licence – The legal contract between the institution and the provider detailing all aspects of access, length of agreement, usage limitations and other legal contractual information. JISC have a [sample licence](#) which is used for their agreements. Other publishers have bespoke licences. Each licence, even within JISC deals is unique and needs to be carefully checked to ensure you don't break any access limitations.

Link resolver – A bespoke link for an organisation that can be used on third party sites to search holdings to see if an organisation holds the resource. The Link server includes authentication linking to help users get access to the resource. Most Library Systems have a link resolver included, but 3rd parties also supply them.

Linked data – Machine-readable structured data using standard web technologies such as URIs, HTTP and entity data to create a 'web of data' where data can be linked and discovered at scale. Open Linked Data also allows that data to be ingested and re-used.

Listservs – large scale email discussion servers. JISC runs many for UK libraries, but LIS-E-RESOURCES@JISCMAIL.AC.UK is particularly useful for E-resource Librarians. More information can be found at [JISCMail](#).

Marc record – library standard way of recording metadata about resources. It uses numbered fields and strict rules so that data can be easily shared between publishers, libraries and library systems. MARC stands for MACHine-Readable Cataloging. You can find out more here [Understanding MARC Bibliographic: Parts 1 to 6 \(loc.gov\)](#)

Metadata – information that describes an item. For e-resources this might include title, authors, journal, URL, subject, etc etc. Library metadata is commonly recorded in MARC record format, but other formats such as BIBFRAME are also available.

Open Access – Journal articles or ebooks that are free to read and download. Payment has usually been made as part of the research grant, or by the author, although there are a variety of Open Access publishing models.

Open Access models – this is not an exhaustive list and variations exist on all these models!

- **Green OA**– Usually, this is the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) which is self-archived by the author in a university repository, or similar. There may be an embargo period before the article can be made fully OA.
- **Gold OA**– The article is published Open Access in a peer reviewed journal. This is funded by an Article Publishing Charge (APC) or by a consortium agreement, such as the JISC TA agreements.
- **Diamond OA** – the article is free to publish and free to read. This model is supported by community funding, such as membership fees from HE institutions and libraries.
- **Rights Retention Statement** – a statement asserting the authors right to copyright of their work. This can be used to prevent embargos when publishing green OA. [Rights Retention Strategy | Plan S](#)

Open Athens – Open Athens is a single sign-on authentication system for identity and access management. It is part of Jisc. It is widely used by the NHS and universities to authenticate users. <https://openathens.org/>

OpenURL – A special URL that is used to help finding a locally authorised copy of an electronic resource from citation data. The URL contains institution link-server information, together with information about the item, such as ISBN, ISSN, title, authors etc. Example – a library user finds an article in a Medline database, if the link resolver has been set up by the library, then Medline can send the citation information through the OpenURL to see if the library holds the article and has a full text link.

Plan M – A project, managed by JISC to look at the supply, standards, procurement and licencing of metadata across the UK library infrastructure. [Plan M: streamlining the bibliographic metadata marketplace - Jisc](#)

Plan S - an initiative for Open Access publishing that was launched in September 2018. Plan S requires that, from 2021, scientific publications that result from research funded by public grants must be published in compliant Open Access journals or platforms. More information is on the cOAlition S website <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

Platform – a website which provides access to e-resources. May be a small scale publishers website, or a large searchable database of many resources.

Post cancellation access – When you cancel a journal or package you may retain access to the title for the years you subscribed. Additionally you may have access to years you purchased a title in print. Details will be in the licence agreement when you sign up for a journal.

Publisher – a company that publishes a resource. They may also host the e-version of the resource on their website, or it may be hosted on another platform, e.g. JSTOR. They may or may not be the people who sell the resource to you.

SCONUL – Society of College, National and University Libraries – membership organisation for university libraries in the UK and Ireland. They also collect annual statistics about university library use. [SCONUL | Society of College, National and University Libraries](https://www.sconul.ac.uk/)

Shibboleth – Shibboleth is a single sign-on log-in system for computer networks and the Internet. It is widely used in UK Universities to allow users to login to resources and authenticate themselves as valid users. <https://www.shibboleth.net/>

SSO – Single Sign On (SSO) is a direct link to an institutions database of approved users (staff and students). Your IT Department should be able to advise on setting this up.

University purchasing consortia – There are 8 regional university purchasing consortia, more details are at the UKUPC website <https://www.ukupc.ac.uk/>. There are framework agreements covering book, ebook, and etextbook purchasing and serials, periodicals and associated services.

UKRI – UK Research and Innovation funding agency. They distribute research grants for research and innovation to businesses and Universities and invest in training and infrastructure. Universities may receive a ‘block grant’ depending on their publishing profile. Libraries may be involved in the spending and allocation of the block grant, particularly for the Publish elements of Read and Publish deals.

URI – Uniform Resource Identifier a unique code to identify a resource. A commonly used example of a URI is the URL which is the location of an item (see below). A URN (Uniform Resource Name) is the name of a resource, but lots of other information can be coded within a URI.

URL – Uniform Resource Locator (URL) a unique code that links to a particular place on the web. Website addresses are referred to as URLs.

Vendor – a company that sells products to the library. It can be a publisher or institution, or it can be an aggregator or agent.

VLE – Virtual Learning Environment. A portal for students and academics where learning materials are stored they often include tools for online teaching. Often the library resources are integrated into the VLE. Some commonly used systems are Blackboard, Canvas and Moodle. Can also be referred to as Learning Management Systems (LMS)

WAYFless URL – A URL which links directly to a journal or article and is bespoke to the library which purchases the resource. WAYF stands for ‘Where Are You From’. The WAYFless URL already includes information about where the user is from so once logged in they go directly to the resource.