

A JISC agreement makes available the full text of over 750 books in a range of subjects. Philip Pothen explores the benefits of this new and impressive resource

Scholarship unlimited

Oxford Scholarship Online offers the full and fully searchable text of over 700 complete titles, with the prospect of around 200 titles being added each year. Available to higher and further education at highly competitive rates through a JISC agreement, it currently has four subject modules – Philosophy, Religion, Economics and Finance, and Political Science.

Colin Gerrard, Head of Technical Services at the University of Kent, sees this as vital to its success at Kent: 'We've had very heavy use of this since the beginning of the academic year in certain key areas,' he says, 'History, Politics, History of Religion and Philosophy. So we're very impressed with this resource.'

Gerrard's colleague Sarah Carter, Law Librarian at Kent, goes even further: 'I'm an enthusiast. The resource is extremely

e-books: it enables cross searching, making it an essential resource.'

One innovative feature of the resource has been the specially commissioned keywords and book and chapter abstracts that help students and staff search the mass of materials effectively. Another key feature has been the unlimited access it allows. This is unusual in e-book packages but means enormous savings for hard-pressed library budgets.

'I argued strongly for the JISC agreement because this does something very different from ordinary e-books'

Electronic Information Librarian at Bradford College, has been promoting it on Bradford's web pages. 'We were very surprised at the use it was getting,' she says. 'And it's not only staff who are using it but a lot of students too.'



Liz Stevenson, Electronic Services Librarian at the University of Edinburgh, explains: 'There's a very close match between the titles available through OSO and our reading lists, so for us this is the Holy Grail of online resources. But prior to this resource, the problem was always that we could never provide enough print copies of

well designed. It's excellent for interdisciplinary study – at Kent, for students learning about medical ethics, globalisation, human rights and international relations. I argued strongly for the JISC agreement because this does something very different from ordinary

books. However much you spend, there are simply never enough to go round. Unlimited simultaneous online access means that we now have enough.'

But it is not only HE that has benefited from this resource. Deborah Duffy,

Adding records of individual books within the package to library catalogues has helped the promotion of the resource. Records are available free of charge to subscribers which means that students can be pointed to any online book automatically through their catalogue search. For Liz Stevenson of Edinburgh this makes complete sense: 'Students never search under publisher, after all. They simply want the book, don't they?'

Philip Pothen
JISC

For further information, please go to:
<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/collections>