

*Policy for Migration from Print to Electronic Journals, Wellington
Medical & Health Sciences Library*

Title	Policy for Migration from Print to Electronic Journals
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Person responsible	Collections Services Team Leader with Library Manager

Purpose

This policy sets out the principals behind the migration of print journal subscriptions to electronic journal subscriptions.

Background

The central reason for a move to electronic access is improved access for library users who with access to a computer and the internet are able to use electronic journals from anywhere and at any time. It should be recognised that moving to e-only journals is not an exercise to save money. It is rare to reduce costs by moving to e-only for journals. Significant staff time is spent enabling and maintaining access to the electronic journals.

The number of electronic journals available via the University of Otago libraries now exceeds 70,000 and has increased by 10,000 over the last three years. In contrast the number of print titles is 7,000 and this has reduced by nearly 1,000 over the same period (from Otago University Library Annual report 2007).

The Wellington Medical & Health Sciences Library refurbished in 2007 was built on the premise of a “steady state” collection. This means that as new material is added to the collection an equal amount of material is removed from the collection. We have no room for growth and so it is necessary to transfer a significant number of current print subscriptions to e-only.

One of the cautions about moving to e-journals has been the loss of continued access to titles if you subsequently cancel the subscription. With print subscriptions you retain the print but in the past with electronic subscriptions cancellation meant loss of access to back issues. This is starting to change with publishers offering deals to include backfiles on a “in perpetuity” basis.

One other point to consider is that in many cases access to electronic journals is purchased via package deals pre-determined by publishers. A bundle of titles will be offered together for one price. Often titles that the library would not normally choose to subscribe to will be included in the package but the overall price means it is not cheaper to exclude these titles.

An important advantage for electronic titles is the availability of usage statistics for electronic access. These statistics give a more accurate picture of journal use than the current print usage statistics (which are based on a twice a year re-shelving exercise) and will mean in the longer term better decision making about which subscriptions we should continue.

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Policy statement

Where a journal title is available electronically the Wellington Medical & Health Sciences Library will prefer to subscribe to the electronic version unless it is significantly more expensive or unless the licence is for access rather than ownership.

The library will aim to have moved at least 80% of our current print subscriptions to electronic only access within the next five years. We currently subscribe to approximately 400 print titles so by 2013 we should be subscribing to 80 titles in print.

Print versions will be retained for the “big four” New England Journal of Medicine, British Medical Journal, Lancet and JAMA and also for those print titles where Wellington Medical & Health Sciences Library has a unique (to New Zealand) or complete back run of a title (listed in appendix A).

There may also be cases where print is available free with an electronic subscription. The decision to retain the print will be made on a case by case basis in consultation with the relevant user group.

Preference will be given to purchasing electronic content via the publisher rather than through aggregated packages as this generally gives more stable access to the title.

Wherever relevant and if possible and affordable the library will negotiate to include access for both the University of Otago, Wellington and C&CDHB networks

Where Wellington Medical & Health Sciences Library cancels a print subscription because access to the journals is available via Dunedin it does so in the knowledge that Otago Central Library independently reviews its subscriptions annually and may from time to time cancel a title that its users no longer give high priority to.

The library recognises that moving to electronic only for journals places a responsibility on the library to provide reliable and adequate access to computers and a good quality printer in the library so users can access this e-only content.

Consultation and Communication

The Wellington Medical & Health Sciences Library will consult with both the Christchurch and Dunedin Medical Libraries during this migration process and will keep the Otago University Central Library informed of its decisions.

The library will inform library users of this policy and make the policy available on the library website.

The Medical Librarian will refer any cases put forward to retain print to the Library Committee.

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Procedure

1. The print titles currently received will be investigated to see which titles are available electronically and the cost of moving the subscription to electronic only will be obtained.
2. Where the electronic option fits with the policy statement outlined above, the print title will be cancelled at the next opportunity and the electronic access enabled.
3. Library members will be kept informed of the migration progress via the library webpages, newsletter (Library link) and email when appropriate.
4. Criteria for a standardised submission to retain print will be developed by library staff.