

Sara Zerini and Mariana Sanz

At the UOC Library,

we are in charge of acquiring
and managing books

in digital format

that are included in the subjects

that people may need
for their projects.

Right now, in the Library

there are more than 300,000 e-books

from domestic
and international publishers

related
to the University's subject fields.

-The books purchased
and subscribed to by the UOC

are requested
by professors and specialised staff.

There are also cases
of specialised librarians

from the various study areas

who make requests to us.

So, the added value

that we contribute
to this selection process

is a constant scrutiny
of the publishing market,

a search for new material

and a comparison of these novelties
with professors.

-In our day to day,

we work
with dozens of publishers,

publishing groups,
content providers

and aggregators.

And the market
is very different, very varied

because there are publishers
who only work in paper format,

ones who are already shifting
towards digital formats,

and ones who have been offering
books in digital format for years,

and this is the scenario

when buying a book
for our Library.

-And in the context
of this situation,

it's important to highlight

that all publishing groups

set their own access
and reading conditions

for the various digital contents

and that's why we find cases
where, for example,

we can download
a book in its entirety,

access it in perpetuity

or other cases where
a book can be accessed

for a specific time
through a specific device.

This occurs
because there are many books

that use a protection system

limiting reading,
against piracy, DRM.

That's why we find
all these varied cases

in which you can access
a book freely

or you can only access
part of it,

download a chapter,
download all the content,

among other cases.

-At the UOC,
we've worked with digital content

for more than 25 years,
since our foundation,

and thanks to this experience
and the comments of our users,

professors and students,

we have been able to gather
quality features

that an ideal digital book
should have.

For example, a feature

that is very important
for our users

is the format.

The most accepted format is PDF,

that can be downloaded,

that can be saved on the computer

and that can be consulted
at any time

online or offline.

It is also important

that the book can be read
with different operating systems

and with different devices.

Another very important feature
in a book

is that it can be
underlined or highlighted,

that notes and comments
can be added.

Another key characteristic

is that the book can be accessed

by different users at the same time,

that is, that simultaneous access
is possible.

And, obviously,
a fundamental feature

is that a book is accessible

for people
with disabilities.

And of course,
when purchasing the book,

we communicate these features
to publishers

and negotiate with them

so that the book
that we finally acquire

has the best possible features
at that time.

-Everything indicates
that e-book readers are on the rise

and that companies
will have to make efforts

to have digital resources
with higher quality.

We've seen in recent years
that e-book readers have increased.

During the pandemic,
this number has risen exponentially,

and the latest studies indicate
that this continues post-pandemic.

At the UOC, we will continue working
to get more e-books,

improve access conditions,
more quality,

and eventually achieve
a 100% digital UOC Library.