

Frequently Asked Questions

What is dawsonera?

It is a platform that contains a catalogue of ebooks for purchase by libraries. The platform is held on the Dawson server (the library does not install it locally). It is accessed via the internet just like a website. The software enables a library to manage a growing collection of ebooks and to 'lend' them to their users (eg: students).

Can any library use dawsonera?

Yes, any library with an interest in building a collection of ebooks can use dawsonera. If your library is not a current Dawson customer you can still use dawsonera. The only thing you must do is sign a Licence Agreement before you start buying ebooks.

Can my library try dawsonera before signing the agreement?

Yes, and we would encourage you to do so. Any library can choose a 30 day FREE trial before signing and Dawson staff will provide support by telephone or, when possible, in person.

What does dawsonera look like?

It looks like an interactive website. So, any website where you establish an account profile to research products and buy online has features that are similar to dawsonera. In fact, from the customer point of view, dawsonera is two websites – one for readers (students) and one for administrators (librarians). How they work is fairly obvious from their names – the Reader Portal is where a student finds an ebook in the library collection and reads it; the Admin Portal is where a librarian finds an ebook in the Dawson catalogue and buys it for the student to read. As a librarian, you have access to both portals – but only one at a time. Publishers also have password-controlled access to their own Publisher Portal.

How much does it cost?

There is no charge for becoming a dawsonera customer. Each ebook purchased is charged at the list price set by the publisher plus a small hosting fee. There are no other charges (i.e.: no annual subscription, maintenance or platform fees).

How do I place orders?

You can order as you do now – via dawsonenter or EDI. You can also place orders via the dawsonera platform itself.

Will I receive order confirmations?

Yes, you will receive electronic order confirmations.

When do the ebooks arrive?

Very quickly. It depends at what time the order is placed, but within 24 hours.

How will my library be invoiced for the ebooks I buy?

We will bill customers exactly as we do now for printed books. Invoices can be sent at a frequency that suits each library. We expect most libraries to operate a separate ebook sub-account under their existing Dawson account, but it is your choice. Invoices can be sent via EDI, email and in the post.

How do customers log onto dawsonera?

End users log onto the Reader Portal with one of several different options, such as Shibboleth, Athens, Athens DA, Open Athens, Ezproxy, IP Passport or Direct User Logins. A librarian logs onto the Admin Portal with a User ID and Password.

What about things like Shibboleth and IP address?

Dawson is Shibboleth compliant, and is working with numerous Federations such as the UK Access Management, HAKA, SWITCH, DFN and FEIDE to ensure that libraries can seamlessly authenticate to dawsonera.com. Unlike some online databases (eg: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography) where IP recognition alone is enough to authorise access, Dawson has to approve down to individual level (not just institutional level).

How will my readers find the ebooks they want?

It is very likely that readers will reach the ebook via your library catalogue or institutional VLE. However, they can also search in dawsonera itself using a range of search parameters such as author, title or keyword.

Can catalogue records be provided?

MARC records enhanced to AACR level II are available for retrieval daily, twice weekly, weekly or monthly via our FTP server or via email.

How are the ebooks viewed?

The ebooks are presented as PDFs and read using Adobe Reader. We recommend Version 9.0 but Versions 8.0 and 7.0 are fine.



Can my readers print and copy portions of an ebook?

Yes, in line with the 'fair dealing' rules of copyright protection, a reader may print 5% of the book and copy 5% of the text – but no more than that. Sophisticated DRM informs the user how many pages are left to print or copy.

Does dawsonera support visually impaired students?

Yes, the standard functions of Adobe Reader that allow for a page to be enlarged or to be read aloud are available. Screen Readers such as JAWS, Text Help and Read & Write Gold are supported.

Is there a minimum number of orders that my library can place?

There is no minimum number of orders – purchase as many titles as you require for your library.

How does dawsonera work with dawsonenter?

The dawsonera catalogue of ebooks is integrated with the dawsonenter catalogue of all books. So, you can find ebooks in dawsonera itself or in dawsonenter.

Do you announce new ebook availability?

Yes, dawsonenter allows you to create your own subject profiles in the Alerts section which will send out monthly alerts for each subject.

How many ebooks are in the dawsonera catalogue?

dawsonera has 130,000 titles from over 300 Publishers and this is increasing rapidly. The acquisition of more content continues and many more thousands of titles of particular relevance to the academic community continue to be loaded every day.

Are new books added to dawsonera as they are published?

Yes, most publishers will automatically send new titles to Dawson as they appear. Our Content Administration team will do all they can to secure new titles in a timely fashion.

If my library buys ebooks from Dawson, do we own them forever?

Yes, although Dawson hosts the ebooks that are purchased, the ebooks are the library's forever. Access is not dependent on an annual subscription fee, you own them.

Can more than one person read an ebook owned by my library?

Yes, this is one of the special features of dawsonera. Because digitising a book makes it possible for lots of people to read it at once (unlike a printed book) why would anyone stop this from happening? We don't!

But doesn't that mean that my library will only ever buy one copy?

No. To preserve the intellectual property rights of the publisher, usage cannot be infinite. So, the solution is to set a number of credits during a year for each copy owned. These credits re-set yearly at no extra cost. If the credits run out before the anniversary of the purchase, the library will need to buy another copy to ensure continued access (as they would do with high demand printed books).

Can an ebook be downloaded for offline reading?

Yes, although reading online is more common, it is also possible to download the ebook to a laptop or memory stick. This is another special feature of dawsonera and not common in any similar product. Of course, after download, the student can't keep the ebook forever. Access will be denied after a few days.

Is it possible to check the availability of printed books in my collection against the dawsonera ebook collection?

Yes, it is and we call this "Title Matching". We can provide you with a spreadsheet that shows the printed books you have ordered from Dawson over a set time period that are now available as ebooks on dawsonera. In addition, we can also match against a supplied collection, such as short loan collection or against a subject collection or Dewey classification or range.

Are there any more special features?

Yes, all libraries that buy ebooks will make their collection available to readers. However, they won't buy all the ebooks Dawson has to offer. So, they can, if they wish, also show readers the whole catalogue of ebooks, including the ones they haven't bought. The reader can then ask the librarian to rent one of the 'non-owned' ebooks for a couple of weeks (eg: so that they can have it while they complete an essay). This is a bit like an Inter-Library Loan (ILL) for ebooks.

What kind of support is needed?

dawsonera has been developed to be user friendly, but it has a great many features that cannot be understood instantly by a novice. There is a User Guide to help you. At the beginning, some technical support may be needed to ensure the digital link between your library and Dawson is operating smoothly.



To arrange a 30 day free trial, live demonstration or take advantage of our title matching service please contact a member of the dawsonera team: +44 (0)1933 417 500, or send your questions to enquiries@dawsonera.com.

For further detailed information and current press releases, please visit our website:

www.dawsonbooks.co.uk/services/e-books.