

From Microfilm to AI: ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

With the founding of University Microfilms International, **Eugene Power** marked the beginning of large-scale dissertation preservation and distribution – making scholarly research widely accessible in the pre-digital world. For decades, dissertations were microfilmed for preservation and distribution, a revolutionary format at the time.

For more than 85 years, ProQuest and resources such as **ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global (PQDT Global)** have been essential sources for accessing a vast array of post-graduate research. With over 6.3 million curated metadata records and 4.0 million full-text documents, it provides unparalleled access to scholarly work from more than 4,100 institutions across 75 countries and 60 languages.

The integration of PQDT Citation Index into the Web of Science offers researchers at all levels premium curated metadata with robust discovery, analytics, and relevant results from multiple sources in one platform environment. And now the ProQuest Research Assistant harnesses artificial intelligence to responsibly increase research efficiency and deepen understanding of a topic.

ORIGINS

- 1938**
Eugene Power founds University Microfilms International (UMI), the beginning of large-scale dissertation preservation and distribution
- 1939**
UMI receives dissertations from five universities and creates and sells microfilm of those dissertations
- 1951**
Association of Research Libraries (ARL) passes resolution recommending that all member libraries contribute dissertations to UMI



DIGITAL SHIFT

- 1995**
ProQuest Direct launches as the first digital service selling bibliographic databases to academic institutions
- 1997**
PQDT Global launches with 1.5 million graduate works in its abstracts database and begins converting all paper dissertations received to PDF
- 2000**
PQDT Global expands to provide global coverage



INNOVATIONS

- 2003**
Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) Administrator launches
- 2008**
Extraction of cited references begins
- 2016**
ProQuest launches ARC harvesting program
- 2020**
ProQuest honored as CODiE finalist for ETD Dashboard
- 2022**
Citation Connections is the first bibliometric, algorithmic research tool from cited reference coupling
- 2023**
PQDT Citation Index integrated into the Web of Science
- 2025**
ProQuest Research Assistant launches with generative AI tools included in PQDT Global

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