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Alma 2021 Release Notes

Last updated: Dec 12, 2021



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Release:

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As many of you already know, Alma development periodically needs to take a "back seat," and maintenance, cloud infrastructure, and other important tasks need to be handled in order to ensure that Alma meets the highest standards of performance and high availability. The September 2021 release is devoted to such tasks.

We would also like to take this opportunity to update you on the following:

Alma Announcements

Alma Announcements is a new feature that will display as an icon  on the Persistent Menu Bar in Alma. It enables Ex Libris to update users about important issues, unusual occurrences, or major feature rollouts, as well as ad hoc updates and announcements.

While there are a number of channels for communicating with our Alma community, most of these channels have various limitations, which prevent us from reaching the widest audience possible. For example, only one email per institution is sent from Salesforce; not all users subscribe to the Alma list-serv.

While some announcements are relevant for all users, the aim is to filter other announcements by roles and privileges, so that only relevant staff users will see these topic related announcements. For example, an announcement reminding users to activate fiscal rollover will only display for users with fund related privileges. In addition, in the same way that announcements can be filtered by roles and privileges, they can also be filtered by region.

Alma Announcements will be turned on for all users in October.

NERS (New Enhancements Request System)

The NERS 2021 voting process has been completed. The Alma community voted for the following enhancements to be developed. Delivery will be by the end of H1, 2022:

- Add option to configure Process Types for Unavailable Physical Items, without creation of requests
- Ability to Move/Re-Order Requests
- Restricting the number of fields that show when manually creating new users via Register New User
- Disable Item description confirmation message
- Provide the ability to batch-edit electronic collections

Alma's Pixel Perfect Day

User Experience is very close to our hearts and as such, in addition to the ongoing planned UX improvements, we conducted a Pixel Perfect day!

You may well be thinking 'What is a Pixel Perfect day?'

In the Alma context, a Pixel Perfect day was when all Alma developers spent a whole day improving and correcting User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) issues.

The team worked hard, and resolved an impressive number of issues, but at the same time had lots of fun.

We hope that you will see the benefit of this day in the coming releases where many of the small – but sometimes annoying - UI/UX issues will have been resolved.

Alma Analytics

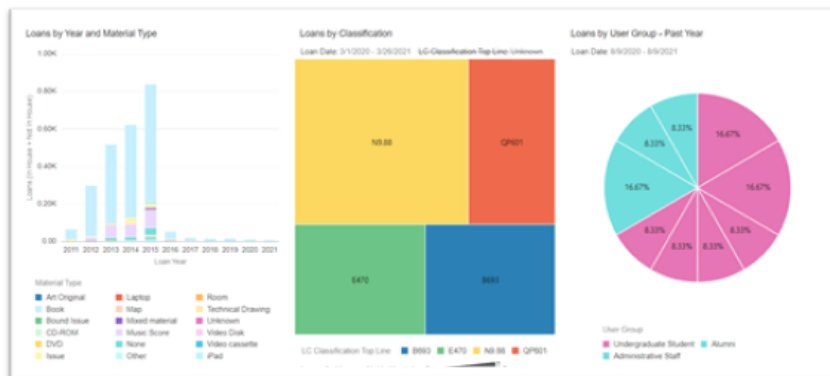
Data Visualization Reports

An exciting new tool Data Visualization (DV) was added as part of Alma Analytics' move to the newer Oracle Analytics Server (OAS). It can be easily accessed for users with the Analytics designer role from the Analytics menu.

DV reports offer a rich variety of visualization options from simple tables to rich visual charts.

For example - In the "Loans" dashboard below, three charts, all created in minutes, present clear trends:

- a bar chart representing material type loans by year,
- a treemap chart presenting loans by classification and,
- a pie chart presenting loans by user groups.



With just a few minutes of simple drag and drop actions, staff users can immediately identify usage trends and get a clear overview of the activities in their libraries.

2022: Analytics User Experience Enhancement

2022 will be devoted to improving the user experience for Alma Analytics, helping users to access and share reports quickly and intuitively.

These improvements will be done with the close cooperation and input of the Alma user community.

The first step in this exciting process was the survey that recently took place focusing on how Alma users interact with Alma Analytics. We received a great number of important insights and comments from this survey which will help us as we plan our next steps.

Watch this space for more updates.

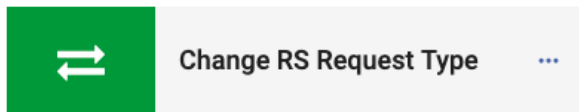
Cloud Apps

Usage of Cloud Apps is growing! Over 500 institutions have enabled Cloud Apps and are used by more than 2000 users.

There are now 35 Cloud Apps available, 17 of which have been developed by customers.

Our Cloud App of the month is [Change RS Request Type](#).

This popular app (it has been activated more than 240 times) allows changing a Resource Sharing 'book request' to 'article request' and vice versa.



To use this app, navigate to the Borrowing Requests page in Alma. From there it will be possible to change a Book Request to an Article Request and vice versa.

Check out more exciting Cloud Apps [here](#).

Global Knowledge Delivery

1. Training

- a. Close to 6,000 Ex Libris customers attended the [2021 Knowledge Days webinar series](#) hosted in June of this year. Follow the link to find the recordings and supporting documents for each of the 10 webinars, each subject selected based on submissions to our annual customer interest survey.
- b. Alma Essentials, the re-designed training kit, released towards the end of 2020 is now available in 6 translated versions - Polish, [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), [Chinese](#) (Simplified) and [Chinese](#) (Traditional). Italian and German will be released by end of August 2021. The entire kit has been modularized and organized in order to make the content more approachable and easier to consume. It contains shorter sessions (averaging ~5 min) with more demo and workflow driven content.
- c. Check out the recently completed [Implementing Acquisitions in Alma](#) webinar series! This five-part series walks you through the benefits of using acquisitions, gives you guidance on getting started, and helps you discover workflows that will ultimately save you time and effort when it comes to acquiring physical and electronic resources.

2. Education and Knowledge Webinars

You can see our full list of upcoming webinars and recordings of past events on our [Education & Knowledge Webinars](#) page on the Ex Libris website. We also encourage you to sign up for our [Global Knowledge Delivery](#) updates and pass this on to interested colleagues.

3. GuideMe

We're happy to introduce two new GuideMe walkthroughs. These and more [step-by-step walkthroughs](#) are available in Alma, accessible from the GuideMe menu in the Alma help menu, try them out!

- a. Test Access to an Activated E-Resource
- b. Testing Loan Policies with the Fulfillment Configuration Utility

Administration & Infrastructure

Transport Layer Security (TLS) Support – call for action

This is a reminder that you might need to take necessary actions in order to avoid service disruptions. TLS is a cryptographic protocol that provides authentication and data encryption between different endpoints. Various vulnerabilities have been found in TLS versions 1.0 and 1.1 in recent years. As previously announced in the latest security update, to avoid security vulnerabilities and to align with industry standards, Ex Libris will block TLS 1.0 and 1.1 traffic for Alma API in production environments and will support only TLS 1.2. The deprecation plan will begin by October 2021 and will be concluded by May 2022.

For more information, please review [Ex Libris Higher Education Platform API - deprecation of TLS 1.0 and TLS 1.1](#)

Top Trending Books

Starting with the October release, the Top Trending Books dashboard widget will be removed from the list of available dashboard widgets. The Top Trending Books dashboard widget is currently available for institutions that opted into sharing their anonymized data (Configuration menu > General > Data sharing Selection and development section). The deprecation of this dashboard widget is done due to the low adoption of institutions who opted into the "Selection and Collection Development" functionality and this is imperative in order to conduct analysis and provide reliable and effective data to be presented within the widget.

October Sneak Preview

Click [here](#) to view the October sneak preview.

Main Features

No main features match your criteria.

Additional Enhancements

No additional enhancements match your criteria.

Resolved Issues

No resolved issues match your criteria.

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