Alma

Ten Reasons Why Ex Libris Alma is the Best New-Gen Solution

AN EX LIBRIS ALMA SOLUTION BRIEF

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Ten Reasons Why Ex Libris Alma is the Best New Gen Solution

1. A Single Unified Solution by Design – not a collection of services

Alma addresses one of the key challenges in today's environment by consolidating the separate silos that libraries manage in order to eliminate redundancy, duplicate workflows and data.

Alma provides unified workflows across all resource types (electronic, print, and digital) and uses automated processes to significantly reduce the time staff spend managing collections. In this streamlined environment, new services such as cross-format selection and smart fulfillment are possible.

Unlike other services, which are essentially a collection of separate software environments linked together, Alma is one service that incorporates all the functions needed to manage all types of library resource.

2. Unique and Shared Data – a hybrid model: Institution and Community Zone

Alma includes a metadata management environment that supports a shared Community Zone as well as a local Institution Zone catalog. The Community Zone includes an extensive and rich Central Knowledge Base of e-resources as well as a Community Catalog of bibliographic records. This catalog serves as a source of descriptive records for all Alma libraries, and allows libraries to work directly in a collaborative metadata management environment. The Institution Zone includes the data that you designate as your own and unique.

Ex Libris does not claim any ownership of the Community Zone records and, in fact, has created an Advisory Group to assist in guaranteeing that this open data philosophy is implemented and retained in the best manner possible. In contrast with some vendors that keep their data closed, Ex Libris is committed to openness.

3. Automated Rich Workflows – exception-based workflows minimize staff involvement

Unlike traditional ILS environments which are function oriented, Alma is task-oriented and focuses on streamlining workflows for library staff. A business process engine sits behind all the Alma workflows, allowing the library to define its rules and ensuring that tasks are automated wherever possible. As a result, staff members only need to deal with exception based workflows. This saves valuable library staff time as well as establishing efficient workflows. Below are some examples of ways in which Alma streamlines workflows for library staff while improving services to users:

Smart Fulfillment
Alma provides fulfillment services to users in terms that are easy to understand, while using unified workflows and analytics to streamline and optimize fulfillment workflows. Through tight integration with the Primo discovery solution, Alma ensures that the results of consolidated resource management are exposed through useful services to end users.

Intelligent Collection Development
Alma allows you to maximize your collection development budget allowing for selection, acquisitions, and evaluation processes to be informed by parameters such as usage information and cost per use.
And, Alma supports a variety of models for collection development, including patron- driven acquisitions and new and evolving models for eBook use.

This task-orientation is found throughout Alma: the homepage, or dashboard, includes a list of the tasks or exceptions that are assigned to the individual staff member as well as links to notifications, "dashboard" like statistics, and reports. Each screen in Alma includes a persistent link to the task list, ensuring that workflows are focused and streamlined.
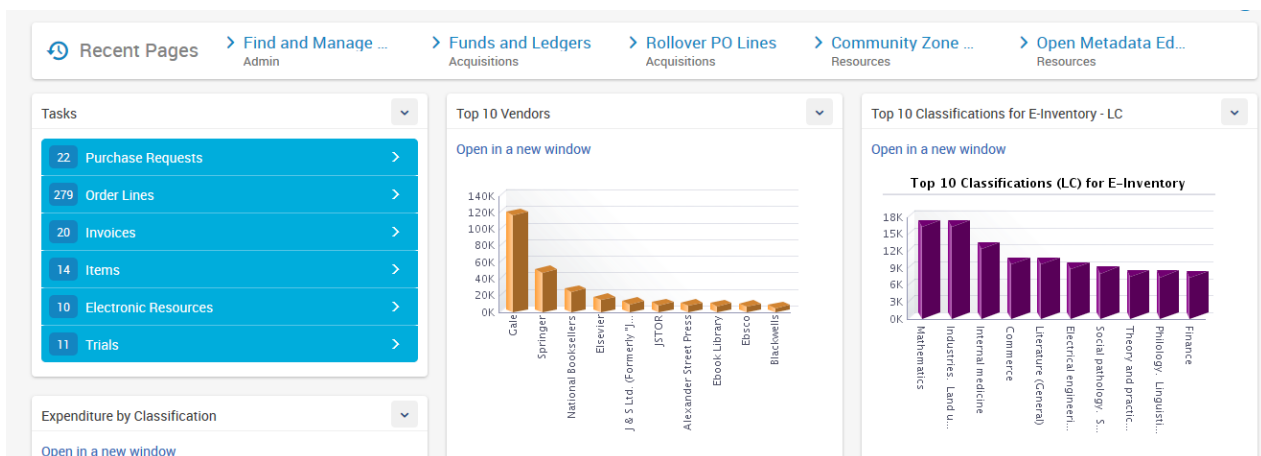
4. Analytics Driven – evidence-based decision making

No 21st century library management system should be without a strong and embedded suite of analytic tools to assist the library in maximizing its investment in collections, ensure the effectiveness

and productivity of its staff, and demonstrate the value the library brings to its end-users and institution. Ex Libris Alma includes a powerful suite of tools that integrate analytics into everyday workflows—such as including usage and cost information as part of standard selection—and provides library staff and management with the information needed for informed decision making. Alma's Business Intelligence reporting tool makes meaningful and useful analytics available to administrators both within and outside of the library.
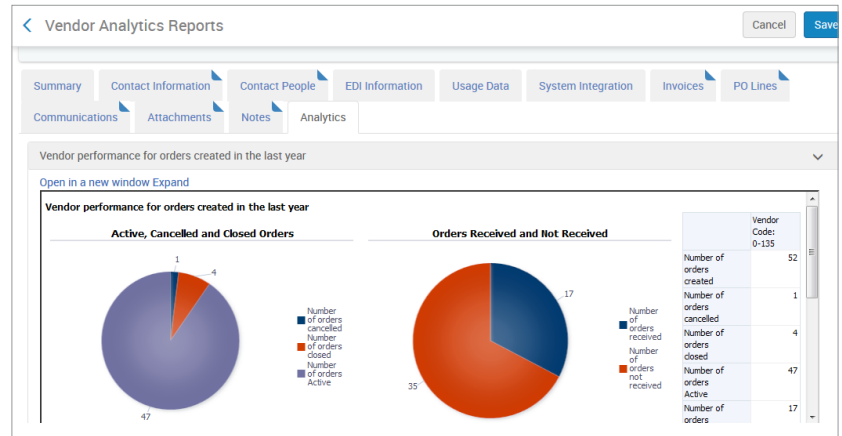
5. Highly Configurable - aligned to your business needs

Since no two libraries are alike, Alma provides flexible and advanced configuration options to meet your library's specific process and business needs. These configuration options span the entire solution and cover wide areas, including the content and scope of dashboard displays; the ability to define workflow rules such as the cost threshold for automated PO approval; options to customize routing rules in fulfillment; the ability for catalogers to configure merge rules for importing new bibliographic data; and diverse choices for system librarians to configure integration profiles and security parameters. In short, Alma is designed with the flexibility that allows you to meet your current and evolving business needs through a highly configurable solution.

6. Support for Diverse Formats – multi-format metadata and inventory management

While the MARC format remains an important component of any library service, next-generation systems must be designed to support a variety of metadata schemas. Alma supports not only MARC, Dublin Core, UNIMARC, KORMARC and more but also new formats such as Linked Open Data and BIBFRAME. This support will continue to expand, by leveraging Alma's multi-format architecture to meet evolving needs including other non- traditional library content that can be managed within Alma.

Other services offered in the market, focus exclusively on the MARC format or offer limited support for the growing body of electronic and digital resources that libraries manage today. These solutions do not have the architecture to support new and emerging formats

7. Collaborative Networks – unprecedented collaboration

Ex Libris has decades of experience in providing software to consortia of various types and sizes and recognizes that libraries today often have several different consortial relationships for cataloging, resource sharing, and other operations. Alma was built from the start to enable collaboration and to leverage common resources without duplicating management effort. Alma is optimized for the needs of consortia by supporting highly flexible policies, customizable processes, joint selection functionality in acquisitions, native support for library-to-library resource sharing, and much more.

8. Open and Interoperable – integrations and extensions, together with the Developer Network

Using web-based, open interfaces, Alma can be integrated seamlessly with other systems including external campus systems. Libraries are free to develop adapters and apps to meet their institution's unique needs.
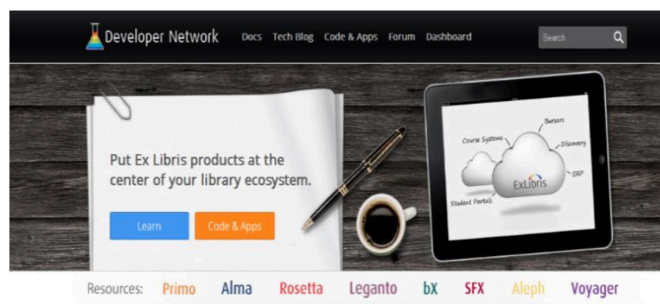
Since the launch of the Developer Network a few years ago, Ex Libris has created hundreds of REST APIs in important areas of library management such as Acquisitions, User Management, Fulfilment, and Resource Management. As such Alma now routinely handles more than 1 million API transactions daily from hundreds of institutions in all areas of the globe, giving access to additional services for Alma patrons and automating many of the library staff's daily tasks.

9. Proven Cloud-Based SaaS: reducing costs and increasing return on investment

To increase the return on investment and reduce the total cost of ownership of the library's infrastructure, Alma is delivered as acloud-based SaaS solution. In addition, the shared Data Services environment that is core to the Alma infrastructure not only streamlines traditional metadata management services, but offers potential for the development of new services based on data mining and analysis.

All Ex Libris Cloud Data centers are SSAE-16 as well as ISO 27001 certified, and meet the highest standards related to security and high availability.
In addition to a dedicated security officer, Ex Libris has a dedicated cloud team that monitors cloud operations 24 x 7 x 365

10. Depth of Functionality – uniquely rich capabilities

Developing a solution that covers a library's entire range of operations and needs requires a deep familiarity with library workflows. Ex Libris has over 25 years' experience in developing and delivering library management solutions. This experience is evident in every Alma workflow. Each workflow—whether for Acquisitions, Cataloging, or Fulfillment—provides extensive, varied options that librarians recognize and appreciate.

This depth of functionality is what makes Alma the most advanced and robust solution on the market. It's the reason why librarians who view Alma for the first time consistently comment that Alma has no comparison in the depth and breadth of functionality that it provides.