The Alma Product Working Group (PWG) would like to use NERS as a way to collect enhancement requests in anticipation of a formal enhancement process. Using NERS for this function would allow the Alma community to see others’ ideas and would also permit the PWG to monitor where and when priority issues arise. Following is a brief report of the current state of affairs, the proposal and responses to the proposal.

**Current State**

When Ex Libris designates a Salesforce case as an enhancement, the case is immediately closed.

A few cases from the University of Minnesota are included here as examples. The status 'Closed' was applied to all three, but may mean anything from a question that was answered and properly closed to functionality that is coming, but not there yet (see 59251), to the case being an enhancement request (46310) which may or may not be on a roadmap yet, and, finally, to Ex Libris saying our request is not in their plans at all (62353).

*#59251*

*Status: Closed*

*Comments: This fix is currently scheduled for April. we will update you when we will have more information.*

*#46310*

*Status: Closed*

*Comments: We submitted an enhancement request for this issue. Moved to Product Management analysis*

*#62353*

*Status: Closed*

*Comments: The Product Management Team has carefully evaluated the proposed feature. We have determined that at the present time the proposed feature will not be included in the current Alma roadmap.*

Reports in Salesforce appear to export open cases only, so the only way an institution can keep track of enhancements is to record them locally. Even if reports did export all cases, the information needed to know that Ex Libris considers this an enhancement, not a bug, is not exported in the report.

**NERS Proposal**

The Alma Product Working Group (PWG) was formed in mid-2012 and met for the first time at IGeLU in September 2012. At that meeting, it was made clear to the group that there would be no enhancement process for two years.

During our February call, the group decided that before any enhancement process could be initiated, we would need to collect enhancement ideas/requests in a central space like NERS. We recognized that work would be involved for the group and that we’d have to be careful in organizing and controlling the collection. Distinguishing an enhancement from a bug or function that is not working can present a challenge, but we decided that if we could, at first, limit to input to requests that Ex Libris identified to institutions as an enhancement, that it would probably work.

**Feedback on the Proposal**

The proposal had the preliminary backing of both the IGeLU and ELUNA Steering Committees for this idea. However, after speaking with Ex Libris management, IGeLU suggested that if Ex Libris would not close enhancement tickets and would allow ‘me too’ functionality, that SalesForce be used for this work. IGeLU was waiting to hear back from Matti Shem Tov, Ex Libris CEO. An email indicated that a response was expected by March 21. To date, we have not had a response from Ex Libris via IGeLU. We understand that this matter will be on the ELUNA Steering Committee/Ex Libris agenda.

The IGeLU Steering Committee was also concerned about raising expectations by using NERS as a collection point, but not yet an enhancement process.  There was additional concern that the PWG might need to do some work organizing and consolidating any collection.  While these are valid concerns, we think our users are smart enough to understand the where we are in the development of the process.  If the PWG is willing to put in the work to organize the data to be ready for a future enhancement process, just like the other PWGs have, then we are that much futher ahead.

**PWG Response**

No other users of an Ex Libris product are required to use Salesforce to record enhancement ideas. The Alma PWG doesn't feel that Salesforce is an adequate tool for recording enhancement requests from single institutions, never mind the entire Alma community. Salesforce has an additional constraint, in that some organizations are not allowed to publish their issues, making it difficult for them to participate in any Salesforce solution.

On our last PWG/Ex Libris call, there was also some indication that Ex Libris wouldn't be ready to discuss any kind of enhancement process until 2015. The PWG feels it is important to be ahead of any process by beginning to collect ideas, organize them, and begin to prioritize them with the community. Additionally, we think collecting enhancement idea in NERS will benefit users as well as Ex Libris and the PWG, by providing knowledge about what is most important to the Alma community.

We still believe that the community would appreciate a NERS environment for enhancement requests. Like other PWGs, the group is willing to put in the work to communicate to users and organize the data. We would like the full backing of the Steering Committees in this effort.