Aleph, SFX, and Verde to Alma: How We Survived 18 Challenging but Rewarding Months

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Harvard University
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Agenda

• Project Background
• Hindsight is 20/20
• Staying Sane
• Celebration Time
• Questions
Alma Project Overview

• Goal: Improve the user and staff experience through advancing the Harvard Library’s ability to manage large scale library collections including print, digital, and licensed electronic resources by migrating to a next generation unified resource management system with advanced workflow capabilities, innovative analytics tools, and greatly enhanced support for collaboration within and across research institutions.

• Timeline:
  • Phase I: Pre-Implementation – January 2017 to June 2017
  • Phase II: Implementation – July 2017 to July 2018
  • Phase III: Post Implementation – July 2018 to December 2018
Improve the user and staff experience through advancing the Harvard Library’s ability to manage large scale library collections including print, digital, and licensed electronic resources by migrating to a next generation unified resource management system with advanced workflow capabilities, innovative analytics tools, and greatly enhanced support for collaboration within and across research institutions.

### Strategic Objectives

- Work closely with Ex Libris to configure Alma and migrate Aleph, SFX and Verde data to Alma by July 2018
- Support collaboration between HL and LTS staff to revise workflows to increase efficiency in “backroom” library operations
- Optimize use of analytics to empower staff to make informed decisions and improvements to their own work
- User has an improved discovery, access to information and improved stewardship of collections to meet scholars needs. Make the world better for our users.
- Empower staff to transition their work to new design—which will allow them to have a increased job satisfaction.

### Guiding Principles

- Improve user experience through adopting common practices across the institution.
- Optimize solution for Harvard Library, leveraging shared approaches and minimizing customized solutions
- All workflows are to be included in the review and migration to the new system.

### Key Performance Indicators

- Achieved minimal customization both in technology and workflows.
- User experience accessing library materials is improved through faster throughput for materials and improved discovery experience.
- Streamlined, predictable access and improved stewardship of library materials.
- Ability to make evidenced based decisions on collections and improved reporting capabilities.
Project Structure

- Executive Oversight Committee
  - Communications & Change Management
  - Technology
  - Training & Documentation
  - Functional Teams
Project Structure

- Functional Teams
  - Acquisitions & Serials
  - Analytics & Reporting
  - Course Reserves
  - E-Resources
  - Finance
  - Fulfillment
  - HOLLIS+ Integration
  - Linked Data
  - Resource Management
Project Phases

• Pre-Implementation
• Implementation
• Post Implementation
Pre-Implementation

• January 2017 – June 2017

• Key tasks
  • Project Kickoff/Setup
  • Explore and Learn Alma
  • Conceptual Solution Design
  • Data Migration Testing / Cleanup Scoping
  • System Configuration Testing
  • Community Engagement
  • Leganto Evaluation
Implementation

• June 2017 – June 2018

• Key tasks
  • Workflow Design
  • Creating Documentation & Training Program and Train the Trainer Program
  • Training Staff
  • Creation of Analytics Reports, Widgets, and Dashboards
  • HOLLIS+ Integration
  • Finalizing Data Migration Maps
  • Finalizing System Configuration
  • Conceptual Solution Development/Testing
  • Community Engagement
Post - Implementation

• July 2018 – December 2018 (and then some . . .)
• Key tasks
  • Workflow Adjustments, including work with Ex Libris Expert Services
  • Data Cleanup
  • Training Staff
  • Community Engagement
Cutover Milestones

• **Readiness**
  - Phase 1 Training – 5/15 – 8/27
  - Final Migration Forms – 5/29
  - Key Logins – 6/1 – 6/30
  - Final P2E Form – 6/6

• **Rollover – 3 weeks early!**
  - Stop invoice creation – 5/25
  - Last REG batch – 5/28
  - Last ADJ batch – 6/4
  - Aleph Rollover – 6/5
  - Financial Reporting Snapshot – 6/5

• **Data Migration**
  - Freeze Aleph, SFX, Verde (non-circ) - 6/8
  - LTS Data Updates - 6/8 – 6/9
  - Freeze Aleph Circ – 6/28
  - Final Reporting Snapshot – 7/2
Cutover Milestones

- **Switch to Production**
  - Alma Data Review (LTS) - 7/2
  - Post-migration data updates (LTS) – 7/2
  - Cutover Tasks (LTS) – 7/2
  - Turn on Staff Logins/Announce – 7/3
  - Cutover to new Primo – 7/3

- **Leganto Cutover**
  - Summer school reserves item changes reapplied in Alma – 7/3 – 7/5
  - Freeze Reserves List Updates. Support turnover with Instructure – 7/9
  - LTS Reserves List Data Updates. Remove RLIST LTI for Fall 2018 classes – 7/10
  - LTS Extract Courses and Citations Requests – 7/11
  - LTS Load Courses
  - Ex Libris Loads Citations
  - LTS Data Review & Cutover Tasks
  - Leganto Live for Fall 2018 Course Reserves processing! Turn on Leganto LTI in Canvas Courses!
Cutover Milestones

• **Post Go-Live Tasks**
  • Phase 2 Training Program (700 staff, average of 1 class per person) – 7/6 – 9/7
  • Remove RLIST LTI from Summer 2018 courses. Turn on Leganto LTI for Summer 2018 courses. – 8/30
  • Decommission RLIST. – 8/31
  • Decommission view only access to Aleph
  • Decommission view only access to Aleph
  • Work on productionizing Alma (7/3 – ????)
## Migration Numbers

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Project Realities

• On the surface, this is a technology project . . . But the reality is that this is a cultural shift.
• Guiding principles helped us to remember the “why” when overhauling library services and workflows.
• Leadership involvement is critical due to the number of radical changes, some of them thorny. Without this support, staff are not empowered to make large scale changes.
• Alma is not your prior ILS. Alma is integrated in ways prior systems are not. Groups have more visibility of other work and may not always have it “their way” in workflow design.
• Data and migrations are messy, not matter how much clean up is allowed. Work to encourage comfort with less than perfection!
• Try to always have some fun along with the work!
Hindsight is 20/20

• Communication. Not all leadership policy decisions were communicated to staff in an effective manner, leading to day one surprises.

• More assessment of prior coding shortcuts. We had a few cases in which coding (miscoding) practices in Aleph had far reaching repercussions in Alma.

• Workflow Inventory. Task working groups to inventory workflows more completely to allow for more comprehensive workflow reviews and verification scenarios.
Hindsight is 20/20

- Print + Online Subscription Migration. Lack of common practice in Aleph coding has made identifying these and resolving migration issues costly in time, and eroded staff confidence in the system post-cutover.

- Broaden E-Resource Training. Lack of training on e-resources early/messaging about e-resources being confusing and foreign has perpetuated knowledge divide and fear about these materials.
Hindsight is 20/20

- **Library Wide Project** The transition to Alma has broad reach. Include colleagues in other areas of the project (RTL, Bibliographers, etc) that did not traditionally use the ILS. Their world will change too. Work with them at all stages.

  **Stage 1**
  Alma doesn’t matter to me.

  **Stage 2**
  Alma is ruffling my feathers.

  **Stage 3**
  Alma tools can help me provide better services.
Staying Sane

• **One project, one team.** Lean into the concept that Ex Libris is part of the project team and not the traditional “vendor” migration team. Your institution and Ex Libris staff are all working towards a common goal. Build close ties and stay in constant communication throughout the project.
Staying Sane

- **Milestone Boards.** Post milestones in key parts of the project team room and office space kept project in focus.

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**Ready, Set, Alma!**

- **5/15 – 8/27.** Phase 1 Training Program (800+ staff, average of 4 classes per person)
- **5/29.** LTS sends Ex Libris final Migration forms for Alma, SFX, and Verde & draft Go Live Check List
- **6/1 – 6/30.** LTS keys 800 custom production logins
- **6/5.** Aleph Fiscal Year Rollover/Data Verification
- **6/6.** LTS Freezes Config changes on Alma Prod
- **6/7.** Ex Libris Copies Prod Alma Config to Migration Server. No access to Alma Prod on this day (use Alma Sandbox)

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**Ready, Set, Alma!**

- **6/8.** Aleph Non-Circulation. SFX, and Verde Data Freeze
- **6/8 – 6/21.** Access to Alma Prod restored. Config changes can be made but must be reapplied.
- **6/9.** Final LTS Aleph Batch Updates
- **6/9 – 6/27.** Ex Libris Extract and Load to Alma (Non-Circulation)
- **6/19.** LTS to Confirm PCI Activations
- **6/26.** Aleph Circulation Data Freeze. Circ units use Alma offline circ through 7/2, but will hold returns to 7/3 in Alma.
- **6/27 – 6/30.** Ex Libris Extract and Load to Alma (Circulation).

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**Ready, Set, Alma!**

- **6/30.** New Database Search in Primo
- **6/30? – 7/2.** LTS Alma Data Review/Data Updates
- **7/2.** Final Aleph Snapshot in Library Data Warehouse
- **7/2 – 7/3.** LTS uploads Offline Circulation files sent by libraries
- **7/3.** Alma Go Live!!!!
- **7/3 – 7/5.** Summer school reserves item changes reapplied in Alma
- **7/9.** Freeze Reserve List Updates. Support turnover with Instructure
- **7/10.** LTS Reserve List Data Updates. Remove RLIST LTI for Fall 2018 classes
- **7/11.** LTS Extract Courses and Citations Requests
Staying Sane

• **Community Engagement.** Change is hard and harder when you are moving from your system of 17 years. Find unique ways to engage with each other. Recognizes this is stressful and imperfect, but with long term benefits.
Staying Sane

Alma Implementation

HOLLIS+ Integration

Leading the rollout of the integration of HOLLIS+ with Alma.

Current work & future plans

✦ Coordinating beta launch of new Primo UI
✦ Customizing new Primo UI design & functions
✦ Planning for HOLLIS Classic retirement
✦ Ensuring accuracy of holdings & items display
✦ Implementing new link resolver (Find It)

Visit the Wiki: tinyurl.com/almahollis

Team Members

Join us for an Alma Community Event for Library Staff

Tuesday, July 11, 2017
from 3-5pm

The Patio & Dudley House
Refreshments will be provided

Aleph, SFX, and Verde to Alma
The Vendor Mash

I was working in the library late one night
When my eyes beheld an eerie sight
When my vendor, from its slab, began to rise
And suddenly to my surprise
She did the Mash, she did the Vendor Mash
And it’s a workflow smash

Ledgers and Summary Funds and Allocated Funds, OH MY!
Hindsight is 20/20

**ALMA TRAINING 2018**

Visit the link below to be paired with a training buddy!
Training will begin in May 2018

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**Alma Training Buddy Registration**

Just like a book club or a workout buddy, an Alma training buddy is someone you attend trainings with, bounce questions and ideas off of, and discuss the possibilities of Alma with after hands-on training. Whether you already know who you want to buddy up with or want to be matched with someone, please fill out this registration form and answer two additional questions about Alma training.

Buddies will be matched during March, have time to get to know each other in April, and begin attending trainings together in May. After training begins, we hope that the buddy pairs will come together in larger Learning Circles for additional peer support.
Hindsight is 20/20

ALMA PETTING ZOO

JOIN YOUR HARVARD LIBRARY COLLEAGUES
FOR SOME HANDS-ON WORK WITH ALMA

Friends from Animal Craze Traveling Farm
will be on hand for the event.
Come for the baby animals - stay for Alma insights!
Celebration Time

• **Business Resumption.** Although we have challenges in certain workflows/areas, many processes saw normal or improved throughput after 3-6 months.

• **New Workflows and Processes.** Small and large changes have allowed for new services and much needed policy change.

• **Single to Multiple Records Transition.** Opportunity to rethink longstanding description practice, allowing for more efficient management of titles in KB. Months of careful analysis and mapping (informed by those who went before us) allowed us to migrate data as cleanly as possible via the P2E process.
Celebration Time

• Distribution of “Systems Librarian” Tasks. Alma design allows for record load and batch processes to be extended to library staff.

• Largely Successful Data Migration. Still have some problem areas of cleanup, but no data was lost.

• Project Completed on Schedule. We did it!
Thank You!

• Thank you to Ken Peterson, who started this journey as my co-lead (and helped out with this presentation)!

  Kenneth J. Peterson  
  Associate Librarian for Access and Collection Strategies  
  Dartmouth Library

• **Questions** - Laura Morse – laura_morse@harvard.edu