ACEF annual report
2020 IGeLU National User Group meeting

Introduction

Founded in 2000, the ACEF was formerly known as AUFA (*Association des Utilisateurs Francophones d'Aleph*). It changed its name during an extraordinary general assembly on February 12th 2007 and became the ACEF (*Association des Clients d'Ex Libris France*).

Initially dedicated to Aleph, the association has grown with Ex Libris' customers base. The vast majority of members use Ex Libris' software: Alma, Primo, Aleph, SFX, DigiTool, Leganto. Few customers use ProQuest software: Summon, 360 Link.

Membership

In 2019, the ACEF users group has sixty member institutions, a gain of ten compared to 2018, which is an all-time record. Most of them are academic libraries. Institution members are from France, Belgium, and Switzerland. Quebec customers did not renew their membership because they're currently replacing Aleph/Primo/SFX by OCLC WMS & WorldCat.

Main events since the last IGeLU meeting

Primo admin training (free for members)

A one day training session was organized at Sorbonne Nouvelle University on the 6 and the 7th of January 2020. The training was given by Benoît Vicart (DBU Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3 / Bibliothèque Sainte-Barbe). Members of eight universities have attended the training session (ten trainees).

It's getting more and more difficult to organize a single training session because of the multiple environments: local/cloud, BO/VE, Classic/NUI. In 2020, for the first time, a separate training was given for Primo VE admin users.

SFX admin training (free for members)

A two and a half days training session was organized at University Paris Nanterre in November 2019. The training was given by Isabelle Filliâtre (Université Paris Dauphine) and Gabriel Raupp (Université Paris Nanterre). Members of four french universities have attended the training session (six trainees). The number of SFX clients among the members of ACEF continues to decline since a lot of french Universities are moving to Alma. Yet the issue of how to declare and update electronic resources in commercial KBs is still relevant.

Alma admin training and Primo VE admin training (free for members)

A three days training session was organized on January 14th to 17th 2020. The training was prepared by Arik Atlan (Université Paris Est Créteil) and Hélène Pipet (Université Paris Est Créteil). The first day was devoted to general administration and patrons rights management ; the second day was devoted to fulfillment policies and resource administration; the third day was devoted to acquisitions and analytics. The purpose of this training was to provide ACEF members with a global knowledge of Alma administration. This training was very much appreciated and gave rise to very rich and interesting discussions and very useful knowledge sharing. Fourteen people from eleven universities attended this training, despite the transport strikes, and there was a waiting list.

A Primo VE one day training took place right after the Alma training at University Paris Est on the 18th of January and was given by François Renaville and Laurence Richelle. Fifteen people attended this training, and there was also a waiting list. The training gave a comprehensive vision of all Primo VE administration, with a very complete training tool.

The comprehensive program of the Alma and Primo VE training has been considered as extremely useful by all the trainees who deplore the lack of initial on-site training by Ex Libris itself during the Alma projects.

ACEF meeting in February 2020

The meeting was hosted by Collège de France, Paris, on February 5-6th.

Twentieth birthday of the association

The french-speaking users group, AUFA (aka Association des Utilisateurs Francophones d'ALEPH) was created in 2000. Laurent Aucher, chair of the ACEF, presented the origins of the ALEPH software and the Ex Libris company. Historic members of the board were invited to share their memories of this pioneering period and the first ALEPH implementations in France. Sadly, Yohanan Spruch (the Aleph architect) passed away a few weeks later.

Customer feedback sessions

- *The Alma project at Université Paris-Saclay* by Camille Mazé and Vincent Bériel (Université Paris-Saclay / UVSQ)
- *Alma and Primo VE* by Raphaële Bussemey (Université Clermont Auvergne)
- *Interact with Alma using APIs* by Jérôme Chiavassa-Szenberg (Campus Condorcet)
- *Transition from Absysnet to Alma / Primo: feedback from the ESSEC Learning Center* by Alain Fossier and Michel De Moura (ESSEC)

Alma working group news

A meeting was organized both locally and via videoconferencing on January 30th 2020. During this meeting, 14 institutions discussed various subjects, including :
- the channels for reporting translation errors in French language;
- the creation of a circuit aimed at centralizing the requests related to the evolutions of the Unimarc format in Alma and Primo VE;
- a large number of institutions expressed their dissatisfaction with the management of their Primo VE implementation project.

The French institutions have discussed Alma's integration projects with SUDOC (the French collective catalogue created by Higher Educational and Research libraries) and BACON (The french knowledge base).

Ex Libris sessions

In the afternoon, the Ex Libris Staff was given the opportunity to present several topics.

- *Ex Libris activities 2019 / 2020* by Arnaud Guénégan (Ex Libris)

- *Esploro* by Ghislain Onestas (Ex Libris)
- *New Alma Metadata Editor* by par Maud Arnaud (Ex Libris)
- *Alma Analytics* by par Maud Arnaud (Ex Libris)
- Q/A

ACEF meeting in June 2020

The meeting was cancelled because of the pandemic. It has been postponed to September 23rd.

Alma Workshops

Alma workshops were locally organized by members of the community. Each day was an opportunity to address one of the following themes:

- Alma Normalization Rules
- Alma Analytics
- Acquisition process
- Electronic portfolios management

Each session welcomed a dozen participants from different regions. The preparation of the workshops is an investment for the trainers but it also allows institutions to build skills.

Market trends

Predominance

In 2019, Koha and Alma were briefly tied (number of ILS in Higher Education), but again, Ex Libris won all the tenders of the SGBm[1] project. In 2020, more than 50% of public universities (34 out of 67) are already equipped with Alma and Primo. If we take into account Primo and Summon, more than 60% of public universities use Ex Libris' solutions. Some institutions postponed or cancelled their call for tenders so that they do not have to choose Ex Libris' software.

Alma

The massive arrival of Alma customers has revived the dynamic of the association: new threads on the mailing list, workshops, exchange of settings, etc. New institutions, which have never used Ex Libris software before, are discovering the products and the community.

Primo VE

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[1] Higher education mutualized system whose tenders are managed by the ABES agency.
http://www.abes.fr/Projet-SGBm/Systeme-de-gestion-de-bibliotheque-mutualise-SGBm

During a joint Alma and Primo VE implementation project, it seems that both the institution and the Ex Libris teams are essentially focused on Alma data migration and workflows. We observe that the specific problems of the discovery tool are most often dealt at the last stage and in a short amount of time.

Since 2019, Primo VE implementations have shown that Ex Libris consultants have had little training to this software. Moreover, customers could not rely on documentation that was often incomplete and not up to date.

There are clearly two groups of customers:
- New Primo VE customers are complaining but they're not disappointed since they have no idea of how the software works and what was the strength of Primo BO publishing platform;
- Primo BO customers are complaining because they have lost a lot: poorer training and documentation; less flexibility of normalization & indexing.

Central Discovery Index (CDI)

It is too early to assess the quality of the CDI compared to PCI and Summon indexes. However, the tight migration schedule and the incomplete documentation - although significant improvements were made in June 2020 - make the operation of the CDI baffling to customers at this time.

On May 19th, after almost five years of unsuccessful requests, the ACEF sent a letter regarding the integration between the Ex Libris solutions[2] and the ISTEX[3] platform to Mr. Ofer Mosseri (VP Europe).

Ex Libris reacted very quickly by proposing a videoconference so that we could accurately explain the needs of the community. We asked for the creation of 28 specific ISTEX collections in the CDI and the development of the appropriate plugin in the Alma link resolver.

The Ex Libris Content team is currently working with the INIST. We are hopeful to see the creation of these collections before the end of the year.

On behalf of the ACEF user group

Laurent AUCHER

July 2020

http://a-c-e-f.org

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[2] The SFX, Primo NUI and 360 Link integrations were developed by customers.
[3] The ISTEX platform was built by the INIST-CNRS to host the National Licences, ie, e-resources archives acquired on a lasting basis by the French state for Higher Education and Research. The ISTEX platform is meant to be integrated with Universities, Research and Libraries Tools: digital work space, institutional repository, catalog, discovery tool, link resolver, etc. Document access is done at article or book chapter level.