Norwegian National User Group Annual report 2021/2022 - Sikt

Sikt is a public administrative body under the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research that provides common systems and services for education and research throughout Norway. Sikt delivers Primo and Alma to the BIBSYS Consortium and Leganto to the Reading list consortium.

The national groups for Alma, Primo and Leganto are administrated by Sikt. Sikt is a consortium member of IGELU.

The BIBSYS Consortium / Alma

Background

The BIBSYS Consortium consists of around 80 institutions from the higher education and research sector in Norway, including all universities, university colleges, the National Library of Norway, and research and health institutes. All the institutions in the BIBSYS consortium use Alma and Primo. 26 of these institutions also use Leganto.

Living with Alma

Alma has been live since the end of 2015, and the BIBSYS consortium has become experienced with the new system. In general, the system largely covers the consortium's current needs. We have entered the final phase for our current contract with Ex Libris for Alma and Primo. Sikt has started a process to look at future needs and requirements for library services after the end of the current contract. The goal is to deliver good and cost-effective library services through the systems and support services we provide, so that the libraries within the consortium can offer their users high quality services and access to the resources they need for study and research.

On occasion we see some slowness in the Alma UI, and there are also some performance issues on the API's.

NERS and support

In general, we are satisfied with the support provided by Ex Libris. We do, however, continue to see longer than expected resolution times, particularly for cases where complexity is high. High priority cases are usually reported when a bug or issue impacts the consortium in a

consequential way. These cases should not require escalation through monthly meetings with support, yet this is still sometimes needed.

Sikt uses the NERS-system to push for enhancement requests and see this as a good way to let the Norwegian user community influence on the development and direction for the products. We do however see examples of NERS being used as a fallback solution for bugs that will not be handled. We also miss some ways or channels to report the general experience with the products as a whole. E.g., topics as GDPR, information security and the general performance.

Ideas Exchange offers an alternative route to request enhancement where we sometimes see a faster turnaround than what is possible in the annual NERS process. We would like to see more transparency regarding the process of selecting ideas for development.

There is a hope and expectation that the move to quarterly releases for Alma will result in completer and more tested functionality in the releases. We encourage Ex libris to use this new cadence to include the user community/working groups in the design of the functionality and as a minimum provide a better description of what a solution will involve, rather than just stating that an issue will be solved in a future release

There have been meetings and other dialogue between Sikt and Ex Libris product management where certain enhancements and solutions have been discussed. Our experience is that these meetings lead to a better shared understanding and proposed solutions and a better result.

Ex Libris new Support manager Hilary Newman has promised some significant changes to the case handling by the Ex Libris support team. We welcome this changes and hope that this will result in a better understanding for the support case when reported, and that the number of aging cases is reduced and kept at a minimum.

Primo

The core functionality of Primo is about Discovery and Delivery. To get the correct results and to retrieve updated information about access to the documents are the most important for the end user.

We are concerned that much needed functionality will only be developed for Primo VE while Primo BO lags behind. At the same time, required functionality for us to switch to Primo VE is still lacking. Most functionality related to consortial management / configuration is underdeveloped or not present at all. We need a simple way to configure and maintain all of the institutions allowing for a central configuration with the possibility for local adjustments. We should not have to go into every instance to perform a change in configuration, code-table etc. Some of this is possible today, but it needs to be extended.

There is a concern that JavaScript customizations for Primo are still done using the AngularJS framework which has long passed its end of life. Switching to Angular (or another up-to-date framework) should hopefully be made a priority. Using a framework that is no longer supported represents a potential risk, even though Ex Libris has committed to patch any security issues.

In the 2020 report it was mentioned that the switch to CDI led to an increase in cases where full-text links were missing, while Primo reported that online access was available. We also saw a significant number of resources activated in Alma not being searchable by Primo. Unfortunately, the case volume on these kinds of cases is still high and the timeline from a case is reported to solution is too high. We have multiple cases still active after more than a year.

The move to CDI also introduced some issues in the search-functionality and with the end result of unexpected result lists. E.g., there are some issues with stemming of Norwegian words and truncation.

Ex Libris states that they assign an internal priority to each resource with issues. We would like more transparency on of these priorities are made and how we may influence them.

We also experience that it takes too long time to get bug-fixes for new functionality. One example being the quick-links in Primo that was introduced in February 2022. This does not work in a consortia-setting due to an issue with the use of proxies. The fix currently has a tentative release date for February 2023.

GDPR must be part of the design process and all new functionalities must be in accordance with GDPR, e.g. the default on for the search history in Primo.

The Reading list Consortium

The Reading list consortium consists of 26 members and has been live with Leganto since 2017.

Leganto has proven to be a success within the institution and has resulted in a more efficient handling of reading lists by the staff and a better user experience for the students.

The last year Ex Libris has developed an integration with the Norwegian copyright clearance system, and we expect that this integration will reduce the workload for the academic staff further.

Topics for the INUG-meeting

- Response time support
- Time to fix bugs in newly released functionality
- Primo vs Primo VE / Up to date framework for Primo
- Performance of Alma and the API's
- CDI: issues with data quality and functionality