ACEF annual report
2024 IGeLU National User Group meeting

Presentation and membership

Founded in 2000, the ACEF users group 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, as its former name suggests, the association has grown with Ex Libris' customers base. Its statutes were amended in 2016 to include ProQuest customers, who did not have their own customer group. The effects of this change have remained limited, with the steady decline in the number of ProQuest customers in France since that date.
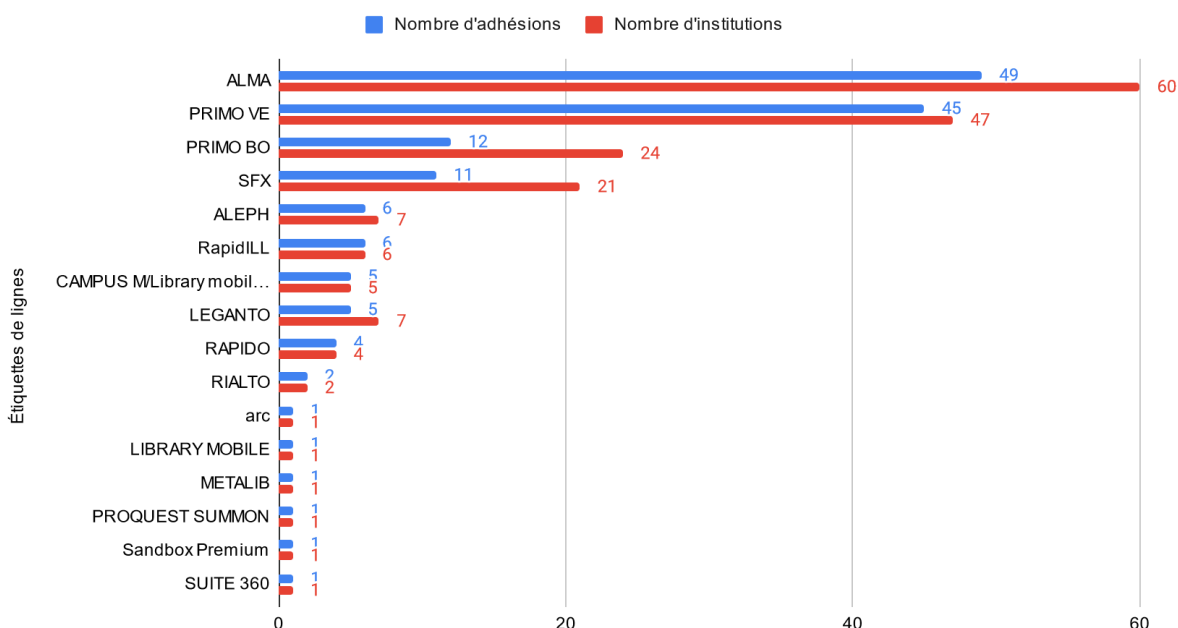
By 1st August 2024, the association had 77 members as in 2023 (no further growth in membership expected). The majority of the members are French institutions (most of them being academic libraries), but several customers are from Belgium (University of Liège, Free University of Brussels, European Parliament, etc.) Switzerland (Swiss National library, Swiss Library Service Platform, BCU Lausanne, etc.) or Luxemburg (Court of Justice of the European Union). It should be noted that there have been no Québec institutions or African institutions.

Pays		Nombre d'adhésions	Nombre d'institutions
	France	56	70
	Suisse	4	4
	Belgique	3	3
	Luxembourg	1	1
		64	78

ACEF membership by country of origin

Alma and Primo are the most widely used softwares among the members of the association with at least 54 and 59 customers (both Primo BO and Primo VE). However, Aleph and SFX are still used by a significant number of institutions (about 10 members each). The others (Summon, 360 Link, Digitool, Rosetta, etc.) have become marginalized.

Number of memberships and number of institutions by software

■ Nombre d'adhésions   ■ Nombre d'institutions

Software	Nombre d'adhésions	Nombre d'institutions
ALMA	49	60
PRIMO VE	45	47
PRIMO BO	12	24
SFX	11	21
ALEPH	6	7
RapidILL	6	6
CAMPUS M/Library mobil…	5	5
LEGANTO	5	7
RAPIDO	4	4
RIALTO	2	2
arc	1	1
LIBRARY MOBILE	1	1
METALIB	1	1
PROQUEST SUMMON	1	1
Sandbox Premium	1	1
SUITE 360	1	1

Étiquettes de lignes (y-axis label)

Organization

The association is directed by an executive committee composed of 6 persons. The association's entire executive board was renewed in May 2024.

The committee is assisted by a group of several referents. Most of them are referents for one software (Alma and Primo => 2 persons each, Leganto and SFX => one person each). As such, they are mainly in charge of coordinating votes for Ners and monitoring changes in these softwares. The other people are in charge of a thematic folder : the translation of the UIs from the English to the French (two colleagues) ; the evolution of the cataloging format (one person) ; the sharing of IT developments (two persons).

The broadcast list is still very active with an average of 73 messages sent each month for almost 380 registered persons.

Main events since the last IGeLU meeting

Training campaign

The 2023-2024 training sessions covered :
- Alma administration
- Primo VE administration
- MARC 21 holdings reporting
- Analytics

Over 60 hours of training and more than 80 trainees.

Training is provided by association members paid by ACEF. They are free of charge for member establishments.
All of these courses are available online on the association's Intranet site (the videos are broadcasted thanks Youtube and a private channel).
2 webinars were organized to present how Alma's APIs work and the IT developments made by some of our members : resource sharing and purchase requests forms; broken link report form

General Meeting

Our annual meeting was held in Montpellier, on May 30 & 31. We were hosted by Université de Montpellier, one of France's oldest universities. This meeting was attended by almost 100 people.
The first morning was dedicated to the review of our activities ; the afternoon to Ex Libris for a presentation focusing on the following topics : Alma roadmap ; Primo research assistant and Primo Next, Alma Starter ; Rapido ; CampusM for library (all these presentations were very superficial, and the people we spoke to weren't necessarily in a position to answer our questions).
The second day was devoted to experience feedbacks in the form of two separate sessions :
- the first session was devoted to the future of catalogs: Exlibris gave a fairly detailed presentation of the work in progress on integrating catalogs into linked open data;
- the second session was devoted to feedback on the implementation of Alma data backups, and the other presentation dealt with the cataloguing circuit for electronic journals and ebooks

Alma/Sudoc Synchronization

22 institutions benefit from synchronization between the national SUDOC catalog (shared catalog of the French academic libraries) and Alma for ebooks (the circuit was the subject of a presentation at IGELU 2023). This year's work focused on integrating journals into the synchronization circuit. Tests have been carried out, but for the time being, many technical hurdles still need to be overcome before the system can be put into production.
The project to set up the same type of synchronization circuit for printed copies is at a standstill, and Abes will probably not be working on it before its reinformatization (2027-2028).

Discussions with the Ex libris content team

In addition to issues relating to synchronization between SUDOC and Alma, and to the management of BACON packages (knowledge base for the French-language resources, managed by the French Bibliographic Agency for Higher Education) in CZ, meetings held twice a year between Acef and the Ex libris Content team have enabled us to raise a number of issues raised by our members (for example, the need to be able to export SFX collection reports to the Sebina SIGB). The creation of a team of ACEF contacts for content-related issues seems necessary to improve the regular dialogue that has been established since the arrival of Tamar Ganor as head of the Content team.A large number of titles in French-language electronic collections in the CZ Alma are reported with very poor metadata. In some cases, where these titles are reported in the SUDOC with detailed records, we believe it would be worthwhile for these records to be added to the CZ. This year, following an EXchange ideas, a first systematized record loading workflow between the SUDOC and Alma was set up for the Dalloz collection.
We would like to extend these circuits to other collections.

Outlooks for the coming year

A number of projects will be carried out this year:

- the terms of collaboration between Acef and Ex-libris must evolve : presentations at the annual general meeting must be more in line with the expectations of our members ; it is also possible that we will integrate Ex-libris' participation in the ACEF training program (for topics that we are unable to provide)

- To maintain more regular relations with the Exlibris Content team, it will be necessary to set up contact persons within ACEF

- the association's membership model will undoubtedly be reviewed to guarantee ACEF financial sustainability and cover new expenses (for example registration and travel to the IGELU congress)

- Integrating linked open data into Alma and Primo is a major challenge for our members. French institutions use Unimarc for document cataloging, and we will have to work with Exlibris to adapt the functions already offered (like infos cards) to our national format. The possibility of cataloging in bibframe raises questions. For a long time, our national cataloging agency (ABES) thought it was best to use the RDA FR code (currently being drafted), without having a very clear vision of the format to be used. In 2024, in anticipation of the total overhaul of its IT system, ABES has decided to temporarily suspend work on future cataloging formats. In this context, the question arises for the French members of our association whether it makes sense to experiment with BIBFRAME reporting without the support of ABES. It remains to be seen how our association can lead these investigations.

- ABES has formalized its dialogue with library software user clubs : ACEF regularly takes part in exchanges (notably as part of the Abes reinformatization project); a dialogue between Acef and other user clubs is to be set up (Sebina users in particular). As such, it is helping to draw up the specifications for the future national catalog management system.

- Over the past 6 years, Leganto has been used in 7 French-speaking institutions. Unlike Anglo-Saxon libraries, reading lists are not a widespread service in our universities, and it will take time for our teachers to adopt the tool. We believe that the service is a real plus in the training of our students and can help build bridges between teachers and libraries. Unfortunately, Exlibris' pricing policy for this product makes it difficult to maintain the tool in a budget crisis.

- Like most Exlibris customers, we're very concerned about the future of Primo and Primo VE, whose new interface is currently under development. The change of technology with the abandonment of Angular and compatibility with Unimarc will be points on which we'll be particularly vigilant.

On behalf of the ACEF user group
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August 2024
http://a-c-e-f.org