Together but separate:
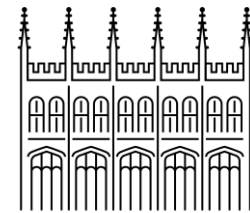## *Library Independence at the University of Oxford*

Nathalie Schulz & Duncan Jones
IGeLU Monday 9th September 2024
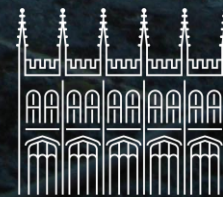
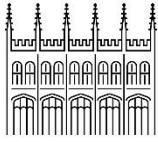**BODLEIAN**
LIBRARIES
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Context

Libraries

- University of Oxford libraries are part of OLIS (Oxford Libraries Information System) – name for the community of libraries

- Consists of:

  - Bodleian Libraries (26 physical centrally run libraries plus offsite storage and acquisitions libraries)

  - Partner Libraries (65) – have their own staff

    - 42 College libraries (independent charities)

    - Departmental and Museum libraries

    - Associated libraries e.g. Oxford Union

Libraries

- Shared bibliographic records (with copy-specific information in holdings records)

- One discovery interface: SOLO (Search Oxford Libraries Online)

- Eresource access is institution-wide

- Single group of users, various patron roles, e.g. students get patron roles at all Bodleian Libraries plus their college

Libraries

- Variation in size across OLIS libraries, for example:

  - Reuben College: 250 items

  - Social Science Library: 347,000 items

  - Collections Storage Facility: 10 million+ items

- Majority in Oxford city centre (no campus)

PLANTATION RD
BEVINGTON
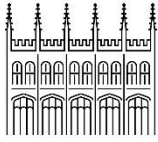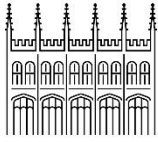WOODSTOCK RD
ST BERNARD'S RD
OBSERVATORY ST
University Parks
RIVER CHERWELL
ST CLARENDON ST
KEBLE RD
BLACKHALL RD
PARKS RD
WALTON ST
SOUTH PARKS RD
MANSFIELD RD
ST CROSS RD
WEL LING
OS RD
WALTON CR
RICHMOND RD
ST GILES
MANOR RD
WORCESTER PL
ST JOHN ST
PUSEY ST
PUSEY LN
PARKS RD
JOWETT WK
LONGWALL ST
OXFORD CANAL
WORCESTER ST
BEAUMONT ST
MAGDALEN ST
Gloucester
Green
HOLYWELL ST
Bridge
of Sighs
BROAD ST
Water
Meadows
HYTHE BRIDGE ST
GEORGE ST
ST MICHAEL'S ST
SHIP ST
CORNMARKET ST
MARKET ST
TURL ST
BRASENOSE LN
RADCLIFFE SQUARE
QUEEN'S LN
Clarendon
Shopping
Centre
NEW INN HALL ST
Covered
Market
HIGH ST
BECKET ST
PARK END ST
BOTLEY RD
NEW RD
Carfax
Tower
ORIEL ST
HIGH ST
MAGDALEN ST
ST THOMAS ST
HOLLYBUSH ROW
BONN SQ
QUEEN ST
Town Hall
& Museum
of Oxford
BLUE BOAR ST
BEAR LN
ORIEL ST
MERTON ST
ROSE LN
Magdalen
Bridge
CASTLE ST
Westgate
Shopping
Centre
PEMBROKE ST
MERTON WALK
DEAD MAN'S WALK
Merton Field
RIVER CHERWELL
THE PLAIN
ST CLEMENT
NORFOLK ST
OLD GREYFRIARS ST
PEMBROKE SQ
BREWER ST
ST ALDATE'S
COWLEY RD
IFFLEY RD
PARADISE ST
SPEEDWELL ST
BROAD WALK
Magdalen
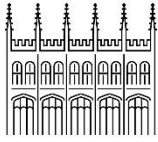College
Sports
Ground
Christ Church

Aleph

- In 2011 OLIS moved to Aleph

- Bodleian Libraries were in one ADM (administrative library)

- All other libraries had their own ADM which gave them complete privacy in terms of acquisitions and circulation information

- Over the years customized Aleph to suit our needs

Alma

- In 2021 OLIS started the journey to Alma

- One Alma institution (with 64 migration forms)

- Go-live originally scheduled for August 2022 but postponed until August 2023 primarily due to library independence issues
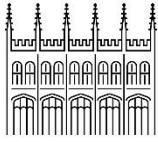
Library Independence

- Examples of what this means for us:

  - Financial privacy for libraries

  - Users can interact with different libraries in different ways

  - Analytics and loan/request data limited by library

- Ex Libris documentation:

https://knowledge.exlibrisgroup.com/Alma/Product_Documentation/010Alma_Online_Help_(English)/010Getting_Started/030Alma_Topologies/Library_Independence
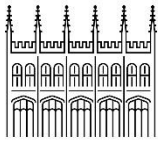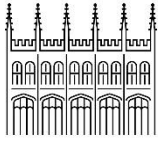
Acquisitions

Funds

Problem:

- By default ledgers and funds migrate as owned by the Institution (even if available for a specific library or libraries)

- Bodleian libraries funds have to be owned by the Institution as they are available for multiple libraries

- Institution level fund permissions mean that you can see funds for other libraries
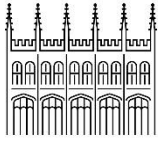
Funds

Solution:

- After migration partner library ledgers were pushed down to the library level which meant that library level fund and ledger permissions could be assigned to staff in those libraries

- In the Bodleian Libraries very few people have fund permissions

- Alma November 2023 release had a new Alma privilege called "Fund ledger view by available for" was added to 7 roles, including fund-ledger viewer and fund-ledger manager. Issue with summary funds.
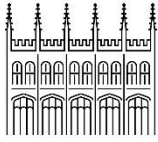
Invoices

Problem:

- By default invoices migrate to Alma as owned by the institution and can only be viewed with institution level invoice permissions

- If you have institution level invoice permissions then you can see invoices and purchase orders for all libraries
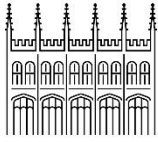
Invoices

Solution:

- After migration partner library invoices were pushed down to the library level which meant that library level invoice permissions could be assigned to staff in those libraries

- In the Bodleian Libraries very few people have institution level invoice permissions but some need them to deal with invoices that have order lines for more than one library (and to view migrated invoices)

Vendors

Problem:

- The Vendor Manager permission in Alma is only scoped at the Institution level. From the vendor record you can see all orders and invoices for the vendor.

- Each library has their own set of vendors. A small number are shared between Bodleian libraries but none are shared between the Bodleian libraries and partner libraries.
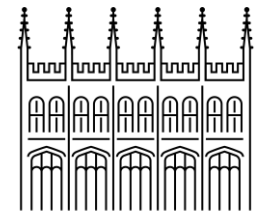
Vendors

Solution:

- Very few people have the Vendor management role:

  - Systems Team create new vendors and do vendor changes for partner libraries

  - Small number of Bodleian Libraries staff (overlap with those with fund and invoice permissions) have the role
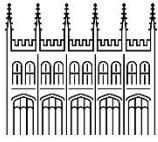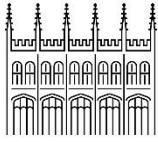
Fulfillment & User Management

BODLEIAN
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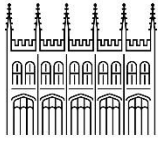# Visibility of loan transactions

Problem:

- Independence of loan data is a requirement for colleges

- Group of Bodleian Libraries have shared policies, blocks and loan limits

- Bodleian Offsite Storage is a separate system library

- Staff therefore need visibility of some loans and requests but not others

BODLEIAN
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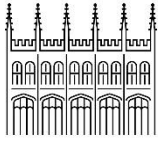# Visibility of loan transactions

Solution:

- Using Alma's Partial Fulfillment Independence model

- Assign "dummy" desk for Offsite store

- Key staff have circulation roles at many libraries

- Ideally we'd like more control with Fulfillment Independence at a campus level
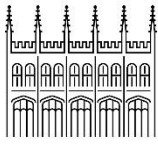
Blocks

Problem:

- Independent application of blocks is a requirement in the institution

- Group of Bodleian Libraries need shared blocks (e.g. a long overdue book in one means borrowing block in all)

- Nothing can be automatically applied in Alma except at a single library level or at the institutional level
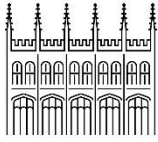
Blocks

Solution:

- Our developers created an in-house solution

- Alma applies a library level block when a user has an overdue item

- A script checks analytics and applies the block to other libraries in the group overnight (block name mentions library)

- Returning final overdue item clears blocks using a webhook

- Find out more from our colleagues at the Developers Day
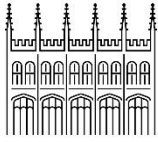
Shared item policy list
Problem:

- Aleph item status codes carried individual descriptions:

  - Code 03 was "**Books – Morris**", "**Classics Books**" and "**Undergraduate Books**" in three different libraries

- Alma migration combined everything into a single table of item policies at the institution level. We chose to label these "**03 – Aleph ISC**" etc. at point of migration to help get the concept across

- Loss of information caused confusion and library staff using incorrect codes or codes not used in their configuration

Shared item policy list
Solution:

- Moved away from item policies where possible

- Created a much longer list and individually named item policies for each library so that no codes were shared

- Three letter code in front of the policy name denotes which library has accompanying configuration

  - BOD Use In Library Only – Not Digitisable

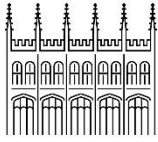 - NUF Short Loan (Restricted)

User groups

Problem:

- High level user groups from upstream data correspond to a single card category e.g. Undergraduate

- Some users have different positions in different parts of the institution e.g. Graduate student but also lecturer

- Some colleges want to apply local privileges to subsets of users

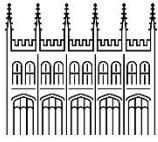- Alma Job category has limited utility and requires User Manager role to assign
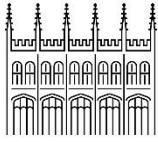
User groups

Solution:

- Negotiated introduction of Fulfillment statistical categories with ExLibris as part of migration programme extension

- Use these to configure additional complexity in fulfillment rules (e.g. User Group InList and Statistical Category = X)

- Statistical categories can be applied by staff with Circulation Desk roles.

- Works for fulfillment rules but not current included in loan limit config tables

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Patron Roles

Problem:

- Automatic patron roles added where predictable (e.g. University members get all Bodleian Libraries)

- Many college and departmental libraries need to assign roles on an ad hoc basis

- Manage Patron Services screen only allows registering/renewing a patron role for a fixed duration e.g. 1 month

- User Management permissions are too powerful to assign outside the systems team
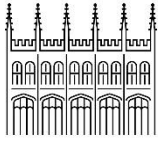
Patron Roles

Solution:

- Complex workaround developed outside Alma using webhooks

- Staff add library scoped block called "Patron role updated by staff" and set an expiry date for the block (**Not a real block!**)

- Webhook catches user record being updated and copies the block scope and date to create a matching patron role

- Find out more from our colleagues at the Developers Day
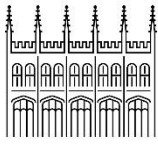
Analytics

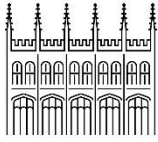# Library specific reports

Problem:

- How to limit reports and dashboards to a library or group of libraries without creating a pre-filtered report for each one

- For example, 5 reports hardcoded to 80 libraries would be 400 reports!
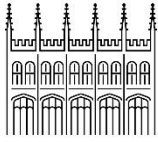
Library specific reports

Solution:

- Analytics enhancements in 2023:

  - Library Level Analytics Consumer role assigned to staff users

  - Library Code Active Filter applied to reports in the relevant Analytics subject areas, for example:

    - Fines and Fees

    - Fulfillment

    - Funds Expenditure

Statistical categories

Problem:

- In order to make best use of statistical categories they needed to be fully incorporated in Analytics

Statistical categories

Solution:

- Enhancements by Ex Libris in 2023 to:

  - Increase the number of statistical categories in Analytics to 10 and display library level data

  - Add Statistical Category Type field to Users > Statistics

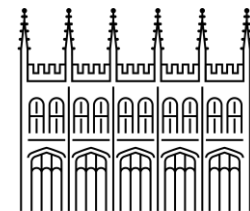 - Add Statistical Category Description field to Users > Statistics

Questions?

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Duncan.Jones@bodleian.ox.ac.uk