THE FIVE COLLEGES OF OHIO

LIBRARY SYSTEMS & INITIATIVES NEWSLETTER

April 2024

Alma Implementation

The Main Migration Has Started!

The first extraction of data from Sierra by Innovative began Monday, April 1. As data is extracted, ExLibris is analyzing and normalizing it, and preparing multiple migration forms for each library, some of which have already been delivered. Once the forms are delivered, the Migration Project Leads for each library will work with their colleagues to decide how their catalog data will be loaded into their Alma instance. The Leads are currently training on how to complete the migration forms. Draft versions of the migration forms are due on May 10th and the completed versions are due by May 24th. Keep in mind, this extract and migration are essentially a test and the whole process will repeat in 2025.

Electronic Resources and the Migration

Most Alma libraries choose to rebuild their electronic resources in Alma rather than migrate them; the data is messy and is often duplicated by records available from

Alma's Community Zone. During the Vanguard, Kenyon learned that the shared nature of records in CONSORT amplifies those issues, so they will be rebuilding electronic resources in their Alma instance. The other colleges are leaning in that direction as well and will be exploring it during this initial migration. Thanks to Kenyon for identifying this issue as part of the Vanguard and sharing it with the rest of the libraries! Also, Kenyon has shared the migration forms they completed during the Vanguard with the other members of the Five, as well as what they've learned, all of which has been very helpful!

Communication During Migration

Communication is going to be critical over the next year, so we've put some things in place to help keep everyone up-to-date and we'll be making adjustments as the migration moves along.

Joint Access and Collection Services Subcommittee

The [Access Services](#) and [Collection Services](#) subcommittees have joined for the duration of the migration. This combined Ohio Five subcommittee shares a Basecamp project space and has met twice to check in on the migration, share status updates, and answer questions. At last week's meeting it was agreed to meet again over the summer, after the forms have been submitted, and again in the fall, after the Alma instances have been delivered to the colleges. Thanks to Michayla Nester from Denison for serving as Chair of this very large subcommittee!

Implementation Project Leads

The Project Leads for each college, along with Spencer and Matt, have a standing weekly meeting time reserved to discuss issues, share notes, make decisions, etc. This is a placeholder so that the group can meet as needed, such as prior to the

submission of the migration forms or when ExLibris asks for a decision that would benefit from discussion. The Leads are:

- Denison: Debby Andreadis
- Kenyon: Chris Hudson
- Oberlin: Paul Heyde and Michael McFarlin
- Ohio Five: Spencer Lamm
- Ohio Wesleyan: Amanda Raab
- Wooster: Mark Gooch

Separate Alma Instances for CONSORT Libraries

The biggest impact of the Alma implementation, outside of Alma itself, is that the four CONSORT schools will no longer be sharing a library system and will each have their own Alma instance. After conversations with OhioLINK and ExLibris, this decision was made by the Directors at last month's Library Committee meeting.

While there were different perspectives on sharing a catalog across the consortium, the decision came down to the fact that Alma wasn't built to support a shared instance as a subset of a larger implementation. Alma was built for two scenarios; a single institution with one or more libraries, or a consortium with member institutions that have one or more libraries. The latter is the configuration we're moving to, with OhioLINK as the top-level consortium, and Alma doesn't support consortia within that structure. ExLibris has made some adjustments to support libraries that wish to share instances, but those fixes weren't enough to offset the additional hurdles that would be created. It should be noted that it looks like separate instances were the choice for most or all of the shared Sierra implementations across OhioLINK, including the OPAL libraries.

This definitely will lead to some changes for Ohio FIve Systems, but that was going to be the case with any new system, shared or not. And as we learn about Alma we're more and more excited about the opportunities to support you all. For those of you that haven't seen it yet, it is a huge system and there is a ton of possibility in there. We're starting to talk amongst ourselves about what the future could be and we'll be talking to you all throughout the next year.

Reserves Sharing and Alma

Reserves sharing between the CONSORT libraries is an important service that will be impacted by splitting the catalog. We've let OhioLINK and ExLibris know that the ability to share these materials among the four colleges is a big positive. They are researching how to support this and will get back to us once the new Alma instances are live in the fall and the implementation of resource sharing starts.

Retirement Shindig for CONSORT in 2025?

CONSORT has been a part of the libraries for more than two decades, so one thing we should definitely do is find some way to say goodbye. Perhaps a retirement party next summer?

Vanguard Update

The weekly Vanguard meetings, initially focused on data migration prep, have turned to Alma functionality training. These weekly training meetings will continue until the end of May. In addition, the week of March 25th was a Vanguard training workshop. There were seven 2.5 hour sessions, each on a different area of the system, including; acquisitions, user management, patron services, and technical services. These deep dives were recorded and are [available on OStaff](#). If you're interested, look for the videos from March 25th-28th.

Kenyon has been working with their Alma and Primo test environments, validating the data migration and identifying issues. Along with the rest of the Vanguard they're currently working with ExLibris and their IT department on authentication and loading patron data.

CONSORT

Wooster Introduces Library of Things

In February, The College of Wooster announced a new lending project, the Library of Things. The Library of Things will be composed of discrete collections that include items related to specific needs, hobbies, and interests of students, faculty, and staff.

The Library of Things inaugural collection is [The Black Hair Care Tools Collection](#). This collection includes various hair care tools that help with the maintenance and health of Black hair and is now available for checkout. The project supports College of Wooster students, faculty, and staff navigating the challenge of managing their own hair care needs due to the dearth of local hair care professionals experienced in the care and styling of Black hair in Wooster.

Thanks to Makiba Foster, Librarian of the College, and Michael Buttrey, Head of Access Services, for developing this project and making these collections available to our patrons!

Digital Initiatives

Digital Repository Review Task Force

A new Ohio Five [Digital Initiatives Subcommittee](#) Task Force will evaluate two digital repository applications, Alma Digital and the newly redesigned CONTENTdm, as

potential solutions for managing digital content and making it accessible. The primary reasons to review these systems at this time are:

- the issues that the current iteration of CONTENTdm has with books, newspapers, and other multi-page objects.
- the availability of Alma Digital as a repository solution, at no cost, to each of the colleges as part of the 2024-25 transition to the Alma LSP.

The task force will review Alma Digital and the new CONTENTdm this spring and produce a report summarizing their findings in July. The report will be an assessment of each system's key features, but will not recommend what system each library should adopt. This is because each library has a different system profile—some use only CONTENTdm, some use only Digital Commons, some use both—and each is focused on different types of digital content.

Task Force Members

- Debra Andreadis, Deputy Director, Denison University
- Stacy Chaney-Blankenship, Digital Initiatives Librarian and Curator, OWU Historical Collection, Ohio Wesleyan University
- Yuimi Hlasten, Electronic Resources & Scholarly Communication Librarian, Denison University
- Katie Farr, Institutional Repository Specialist, College of Wooster
- Spencer Lamm, Director of Consortial Library Systems, The Five Colleges of Ohio, Chair
- Michael McFarlin, Head of Library Technology & Systems, Oberlin College

For more info, see the [Task Force's recently approved charge](#)

Ohio Five Notes

Ticket System

If you have a question, have noticed a bug, or need systems assistance for any reason, let Matt and I know via our Ticket System's [online form](#). If you would like to

sign up so you can submit tickets, please reach out to Matt at macnemarm@ohio5.org.

This Newsletter

This newsletter is sent to all library staff at the Five; it is not distributed to anyone outside of the Libraries. If you would prefer not to receive the newsletter in the future, please let us know and we will take you off the mailing list. Each issue will also be posted to the [Library Resources page](#) of the Ohio Five website.