

Technical Services Planning Committee Meeting January 7, 2005: University of Central Florida

Technical Services Planning Committee
Jan. 7, 2005 Meeting
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Participants:

Members: Chair, UF: Martha Hruska; FAMU: Emmett Denny; FAMU-LAW: Barbara Ginzburg; FCLA: Mary Ann O'Daniel; FGCU: Catherine Gardiner; FIU: Sue Wartzok; FSMED: Suzanne Nagy; FSU: Carolyn Goolsby; FSU-LAW: Janice Ross; UCF: Linda Sutton; UF-HSC: Cecilia Botero; UNF: Vicki Stanton for John Hein; USF: Susan Heron; USF-Shimberg HSC: Allison M. Howard; UWF: Dan North

Other: FAMU-Law: Liz Robles, Linda Sobey; FCLA: Daniel Cromwell, Lydia Motyka; FIU: George Fray, Nancy Hershoff, Elaine Winske; UCF: Selma Jaskowski, Kimberly Montgomery, Jeanne Piascik; UF: Julia Allen, Michele Crump, Jason Fleming, Betsy Simpson, Priscilla William; UNF: Verna Urbanski; USF: Charles Gordon, James Michael; UWF: Jane DeBellis, Lynn Shay, Paul Williford

The meeting was called to order by Martha Hruska and the participants introduced themselves.

Aleph Discussions

Status of Phase 2 Libraries (P2Ls) and Implementation calendar:

FCLA Lydia Motyka reported that the migration of P2Ls was going smoothly and the Aleph software is stable. With stable software and the experience from P1Ls there are fewer surprises. The conversion programs are working and there are fewer interruptions to the implementation schedule. This has reduced the number of test loads necessary. The STP dates for P2Ls are: FSU, May 2; FAMU, May 23; USF, June 27; FGCU, August 8. The schedule is posted on the website. A 'Critical Path to STP' spreadsheet has been developed for the libraries. The number of overall tasks on the critical path for P2Ls is much lower than the number had been for P1Ls. It should be noted that the implementation schedule for P2Ls is much tighter because 4 instead of 3 libraries are being migrated.

Daniel Cromwell, FCLA, reported that the initial round of functional training had been completed for the libraries. Next would come functional testing which will involve examining workflows and further inhouse training. In addition FCLA is planning to set up a systems workshop to address such issues as staff permissions for using Aleph.

Support for Phase 1 Libraries (P1Ls):

FCLA Mary Ann O'Daniel addressed the concern that P1Ls were not getting enough support. She distributed a handout that showed how FCLA's Library Management System (LMS) team spend their time. It indicated the LMS team spent 17.2% of their time on NOTIS production and dataloads, 54.9% on Aleph P1Ls and 27.9% on Aleph P2Ls. When the time of other support personnel was added to the time spent by the LMS team, the overall percentages increased for Aleph P1Ls (56.9%) and decreased slightly for NOTIS production and dataloads (15.6%) and Aleph P2Ls (27.5%). She pointed out that in addition to FCLA supporting two systems, there were two problem reporting channels to Ex Libris: regular customer support for libraries in production and the more customized support for libraries in the process of migrating. Implementing NOTIS was easier because it was phased over a long period of time. With the Aleph implementation there are many things that must happen concurrently for the libraries. The Aleph source code is not available as had been the case with NOTIS. So any problem must be resolved by going through hierarchy established by the vendor.

Comments: Martha Hruska (UF) indicated the UF experience has been that everything takes longer and there is a steep learning curve for library staff and FCLA. Dan (UWF) commented that the modules were functional but it took 2 months to get all records accessible in the OPAC.

Mary Ann said P1Ls didn't look at reports until late in the process and recommended reports should be addressed sooner. She gave the following tips for being more self-sufficient:

Subscribe to list serves

- NAAUG list (ALEPH-NA) (at least 1 person from every department) for workflow issues and problems
- PRB (problem tracking system) the archives are also very useful

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- System Adm SIG is a more restricted list
- Special NAAUG list for government documents
- Activate functional sub-groups (check the FCLA list of list serves)

Be familiar with Ex Libris support sites (any logon information is available from your project manager):

- Ex Libris Documentation Center <http://www.exlibrisgroup.com/docportal/>
- Ex Libris USA Aleph Support Site <http://support.exlibris-usa.com/D>
 - "New" button to report new PRBs (FCLA only)
 - "Search" button to search for your previous PRBs
 - "Add Info" button to update previously submitted PRBs (FCLA only)
 - "Other Services" button to view more information about ALEPH, including a link to the WebPRB OPAC

FCLA is working on setting up a 'response tracker' (RT) that would track SUL problems and be more broad than the Project list. They are also looking to hire 2 more support people, one public and one technical. Both positions would include training responsibilities.

Additional comments: Mary Ann said working in Aleph has required a change in culture at FCLA: you can no longer walk down the hall and ask the programmer how something works. If you don't understand the problem you have to submit a PRB [and wait...]

Action item:

FCLA will report when Response Tracker system is ready.

Aleph Phase 1 Experiences:

UWF Dan North led a discussion about what they have learned and how they have adapted. A library wide committee including both librarians and support staff with regularly scheduled meetings worked very well for UWF's small library. They decided to start with existing workflows and then see what Aleph permitted. They have not needed to change any department operations per se, though many workflows have been adjusted. For the processing of invoices they found Aleph was more efficient than NOTIS for books but less efficient for serials (there is no way to note what you're paying for within the invoice record, unlike NOTIS).

They have discovered 2 quirks in the acquisitions module: (1) daily printing of things like order lists to vendor is impeded by malfunctions in the print daemons – some things that should print automatically don't , and must be copied to the local workstation and printed manually – and print daemons themselves stop working and must be deleted and re-created in order to print; and (2) the active blue window overlay doesn't always appear over the Aleph window; the only way to handle it is to exit the module and re-enter it. No such problems have been found in the other Aleph modules yet. They found the initial FCLA permissions too restrictive and modified them; for example, Acquisitions and Serials staff have full rights in both modules, and Acquisitions staff have broad permissions in Cataloging. They are not currently using GenLoad for importing records.

Dan could not emphasize enough the importance of pre-migration database cleanup – particularly reviewing records that have been withdrawn to make sure they have been complete withdrawn (all steps) and not just suppressed. Many suppressed records will still migrate and complicate your life in Aleph staff mode.

Four handouts were distributed. The 1st UWF handout contained 5 examples of useful data migration reports from the DB2 tables, and 2 examples of unrelated collection reports which Dan included to show the versatility of DB2 reporting (needed in Aleph, too) and how he regularly provides such information to faculty and library administration at UWF. Many of the database cleanup reports were run multiple times for editorial reasons. Several years back Dan learned from Hohn Hein how to access the DB2 tables through MS Query (a part of MS Office suite), and then import the results into Excel or Access, allowing him to query data beyond the scope of the ARROW reports, without having to ask FCLA to do them for UWF. Dan used DB2 to create a few dozen reports to identify records to investigate in the Cataloging and Acquisitions modules of NOTIS.

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Many thousands of records were reviewed and many errors, especially from the early years of NOTIS, were discovered and corrected. He cautioned that many reports could be quite lengthy and might need to be run in segments so as to not exceed the maximum file size that Excel will accept. Mary Ann said that if we don't want to learn MS Query, Donna would run the queries for us. Dan said that many reports can easily be run as ARROW copy holdings reports, and that FIU is already running such reports for themselves. One migration surprise was the number of withdrawn records that migrated, despite all the cleanup work, because the migration software interpreted the coding differently than was expected. Withdrawn records that are not correctly coded WILL migrate. Queries from the DB2 tables can identify these coding problems. Any inconsistent data is a problem for migration.

Acquisitions and Serials reviewed all their vendor records and prepared a list of new Aleph alpha codes to be used for the 400+ active numeric vendor codes chosen to be migrated to Aleph; all the codes not to be migrated were changed to Inactive status. The dummy "D" vendor code used for gift records will not migrate; Aleph requires both gifts vendor code and a gifts budget code. UWF created separate monograph and serials gift vendor and budget codes. A report was generated to identify those records for recoding for correct migration to Aleph. Orders in process do migrate but the status must be manually updated to IN PROCESS in both the Aleph item and HOL records after migration. At UWF there were 4500 such record but it took several weeks to finish the updating because a number of additional problems with some records were discovered.

Serials migration was difficult. No OPR notes, including serial check-in statements, will migrate. The implications of this for Serials were never explained by ExLibris; the library had to figure out how to handle it on their own. UWF held back check-in near freeze date and did a lot of bindery shipment prepping so that the rekeying of check-in data after STP would be manageable and efficient. (For example, if a volume was complete the full volume was directly checked into Aleph, and only the actual current issues on shelf were checked in as issues.) It took several weeks to complete the initial Aleph check-in. UWF decided to migrate their own prediction patterns and not load Harvard's. Some patterns did not migrate correctly. UF said they handled their serials similarly as to checking in full volumes, etc. UNF did not hold their serials for later check-in. They continued to check-in on NOTIS. Then when they checked-in a title in Aleph for the first time, they looked in NOTIS for issues checked-in after the catalog was closed. Some suggestions were to catch up on binding before migration and to close out NOTIS holdings statements as much as possible.

Dan said that during the testloading process that they were not able to see what the Aleph reports looked like, or fully test printing. He observed that the functional committees did not closely review reports during vendor selection and that it turned out to be a mistake, as reporting has been shown to be one of the weakest parts of Aleph. He recommended that the SUS take the time for full examination of reports next time we are looking to change systems.

The 2nd UWF handout has 7 examples of various records and reports in the acquisitions module. He deliberately included examples of orders, claim reports, and other daily documents for the benefit of the Phase 2 and Phase 3 libraries who may have not yet seen what Aleph products look like. (Printing was not demoed well during vendor selection, either.) Asides loosely related to the reports:

- UWF used group codes rather than hierarchical codes (parent-child) when they established their new budget codes, per recommendation from FCLA.
- FCLA recommends not migrating inactive vendor or fund codes.
- UWF now catalogs directly in Aleph, using the records Acquisitions has provided from OCLC, and now usually goes into OCLC only if a non-DLC record was found by Acquisitions, and always after cataloging to input the holdings symbols. They like the editing and other functionalities in Aleph.
- To cut OCLC costs UWF will investigate downloading bib records directly from LC via Z39.50, rather than from OCLC (particularly where Acquisitions has not found a DLC record for a book).
- Serial check-in is keystroke intensive (MacroExpress helps)
- Navigation issues: Aleph assumes you start from the Search module. Searching is not easier, and the results window is so small that it is easy to miss something. Non-numeric searching is only by

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keyword so the results lists are hard to use sometimes. At UWF they sometimes search by title scan or in the OPAC because the results are easier to work with.

The 3rd handout was for serials and had 4 pages of serial invoice screens and a sample Serial Claim Letter. Dan and Lynn Shay led this discussion. Issues/problems that were noted:

- Unlike in NOTIS, you can't note what specific material you are paying for; there is no field in the invoice record. Only the order number is displayed. The only place to specifically indicate what you are paying for is the vendor note, so they have to back to each order record and key in the info about the material or subscription term being paid for.
- The absence of an 856 field generates a public message in the OPAC that no online version is available. That is not necessarily true. The only other option is to not display any message. The issue of how to handle serial holding displays should be referred back to the Web OPAC Group to be reevaluated.

Additional points discussed:

- The defaults in pull down menus, code values to be used in various windows, text to be used for orders, claims, etc., can be changed to suit your own convenience. UWF has made many such in the acquisitions module. For example, they created their own Material Type and Invoice Type codes; they asked FCLA to display every available field on the Order Record Information form, as that is what accompanies material to Cataloging; and they added the 035 field to the brief record display in ordering so that they could key the OCLC # into the order record for the catalogers' use later.
- Per recommendation of FCLA, they created object codes in the invoice record that correspond to the expenditure categories tracked by IPEDS, to generate expenditure reports for IPEDS at the end of the year. Unfortunately Object Code is not a sort variable in the canned Aleph reports but hopefully Donna will provide this capability as part of the data warehouse project.

The 4th UWF handout had 3 pages covering government documents. They included:

- Printout from a tapeload in NOTIS using Catalyst to retrieve the records. They annotated it with call numbers and /or shipping list numbers.
- Comparable report generated in Aleph for work with the tapeloads.
- Modification of the Aleph report in order to include the information needed to process the tapeload, still requiring the further annotations as above.

Jane DeBellis reported that processing tapeloads in Aleph is clumsy because they cannot generate record lists showing all the information they need, and requires extra staff work. The handouts show the procedure they have developed to cope with this problem. Jane also reported that during migration UWF only had to go 1 month without the weekly shipping list records. However no monthly load of full records has been loaded so far since STP. Hurricane Ivan and other issues have contributed to the delay in loading the full records. In general things are running smoothly. However, they cannot get circulation statistics for government documents because they decided not to make documents a separate sublibrary in Aleph. This decision may be reevaluated. Documents is interested in using GenLoad.

UF Michele Crump's PowerPoint presentation for Implementing Acquisitions in Aleph will be posted on the FCLA web site. Highlights of the presentation:

- Aleph needs to be a priority for everyone. Staff should be encouraged to make time for Aleph and they should be included in all activities. They had a library wide group plus functional groups.
- Prepare, prepare, prepare! Acknowledge that production will slow down. Fixing is time consuming but it is worth it. Think about where you want notes to appear in Aleph order records. Consistency is a big help.
- Identify codes that won't migrate and get lists of them so they can be fixed.
- Develop outreach classes that show how to read records, use the search module, etc.

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- They have some serial patterns in place thanks to John Hein, UNF and Donna Alsbury, FCLA. Some need tweaking, some they are working to establish, and some are done manually.
- GenLoad is working but they are working on profiles for specific vendors.
- Still need:
 - Centralized documentation
 - Electronic resources reporting and management system
 - Larger Aleph Test region
- Use MacroExpress!
- See links to UF and other documentation.

Comments: Daniel asked if UF would want to consider the FCLA label program for printing single labels. Vicki Stanton (UNF) suggested 40-50 examples for each category of serials are needed in the test database. Lydia said the SULs might need to lobby for a bigger test database.

Betsy Simpson's PowerPoint presentation for UF Aleph Experience

(<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/catmet/presentations/index.html>). Some highlights are:

- Communication with staff is essential. UF developed a structure for reporting and dealing with problems.
- Again, staff need permission to focus on learning Aleph
- Detailed training is important and worth the time it takes to prepare. Workflow can be analyzed in conjunction preparing documentation.
- There are many things to adapt to. Some observations are:
 - Authority work is more manual
 - Item processing status codes need consensus decision, including any satellite libraries
 - Time needed for indexing impacts loading
 - UF not using Z39.50 capability so far
 - Need to evaluate the order of the drop down menus for public displays
- Still need:
 - Progress on regular record loads and GenLoad revision
 - Updated local documentation for cataloging procedures
 - Automated cataloging statistics
 - Authority maintenance reports and authority resource file load
 - Permanent cataloging permissions
 - New Titles List (Notre Dame's is looking good)

Comments: Betsy said during the freeze UF continued to catalog in NOTIS and saved the records to CatME. The item record issue was a little messy but it worked. Dan asked if would be possible to establish the same type of record sharing and read-only access to acquisition records as we had in NOTIS via LTRF. The ability to derive bib records and view order records are both important for acquisitions work. UWF government documents staff also wants to be able to derive records, as before. Daniel Cromwell said that one could presently search and derive bib records ('duplicate' in Aleph) using z39.50 connections. You would need to have a guest login in order to see other types of data such as orders, items, subscriptions, etc.

Action items:

Recommend larger test region.

Document Aleph printing options and facilitate sharing.

MacroExpress (ME) applications:

UF Julia Allen and Jason Fleming's handout for Macro Express Applications included background information, a brief list of macros and their functionality, their guidelines plus some links to resources. They demonstrated a number of applications UF has developed to work around some of the tedious and key-stroke intensive Aleph tasks. They encouraged anyone not already using it to try the 30 day free trial which provides access to a fully functioning version. A limitation is the inability to name variables so documenting the variables is very important. The scripting editor is quite friendly. UF does not network ME but the UF Health Sciences

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Library does. Be on the lookout for undocumented Aleph hot keys. It helps to bundle macros. Setting up a macro to work only when starting from the proper module is very helpful.

Comments: John Hein, UNF has developed many macros to facilitate migration. He has macros for ticklers, stamps, loading vendor records, deletions, and serial patterns. Documentation is very important.

General discussion: Vicki Stanton said the documentation from Harvard and U of Maryland has been very helpful. The first being very detailed with good workflow and the second having a very good overview. Now that UF is developing documentation that should also be very helpful. The enum/chron data is very important and we need a good understanding of its function. The single record approach at UNF has caused some display problems. Aleph has specific definitions of monographs, serials and subscriptions that may differ from our current working definitions. We need to be aware of this. GenLoad currently does not distinguish between monographs and serials.

Action item:

Given the general agreement that MacroExpress can be a very useful tool, it was suggested that FCLA investigate the possibility of getting a statewide license for the product.

Aleph Reports and Services for Tech Services, EDI Client issues:

FCLA Handouts included 'Construction of a Simple ALEPH Report and Origin of Data', 'Batch Loading of Records to the Authority Database' samples of an LC subject update sorted by update code and by Aleph system number. Mary Ann shared the fact the a

Acquisitions STP can take place at a different time than the OPAC STP. She also noted that although the Gary Strawn program CORCE to automatically encumber orders does not work in Aleph, many of its features are built into an Aleph loader. The GenLoad dataload client written for NOTIS has been adapted for Aleph and is very powerful. It is profiled locally including the parameters for 049 codes. The statistics for record counts in Aleph have the same base as in NOTIS and count all records inclusively: active, withdrawn, deleted, and suppressed. The structure of the ORACLE tables is a bit problematic. The tables are not truly relational. There is a combination of data in one field, financial data is not stored as numeric data which precludes any calculations and there is no index. The user interface to the new add-on Aleph Reporting Center (ARC) is good but FCLA's assessment of the actual data warehouse is not so good. For this reason FCLA is working on their own data warehouse. Some Aleph ARROW reports are available that read existing Aleph tables (arrow.fcla.edu/system/aleph_arrow.html). Donna Alsbury and Ellen Bishop are also working on EDI for serials renewal and is making progress. She is ready to test EDI for UNF.

Possible Action items:

Discuss EDI project on Acquisitions list.

Name group to work with Donna on report and data warehouse specs.

TSPC Subcommittee Reports:

Authority Subcommittee—Priscilla Williams and Sue Wartzok, Co-chairs (report distributed separately)

Centralized maintenance in Aleph and Report with Recommendations: Since the P1Ls STP and because of the discovery of gaps and uncertainties in exploring the concept and value of centralized authority maintenance, Priscilla submitted a prioritized list of proposed changes in authority control. The list would serve as a new starting point for carrying out the Subcommittee charge. The Subcommittee seeks feedback from FCLA on implementing the proposed changes.

Action item:

FCLA (Mary Ann) will provide feedback to the Subcommittee and the Subcommittee will then reformulate the list of issues. The goal is to define what issues can be resolved before the major authority fixes tentatively scheduled for version 18.

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CAGER—Jim Michael, Chair

Commercial MARC records and LTQF: Jim's written report will be posted to the FCLA web site. He indicated that since the ECC decision that vendor records for e-journals be acquired and funded the Subcommittee felt the issue of guidelines was moot. However it was agreed in Committee that it was still valuable to have CAGER serve as a liaison to the ECC in order to maintain an awareness of decisions relating to cataloging. TSPC will recommend that Jim Michael as chair of the CAGER group, serve as the liaison to ECC. It was also agreed that it would be valuable to form an Ad hoc Subcommittee charged with creating a clearinghouse of vendor specific guidelines for the batch loading of their records as well as standards for vendor records. Finally there was discussion about reviewing the 2000 CAGER guidelines for E-journals and developing guidelines for databases.

Action item:

TSPC agreed that CAGER should work in these areas.

An email from Michele Newberry clarified that when the migration is complete, LTQF would not be seamlessly accessible as it is in NOTIS. It could be available as a separate file or could be loaded on a regular basis into each SUL's catalog.

[It's not been determined yet whether an automatic process can do the loading into each bib file. The important part is seamless searching of QF from the local catalog will require loading the QF records into the local catalog. – maod 2/4/05]

General Recommendation formulated as a result of this meeting: The Technical Services Planning Committee strongly recommends that the current Aleph implementation and upgrade schedules be followed for the SUL Libraries. We feel it should be a priority to migrate all the libraries to the same version of Aleph according to the current schedule, then upgrade all to the latest version of the system available for production.

The meeting was adjourned at about 3:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted by Elaine Winske