

December 9th updated comment version for All Cohort

UC SILS / Ex Libris Engagement Services

Preliminary Discovery Report

UC SILS / Ex Libris Engagement Services are part of the amendment made on July 28th 2024 between the University of California and Ex Libris to the original agreement between the parties from December 20th 2019.

The Objectives of the Engagement Services are:

1. Examine the challenges experienced by UC System staff using Alma/Primo
2. Recommend and develop the
 - a. Improved *workflows* and *infrastructure*
 - b. Improved *documentation*
 - c. Improved *support*

The Engagement Services are covering the following Workstreams:

1. Network Zone (NZ) and Institutional Zone (IZ) integration, NZ Analytics, and NZ consortia functionality
2. Infrastructure provisioning
3. Product documentation
4. Customer Support and Knowledge Transfer

Project Timeline

1. Phase 1 –
 - a. Discovery and Recommendations: August 2024 – February 2025
 - 1) Discovery: until November 15, 2024 (submit recommendations to UCS – Preliminary Discovery Report)
 - 2) Reconciliation: Nov 15 2024 – Feb 2025
2. Phase 2 –
 - a. Recommendations Implementation: March 2025 – June 2026

Teams Involved

1. UCS:
 - a. UCS project lead – Caitlin Nelson - UC SILS Service Manager
 - b. UCS Core Team members:
 - 1) Thomas Bustos - Director of Library Technology - UC Merced
 - 2) Gem Stone-Logan – UC SILS Senior Systems Analyst
 - 3) Todd Grappone - Associate University Librarian for Digital Initiatives & Information Technology - UCLA

2. Ex Libris:
 - a. EXL project lead – Carmit Marcus - Senior Director, Product Management
 - b. Workstreams Lead
 - 1) Network Zone (NZ) and Institutional Zone (IZ) integration, NZ Analytics, and NZ consortia functionality – Maud Arnaud – Product Manager
 - 2) Infrastructure provisioning - Shai Ben-Hur – VP – Product Engineering
 - 3) Product documentation – Audrey Ho – Senior Director, Program Management
 - 4) Customer Support and Knowledge Transfer – Matt Baker – Director, Customer Care

Phase 1 – Discovery

1. Ex Libris team reviewed documentations exchanged between the parties as well as all support cases reported between January 2023 and July 2024.
2. Ex Libris team conduct interviews with UCS Core Group of the core group which includes representatives from the UC System central office and member institutions
3. This document is the preliminary discovery report drafted by Ex Libris, with recommendations and initial estimates of development efforts, where applicable

Phase 1 - Reconciliation

1. UC SILS will lead a reviewing process of the preliminary discovery report. The reviewers to include:
 - a. UC SILS stakeholders
 - b. Consortia Community of Practice ("CCoP") by invitation
 - c. Ex Libris
3. UC System will collaborate with appropriate User Groups committees to verify which of issues identified during the discovery phase are of significant benefit to the Alma community
4. The review process will be done between November 15th - January 31, 2025.
5. At the end of the review process (on January 31st 2025), UC will provide Ex Libris with feedback and comments on the report, as well as a minimum of three and up to five recommendations for each Workstream, UC wish to implement during Recommendations Implementation phase (Phase 2)
6. Between February 1, 2025 - February 28, 2025; EXL will update the recommendations based on UC comments and feedback and submit the final Discovery Report which will include also timeline.

NZ Workstream

1. Meetings held on:
 - a. September 27th, 2024 with Caitlin Nelson, Gem Stone-Logan and Todd Grappone
 - b. October 1st, 2024 with Gem Stone-Logan, Thomas Bustos and Todd Grappone

2. Main topics discussed

The UCS team raised the following high-level issues:

- a. Consortial analytics for better data-driven decisions
- b. Documentation related to consortia
- c. Lack of automation with AFN
- d. Consortia discovery, including FRBR issues for Consortia
- e. Management of Consortial e-resources agreements
- f. Central management => IZ visibility into what's happening at the NZ level

3. Ex Libris recommendations

- a. **#1:** More visibility of NZ data in IZ Analytics via the Portfolio Details for Consortia Members folder in Analytics

Problem: Difficulty to create analytics reports with both NZ and IZ data across the Consortia members

Proposed Solution: Recently, the folder "Portfolio Details for Consortia Members" located in the E-Inventory subject area to support consortia members and networks with analyzing Network Zone e-resources together with institution e-resources has been enhanced with two new fields "Electronic Collection Type Description" and "Electronic Collection MMS ID". As part of this ongoing enhancement, Ex Libris will conduct a thorough review of this folder to add/update any necessary field and update accordingly the online documentation.

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: More fields available in the Portfolio Details for Consortia Members" folder to ease data reporting across members of a network.

Effort Estimation: Large

Status: Planned for the future once received specific feedback (fields desired) from customers and run an internal analysis of feasibility.

- b. **#2:** Network Zone Member Out-of-the-Box Electronic Resources Cost Per Use Report
- Problem:** Difficulty in generating cost per use report when e-Resources are activated at both NZ and IZ level.

Proposed Solution: Currently, the process to create report about cost per use in a consortia environment where e-resources are activated at the Network Zone level and Purchase Order Lines are managed at the Member level (Institution level) is cumbersome and complex. Therefore, a new Network Zone member out of the box Electronic Resources Cost Per Use Report will be created for Consortia.

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Ease of use out of the box report.

Effort Estimation: Large

Status: Planned for the future

- c. **#3 - New Alma feature (documentation):** Describe how the feature in the release notes impacts NZ and IZs (if relevant)
Problem: Difficulty finding consortia related information in the current release notes.
Proposed Solution: Starting from the February 2025 Alma release, an opt-in or opt-out flag to applicable features will be put in place in our Release notes. We will indicate and describe the impacts of any feature/functionality that impacts the Network Zone and its members.
Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: More visibility on the Consortia new features.
Effort Estimation: Medium
Status: In Progress (planned for February 2025 release)
- d. **#4 - Consortial blocks for better automation in AFN**
Problem: Today if an institution blocks a guest user, the same user won't be blocked in other institutions of the network.
Proposed Solution: Fulfillment Network members will be able to share local blocks with the entire network. Blocks will be copied not only from the source institution but also from the target institutions.
Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Libraries will be able to better consolidate their fulfillment services across the network.
Effort Estimation: Large
Status: Planned for the future
- e. **#5 - Real-time update of Linked Accounts for better automation in AFN**
Problem: Currently, when a record is updated, its copies across the network are updated only when the patron is active at another institution. This can cause a gap in time between when a record is updated and when that is reflected in the network.
Proposed Solution: Linked account updates will happen in real time. The refresh of linked accounts across institutions will take place in real time when the record is updated in the source institution.
Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Libraries will be able to make use of more up-to-date user account information across the network.
Effort Estimation: Large
Status: Planned for the future
- f. **#6 - User groups in Fulfillment Network**
Problem: Institutions would like to circulate items to fulfillment network member patrons based on their user type in their home institution.
Proposed Solution: Institutions will be able to create different locally linked accounts dependent on the patron's user group in the source institution.
 - Linked account rules will be configurable per the user group value in the source institution.
 - This will enable assigning different user groups in the target institution based on the patron's user group in the source institution.Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Network libraries will gain enhanced configurability in setting network-level fulfillment policies for different user types.
Effort Estimation: Medium
Status: Planned for the future

- g. **#7 -** Enhance the Central Configuration Dashboard for PrimoVE by adding Distribution of Normalization Rules from Display fields & Labels distribution by row
Problem: No central way to manage and distribute PrimoVE normalization rules.
Proposed Solution: Currently, the new Central Configuration Dashboard contains Alma and PrimoVE configurations, but we will add additional PrimoVE configurations such as
- Distribution of Normalization Rules from Display fields
 - Labels distribution by row
- Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Adding additional PrimoVE configurations into the new Central Configuration Dashboard to ease the support of the network members.
Effort Estimation: Large
Status: Planned for the future
- h. **#8 -** Consolidate My Library Card display of loans/requests in PrimoVE from all institutions in the network
Problem: Today, users need to select and click on the institution to see its fines and fees. There is no consolidated way to see all information together.
Proposed Solution: In the New Discovery Experience (NDE) UI, PrimoVE will offer a consolidated display of loans and requests of My Library Card for all institutions in the network.
Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Possibility for the user to view activities in other institutions.
Effort Estimation: Large
Status: Planned for the future
- i. **#9 -** Allow Display Logic rules to share NZ resources at IZ level
Problem: Currently, the Display Logic settings are limited to IZ resources only; they do not allow choices for resources that are shared from the NZ among several institutions.
Proposed Solution: This enhancement will allow shared resources in the NZ to be selected alongside local resources within Display Logic rules to trigger actions.
Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: The central office will be able to work more efficiently, reducing time spent applying modifications to the display Logic rules settings.
Effort Estimation: Medium
Status: Planned for the future
- j. **#10 -** Enhance the FRBR & deduplication documentation, as well as the configuration options for Consortia
Problem: Difficulty for consortia customers to understand all the implications of the FRBR & deduplication configuration options through our current documentation.
Proposed Solution: Enhancement of the documentation related to the FRBR and Deduplication functionalities in PrimoVE as well as configuration options for Consortia to reflect the possible impact between Network Zone and Member Institutions, in order to better explain what the setup of each institution (IZ versus NZ) controls and what may need to be synced between them.
Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: More comprehensive documentation on FRBR & deduplication configuration options if you are part of a consortia.
Effort Estimation: Medium
Status: Not yet planned

- k. **#11 -** Workshops to fine-tune some processes related to FRBR & deduplication between IZ and NZ records
Problem: Possible issue with UCS dedup/FRBR functionalities configuration.
Proposed Solution: In order to offer a better fine-tuned the configuration of the dedup/FRBR functionalities, we offer a workshop to check processes in place at UCS today related to FRBR and Deduplication, and if necessary a recalculation of UCS dedup/FRBR keys during a few days of low usage time such as weekend or semester breaks to cause minimal impact.
Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Improve the use of the dedup/FRBR functionalities at UCS.
Effort Estimation: Medium
Status: Not yet planned
- l. **#12 -** Workshops to utilize existing functionalities and detect missing functionalities regarding the management and distribution of acquisition and negotiation information between NZ/IZ to be added to Alma roadmap
Problem: Understanding the needs around the management and distribution of acquisition and negotiation information between NZ/IZ.
Proposed Solution: This workshop will focus on existing Alma functionalities to share detailed cost, negotiation information and distribution amongst the members of a network. It will give both Ex Libris and UCS the opportunity to review what exists today and detect possible missing functionality to be added to Alma roadmap.
Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Detect if there is some missing functionalities or missing information in our documentation to ease the use of the acquisition and negotiation information in Alma.
Effort Estimation: Medium
Status: Not yet planned
- m. **#13 -** Workshops to utilize existing Central management functionalities (dashboard) at NZ level
Problem: Making sure all new added functionalities in the new Central Configuration dashboard are well known by UCS staff.
Proposed Solution: Currently, our new Central configuration dashboard covers all Alma code and mapping tables. As this is an ongoing project, we'll be adding new configurations into the dashboard in the next Alma releases. Therefore, a workshop dedicated to the existing Central management functionalities will help both Ex Libris and UCS to see what is used today by UCS.
Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Improve and gain on efficiency by using more central administration features.
Effort Estimation: Small
Status: Not yet planned
- n. **#14 -** Restriction of NZ Normalization Rules (Protection of NR created at NZ level to avoid changes by IZ operator at IZ level)

Problem: Currently, any Normalization rules can be edited and changed by the IZ operator at IZ level.

Proposed Solution: This enhancement will protect the edition of NR when they are created at NZ level.

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: More control and protection of NZ Normalization. Rules

Effort Estimation: Large

Status: Not yet planned

Infrastructure Workstream

- Meetings held:
 - 09/23/2024, attendees - Caitlin Nelson, Gem Stone-Logan, Shai Ben-Hur
 - 10/21/2024, attendees - Caitlin Nelson, Gem Stone-Logan, Thomas Bustos, Shai Ben-Hur
- Main topics discussed:
 - a. Jobs performance
 - b. Delete Bibliographic Records job report is limited to 10,000 records.
 - c. Increase the number of records handled in MD Import Report (currently 1000 for exporting records).
 - d. Enable the control of how many NEW files can be processed by Alma MD Import each day.
 - e. Premium Sandboxes (PSB) performance
 - f. Network Zone Analytics performance

- Ex Libris recommendations:

a. #1 - Jobs performance

Problem: UCS requires the Alma jobs to operate without performance issues. Additionally, should any job run slowly for any reason, UCS requests that Ex Libris provide a notification indicating the delay.

Proposed Solution:

Over the past year, Ex Libris has introduced several improvements to enhance job performance and remains committed to continuing these enhancements. Here are some of the improvements already done.

- Hardware Upgrades:
Regularly upgraded hardware, including improved CPUs, storage, and database connections, to support better performance and faster processing times.
- Functional Issue Resolution:
Implemented a process to quickly identify and resolve functional issues, which sometimes cause jobs to run slower or affect shared resources. Any critical functional issue is flagged and addressed with high priority to minimize downtime and performance disruptions.
- Infrastructure Enhancements:
Improved job handling infrastructure with enhanced algorithms for job prioritization and queue management. These improvements are aimed at preventing smaller jobs from being delayed by larger ones, reducing the risk of "starvation".
- Internal Monitoring Improvements:
Developed better internal monitoring tools for analyzing job performance issues more efficiently. Since July release, a new method for job performance analysis has reduced troubleshooting times, making it easier to identify and address slow or failing jobs.

It has also been agreed that Ex Libris will explore options for enhancing job tracking visibility for customers, such as indicators for job status or delays, to help reduce uncertainty and provide clearer information on job progress.

Impact / Desired Outcome / Assessment: These enhancements will improve job performance and provide customers with visibility into the progress of ongoing jobs and their expected completion times.

b. #2 - Delete Bibliographic Records job report is limited to 10,000 records.

Problem: The current Delete Bibliographic Records job report is limited to 10,000 records.

Proposed Solution: Ex Libris will increase the record limit. Ex Libris will communicate the new limit to UCS when it will be available

Impact / Desired Outcome / Assessment: This enhancement will improve workflow efficiency for large deletion, reducing manual interventions.

Status: Planned for H1 2025

c. #3 - MD Import Report (currently 1000 for exporting records):

Problem: The MD Import Report can only handle 1,000 records for exporting, limiting the users from understanding what happened in large scale imports.

Proposed Solution: Ex Libris will increase the record handling capacity to 5000

Impact / Desired Outcome / Assessment: Institutions will be able to export larger number of records in the MD Import reports.

Status: Planned for H1 2025

d. #4 - Control of how many NEW files can be processed by Alma MD Import:

Problem: Institutions lack the ability to control how many new files Alma MD Import processes daily, limiting their flexibility in handling large-scale imports.

Proposed Solution: Ex Libris will add functionality to control daily file processing of NEW files by the MD import

Impact / Desired Outcome / Assessment: This feature will allow institutions to manage data imports more predictably and efficiently.

Status: Planned for H1 2025

e. #5 - Premium Sandboxes (PSB) performance

Problem: Institutions require the Premium Sandbox (PSB) to have the stability and reliability necessary to run large-scale production jobs effectively for testing and validation purposes.

Proposed Solution: With UCS's assistance, a stability issue with the PSB was identified, leading to an analysis and redesign of its architecture. As a result, Ex Libris found that the new PSB architecture significantly enhances stability. It was agreed that UCS will migrate to the new PSB architecture with priority.

Impact / Desired Outcome / Assessment: The improved stability and performance of the PSB will enable institutions to confidently run large-scale production-like jobs, supporting comprehensive testing and preparation for production deployments while maintaining trust in the system's capabilities.

Status: new architecture was implemented

Note: While there is no restriction on running large jobs on the PSB, it is important to note that these jobs may take longer to complete compared to the production environment.

Ex Libris would like to emphasize that running jobs, regardless of their size, should not

impact the performance of online activities in the production environment.

f. #6 - Network Zone Analytics performance

Problem: UCS encountered problems running Network Zone Analytics reports. Some report didn't end, while others took long time to end.

Proposed Solution:

Over the past year, Ex Libris has introduced several improvements aimed at enhancing Network Zone Analytics performance:

- Oracle Bug Fix:
Ex Libris is also collaborating with Oracle to address Analytics bugs, and significant progress has been made this year resolving a critical bug in the Oracle Analytics Server (OAS) that previously caused exports of large reports to fail, stabilizing export functionality and reducing analytics interruptions.
- Query Optimization:
In response to reports from UCS and other consortia, Ex Libris implemented a query optimization specifically for cross-institution queries commonly used in consortia reports. Ex Libris identified that the use of two identifiers in partitioning database tables led to an inaccurate Oracle execution plan, resulting in performance issues. This was resolved by adjusting the Analytics filter to use a single identifier.
- Performance Monitoring and Biweekly Review:
Ex Libris Implemented regular monitoring and biweekly reviews of analytics reports, identifying slow or timed-out reports and addressing them through functional fixes or optimized report designs.

Ex Libris is offering a direct development channel to assist with complex, consortia-level reports, providing guidance on query optimization for enhanced performance and reliability. This will be done for a limited period.

Impact / Desired Outcome / Assessment: These enhancements will improve NZ Analytics report performance.

Additional features needed

[Journal Search including NZ items](#)

Documentation Workstream

1. Meetings held

- a. Dates: September 16, November 13
- b. Attendees: Caitlin, Gem, Audrey, Tali, Tom, Todd

2. Main topics discussed

- a. Forward-facing initiatives:
 - i. Enhancing future release notes
 - ii. Known Issues Portal
- b. Enhancements to existing documentation
 - i. How IZ and NZ electronic resources are displayed in Primo
 - ii. CDI – needs additional clarity/simplification
 - iii. Setting up Resource Sharing – step-by-step instructions on how to configure different setups along with pros and cons for each scenario

3. Ex Libris recommendations

a. #1 - Enhancing future release notes

Problem: Current release notes lack comprehensive information about Network Zone (NZ) feature impacts and do not provide clear guidance on feature applicability.

Proposed Solution:

- Include specific callouts for Network Zone feature/functionality impacts
- Planned adding opt-in or opt-out flags for applicable features in the Feb 2025 Alma release notes

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment:

- Improve clarity for customers about how new features affect Network Zone
- Enable easier decision-making about feature adoption
- Reduce confusion around feature implementation

Effort Estimation: Low to moderate effort, integrated into existing release notes preparation process

Status: In progress - planned for Feb 2025 release

b. #2 - Known Issues Portal

Problem: Customers need a more transparent, self-service approach to identifying and addressing product challenges that reduces their dependency on direct support channels and provides clear visibility into known system issues.

Proposed Solution:

- ___Develop a Known Issues Portal
- Coordinate a preview with UC SILS group in Q1 2025

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment:

- Reduce customer time spent troubleshooting by providing immediate access to known issue insights
- Improve overall customer satisfaction through increased transparency and self-service capabilities

- Decrease support ticket volume by enabling customers to find solutions independently

Effort Estimation: High

Status: In Progress, preview of planned functionality for the UC SILS group in Q1 2025

c. #3 - Electronic Resources Documentation

Problem: Insufficient documentation for electronic resource management, particularly for Consortia setups

Proposed Solution:

- Add detailed information on eResource management setup for Consortia on this page: [Overview of Collaborative Networks with Primo VE](#)
- Create a set of Knowledge Articles explaining Network Zone link visibility issues based on the itemized list of cases provided (see "[Consortia Document Gaps](#)")

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment:

- Provide clearer guidance for complex resource management scenarios
- Reduce customer confusion about link visibility and setup
- Improve understanding of collaborative network configurations

Effort Estimation: Moderate effort, with completion targeted for Q3 2025

Status: Planned

d. #4 - CDI (Central Discovery Index) Documentation

Problem: Existing CDI documentation lacks comprehensive guidance and clarity, especially for consortia

Proposed Solution:

- Reorganize content for improved clarity (completed)
- Add callouts and notes for EasyActive customers ([page reference](#)) (completed)
- Include additional explanations for consortia activation for both EasyActive and FullyFlexible options. (Note: these were driven by the questions and comments in case [06969863: Naxos Jazz - CDI holdings showing up for campus that's not on the collection](#)) (completed)
- Expand [CDI Collection List](#) with a new column for EasyActive customers (in progress)

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment:

- Improve understanding of CDI activation and management
- Provide more precise guidance for different customer types
- Enhance usability of CDI-related documentation

Effort Estimation: Moderate effort

Status: In progress, with some improvements already completed

e. #5 - Resource Sharing Guide

Problem: Lack of comprehensive guidance for setting up resource sharing across different scenarios

Proposed Solution:

- Develop a detailed guide with:
 - Common resource sharing setup examples
 - Step-by-step instructions
 - Explanations of setup implications and trade-offs
- Collaborate with UCS to select and document three resource sharing scenarios

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment:

- Provide clear, practical guidance for resource sharing configurations
- Help institutions make informed decisions about resource sharing setups
- Reduce complexity in implementing resource sharing strategies

Effort Estimation: Moderate to high effort

Status: Planned for the future

Support Workstream

1. Meetings held:
 - a. Dates 9/20, 9/25, 10/21
 - b. Attendees: Todd, Caitlin, Gem and Tom
2. Main topics discussed
 - a. Ways to improve how Ex Libris support can better work with consortia
 - b. How does support provide transparency on support issues, provide feedback with analysis.
 - c. Communications within cases
 - d. Address cases stuck in Development status
 - e. Tools to improve the ability to solve issues at the consortia level
 - f. Improved response and resolution times

3. Ex Libris recommendations

#1- Provide a Quarterly Support Report to Consortia Leadership

Problem: Providing an overall picture of how support is working with individual institutions, possible friction points, issue resolution and knowledge sharing.

Proposed Solution: Develop a quarterly report providing the central office an overview on the status of the consortia's support interaction and analysis to include:

- Case trends
- Development/bug resolution
- Case aging
- Opening rates and closing rates
- Identify knowledge gaps
- Review satisfaction surveys

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment: Address areas of improvement, set priorities, resolve knowledge gaps and develop action items to focus on over the next quarter.

Effort Estimation: Medium

Status: In design

#2 - Develop Consortia Subject Matter Experts at the Regional Level

Problem: Analyst knowledge of consortia configurations and unique configurations associated with specific consortia.

Proposed Solution: Develop formalized consortia-based training in conjunction with consortia focusing on:

- Understanding of consortia workflows
- Expert in in NZ operations
- Focus on consortia cases

Impact/Desired Outcome/Assessment:

- Reduce back and forth between the customer and analyst
- Expedite solution resolution
- Provide the consortia with a high level of support on consortia issues

Effort Estimation: Medium

Status: Planned

#3 - Salesforce Consortia Banner

Problem: ExL staff do not have an easy / fast view into the configuration of any particular consortium, and many consortial clients are set up differently, such that a useful response for UC may not be appropriate for SUNY, for example.

Proposed solution: create a banner which would be visible to ExL staff on viewing a consortial ticket.

- Note unique configurations
- Member institutions are identified as a consortia member
 - o When a case is opened
 - o Configurations that should be considered while analyzing a case

Desired Outcome / Impact / Assessment:

- The banner will reduce unneeded questions (back and forth) because some basic information about the institution and its configuration is already available.
- Create consistent communications and configurations for all members, because all ExL staff (and UC staff) have access to the same information.

Effort Estimation: Small

Status: Planned