April 12, 2019

Harvard Wiki Alma

Lisa Romano

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/lisa_romano/16/
Harvard Wiki – Alma

Lisa Romano

To cite this article: Lisa Romano (2019) Harvard Wiki – Alma, Technical Services Quarterly, 36:2, 218-219, DOI: 10.1080/07317131.2019.1584988

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/07317131.2019.1584988

Published online: 12 Apr 2019.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 1

View Crossmark data
Harvard Wiki – Alma

https://wiki.harvard.edu/confluence/display/LibraryStaffDoc/Alma

For ExLibris Alma users, Harvard’s Alma wiki provides a system overview, definitions, detailed procedures, training, and much more on Alma. Though geared to Harvard personnel, the wiki offers valuable information to all users of Alma.

For non-Harvard users, there are some sections better suited to the general public. The Alma glossary with crosswalks contains Alma and other library/system terminology. The definitions are clear and concise. Some of the terms have links to further details and equivalent Aleph terms. There are also a search filter and two-page cheat sheet. However, the area could use some clean-up as the term Community Zone is repeated, the Deposit entry is missing a link to further information and some terms are bolded without explanation. Still, this section is worth bookmarking.

Several other sections are also of assistance. Some of the information is geared towards Harvard users, but all users will find some helpful content. Alma overviews offer introductory information on Alma. Topics covered include setting up the Home page, Alma on different devices, Alma record and search types, and keyboard shortcuts. There are some general tips for all. Quick start guides give more specific information than the Overviews section for using Alma. The guides are conveniently grouped by functional area (such as Resource management) and provide common procedures with screenshots, definitions, and tips and tricks for all users. This section handily describes how to get started with Alma.

For more detailed information, users should check out Functional area documentation. This section includes some general information (such as searching) and information by work function, such as Acquisitions. Plus, there are additional topics such as spine labels and work orders. In some areas such as Search tips and best practices, there are a few placeholders, but there is a large amount of content. Functional area documentation contains more background information, definitions, detailed procedures with screenshots, and tips and tricks. Users will find this section beneficial and thoughtfully organized.

Additionally, the Alma training documents section provides the training materials Harvard created relating to Alma. There are online videos, hands-on training, handouts, and training scripts. The information is also organized by functional area. The Learning Alma page gives an overview of how to use the training materials. Some of the material is geared to instructors teaching a course, but the information is very extensive and worthwhile to all users.

The wiki also offers up-to-date product information. Alma monthly release notes provide a link to the ExLibris release notes page and the last six months of Harvard Highlights of these notes. These Harvard Highlights organize the notes into functional area, indicate if an enhancement or resolved an issue, and summarize the information in the ExLibris release notes. The Harvard Highlights presents the information in a concise user-friendly format. Alma known issues contain both Harvard and general bug issues. The information is conveniently grouped by problem area. Some areas such as the Metadata editor have helpful workarounds. This section can be used after encountering a problem to see if it has been reported or there is a workaround.

The Alma data loads and exports (including OCLC) section provides background information on loading records and using import profiles in Alma. All users can review and use this section to develop import profiles for their institutions. In particular, the
Staff generic import profiles area points out some tips to keep in mind when creating an import profile.

The Request an Alma login or login update, Alma communication & update sources, Aleph to Alma data mapping guides, and Post-Alma Cutover Project Requests, Alma trends, and Alma configuration changes sections mostly contains information for Harvard users. However, the Alma roles and permissions area in Request an Alma login or login update present a good review of the various Alma roles and the types of permissions that can be assigned.

The Harvard Alma wiki can be used to supplement the ExLibris help and provides answers to all sorts of Alma questions. ExLibris documentation often runs many pages. The wiki breaks topics into more manageable chunks, offers step-by-step procedures by function, and lets users easily locate help. Sometimes there are a few clicks to locate desired material, but the organization is logical. This wiki contains a lot of useful information for all Alma users.

Rating: 4 out of 5

Lisa Romano
University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA
Lisa.Romano@umb.edu

© 2019 Lisa Romano. Published with license by Taylor & Francis.
https://doi.org/10.1080/07317131.2019.1584988

LibraryThing and TinyCat

When LibraryThing was reviewed for this column in 2010, it was a social cataloging site allowing its users to track and rate the books they had read, receive reading recommendations, and join a variety of book-related discussion groups. In 2016, LibraryThing released TinyCat, which turns a LibraryThing account into a simple online catalog for libraries who hold less than 20,000 titles (LibraryThing, 2015). TinyCat was actually developed out of demand by small libraries already using LibraryThing to catalog their collections (Klein, 2015). Pricing is based on how many items are in a library’s collection, ranging from $10 a month for up to 1000 items to $35 a month for up to 20,000 items, and offers a discounted rate for volunteer-run organizations like historical societies and church libraries (LibraryThing, 2016–2018).

TinyCat offers these smaller libraries the basic capabilities of a traditional integrated library system (ILS), such as item circulation, tracking overdue items, and the ability setup patron accounts. Libraries migrating from another ILS are able to import (or eventually export) their MARC records (LibraryThing, 2018). It also allows users to place holds and renew items through their own accounts. Most importantly, patrons have the ability to perform faceted searching of the library’s catalog through TinyCat’s discovery layer (LibraryThing, 2016–2018).

Despite its low cost, TinyCat offers some (though not all) of the features of a larger ILS. TinyCat is web based so there is no software to maintain, and all that is required is an up-to-date web browser and Internet connection. It is also user-friendly for libraries and their patrons: no extensive training is required to make use of the administrative modules, and