
Collaborative Network

Overview

The **Alma Collaborative Network** is a network of Alma institutions connected together to facilitate collaboration/sharing of data and workflows. In some cases, a collaborative network requires the **Alma Network Zone**.

An Alma Network Zone may be set up where one of the following is required:

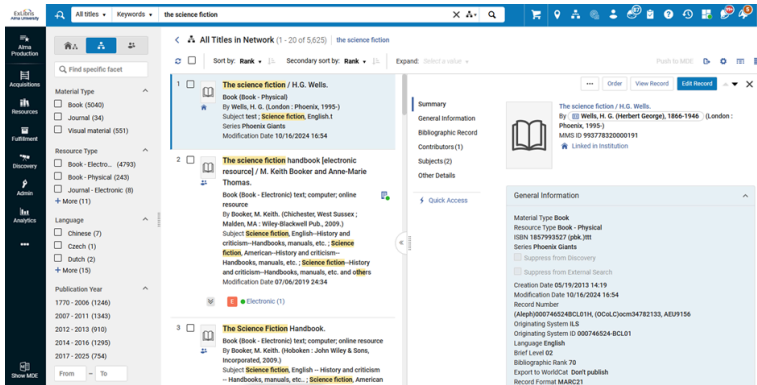
- **Shared Catalog** – A shared catalog consists of a single metadata catalog shared by all libraries. The single catalog source can also easily serve as the source for a shared discovery experience.
- **Shared Acquisitions** – Shared acquisitions consist of centralized purchasing of e-resources that are available to the member libraries.
- **Centrally Managed Configurations** – Additional functionality can be implemented on top of the Network Zone to facilitate centrally managed configurations for the following:
 - **Shared Fulfillment** – The Network Zone can be used to centrally manage fulfillment policies and terms of use. The centrally managed policies and terms of use are then dispatched to all members of the network, where they are used in the local members' fulfillment rules. This achieves a high level of consolidation in the fulfillment area, with agreed upon policies and terms of use being used by all members of the network.
 - **Resource Sharing** – The basic configurations of the resource sharing component may be centrally managed at the Network Zone and shared by all members of the network. This includes a shared list of: Using a consolidated configuration set achieves the goal of unifying the user experience and library back office processing across all disparate libraries.
 - Resource sharing partners
 - Resource sharing rota templates and assignment rules
 - Workflow profiles
 - Locate profiles
 - **Vendors** – Vendor records can be centrally managed at the Network Zone. Routine and automatic dispatching of the vendor records to all network members achieves the goal of having a single list of vendors that is used throughout all members of the network but is managed centrally by a single office.
 - **Mapping tables** – Mapping tables govern a variety of system behaviors across all functional elements of the system. Maintaining a centrally managed mapping tables set is key to creating unified and consolidated workflows at the network members across the system.

An Alma Network Zone is not required if only the following collaboration is desired:

- **Shared Fulfillment/Circulation** – Where institutions and libraries share fulfillment services, enabling patrons of a member institution to directly request or return items at other member institutions in the network.
- **Resource Sharing Network** – Where institutions share resources through Interlibrary Loan.

Shared Catalog

A shared catalog enables multiple Alma libraries in a consortia to access and manage a unified metadata catalog. This ensures all participating institutions use the same bibliographic and metadata records, making it easier to maintain consistency across the network and eliminate redundancy in cataloging.



What are the benefits of this feature?

- **Increased catalog consistency:** All member libraries use the same metadata records, reducing errors and inconsistencies that could arise from having separate catalogs.
- **Streamlined cataloging:** Cataloging work can be centralized, saving time and resources across the network.
- **Enhanced resource discovery:** A unified catalog ensures all libraries share the same records, enhancing the user experience as patrons from different libraries can search the same collection seamlessly.
- **Simplified updates:** Changes made to the catalog (such as updates to MARC records) are automatically reflected across all member libraries, reducing manual work.

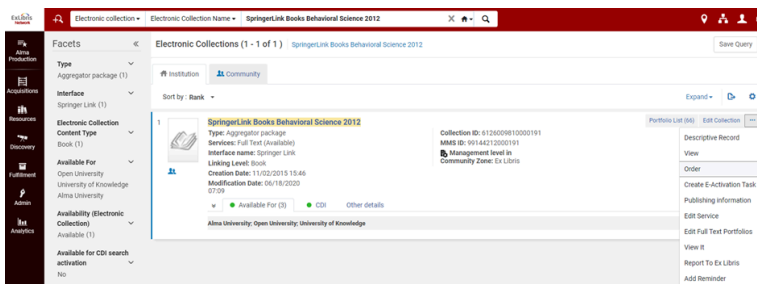
When to use this feature?

- **Consolidating metadata management:** When member institutions wish to pool cataloging resources and avoid duplicating work by centralizing metadata.
- **Ensuring uniformity:** When it's important for all member libraries to have access to the same catalog records, avoiding discrepancies in holdings and search results.
- **Shared discovery experience:** When consortia want to provide a seamless search experience for patrons across multiple libraries with a consistent set of catalog records.

Watch the [Shared Catalog](#) webinar.

Shared Acquisition

Shared acquisition enables consortia to centrally manage the purchasing of materials (particularly electronic resources) for all member libraries. This includes joint negotiation for prices, vendor management, and acquisition workflows, leading to a more efficient and cost-effective purchasing process. With Shared Acquisition, Purchasing is done at the Network level.



What are the benefits of this feature?

- **Cost savings:** By purchasing resources collectively, consortia can negotiate better prices or discounts from vendors, benefiting from bulk buying power.
- **Simplified vendor management:** Centralized management of vendor records ensures consistency across the

consortia and reduces the administrative workload for individual libraries.

- **Streamlined acquisition workflows:** Libraries can use a standardized workflow for acquisitions, making the process simpler and faster for everyone involved.
- **Better resource management:** Shared acquisitions allow consortia to better plan and allocate resources, ensuring that high-demand e-resources are available across the network.

When to use this feature?

- **When cost reduction is a priority:** If consortia aim to lower procurement costs, shared acquisition makes sense by pooling budgets and leveraging collective purchasing power.
- **For e-resource procurement:** When managing large quantities of electronic resources and subscriptions across multiple libraries, shared acquisition simplifies negotiations and management.
- **For simplified workflows:** If consortia wish to standardize acquisition processes to minimize confusion or duplication of effort.

Shared Negotiation

Shared negotiation allows consortia to work together to negotiate with vendors for e-resources, licenses, or other materials. This collective approach enables libraries to secure better deals through bulk purchasing, offering a stronger negotiation position than individual libraries could achieve on their own. Licenses negotiation is managed in the Network Zone with specific negotiation details per member. With Shared Negotiation, the purchasing is distributed down to the member level.

What are the benefits of this feature?

- **Increased bargaining power:** By joining forces, consortia can negotiate more favorable terms, such as discounts, license extensions, and bundled packages, benefiting all participating institutions.
- **Consistency in licensing:** Shared negotiation ensures all libraries in the consortia operate under the same terms and conditions, providing a consistent experience for users across libraries.
- **Simplified administrative processes:** Libraries no longer have to negotiate individually, reducing the administrative burden and the risk of inconsistent agreements.
- **Stronger vendor relationships:** Vendors are likely to offer better terms when working with a group of institutions, and consortia can develop long-term partnerships with key suppliers.

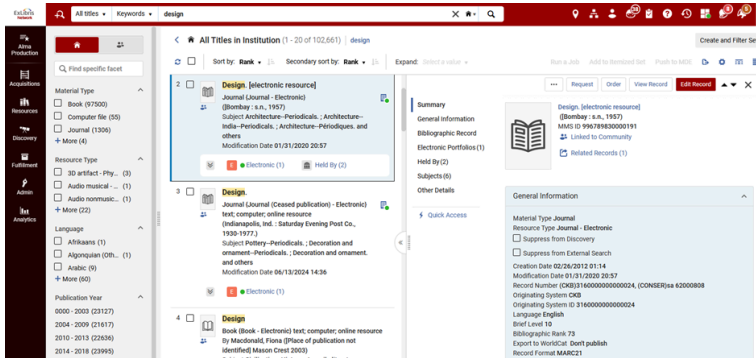
When to use this feature?

- **When multiple libraries want the same e-resource:** If several libraries in a consortia wish to purchase the same e-resource, shared negotiation allows for a unified approach.
- **For maximizing discounts:** When consortia want to leverage bulk buying to secure the best possible terms.
- **For simplifying license management:** If consortia want to ensure consistency and reduce administrative burden by having a single negotiation process for all member libraries.

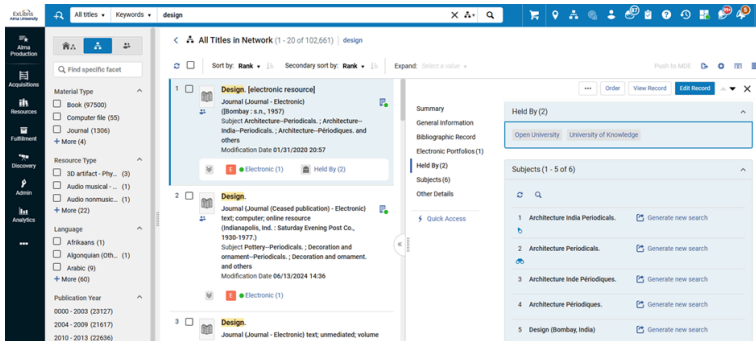
Shared Management (E-Resources Managed Centrally)

This feature enables consortia to centrally manage e-resources, including licenses, access rights, usage statistics, and other administrative functions, from a single interface. Centralized management ensures uniform policies and access settings across all libraries.

At the Network zone level:



At the Member level:



What are the benefits of this feature?

- **Centralized control:** Having a single point of administration allows for more efficient management of licenses, access rights, and other e-resource-related settings.
- **Consistency across libraries:** All libraries use the same configuration settings, ensuring that patrons across the consortia have access to the same e-resources under the same conditions.
- **Simplified monitoring and reporting:** Centralized management simplifies the tracking of usage statistics, making it easier to assess e-resource effectiveness and make data-driven decisions.
- **Improved budget management:** Central management allows consortia to monitor and allocate budgets more effectively, reducing the risk of duplication and improving cost-efficiency.

When to use this feature?

- **When resources need centralized control:** For consortia that want to simplify management by maintaining one central location for managing e-resource subscriptions and licenses.
- **For standardizing access across libraries:** If consortia want to ensure the same e-resources are available under uniform terms and conditions across all libraries.
- **When monitoring usage is critical:** When it's necessary to centrally monitor usage statistics and make informed decisions on renewals, cancellations, or additions to the resource collection.

Watch the [Shared Management](#) webinar.

Shared Users

Shared Users allows for the centralized management of user accounts and credentials across libraries within the consortia. This ensures that user data is consistent and accessible across all participating libraries, enabling a unified patron experience.

What are the benefits of this feature?

- **Streamlined user experience:** Patrons can use the same credentials to access resources and services across any participating library, simplifying authentication and access.
- **Reduced administrative burden:** User records are maintained centrally, reducing duplication of effort when creating or updating user profiles.
- **Improved patron data accuracy:** A shared user database ensures that information is consistent and up-to-date across libraries.
- **Enhanced resource access:** Users benefit from being able to borrow materials or access digital resources from any consortia library with a single set of credentials.

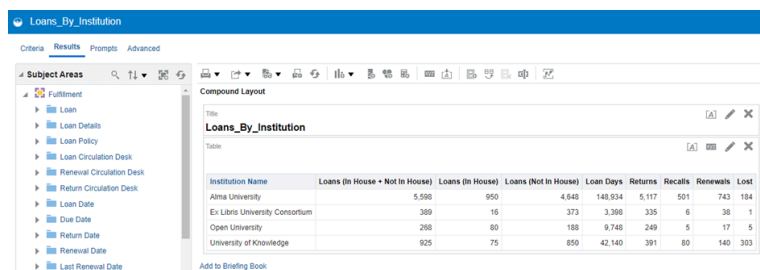
When to use this feature?

- **When patrons need access across multiple libraries:** If consortia wish to offer a seamless experience for users who need to borrow or access materials from different institutions.
- **For simplifying user account management:** When consortia want to avoid the complexity of maintaining separate user records for each institution.
- **To improve user data consistency:** If data accuracy and consistency across member libraries are a priority, shared users ensures a single, unified view of each patron's record.

Watch the [Shared Users](#) webinar.

Shared Analytics

Shared analytics aggregates usage data and other metrics across all libraries in the consortia. This data can be accessed centrally to assess performance, plan for future acquisitions, and make evidence-based decisions on resource management.



Institution Name	Loans (In House - Not in House)	Loans (In House)	Loans (Not in House)	Loan Days	Returns	Recalls	Renewals	Lost
Alma University	5,598	950	4,648	148,934	5,117	501	743	184
Ex Libris University Consortium	389	16	373	3,308	335	6	38	1
Open University	288	80	188	9,748	249	5	17	5
University of Knowledge	925	75	850	42,140	391	80	140	303

What are the benefits of this feature?

- **Consolidated insights:** Consortia can get a high-level view of usage trends, helping to inform collection development, acquisition strategies, and resource allocations.
- **Streamlined reporting:** Data is available in a single place, reducing the effort needed to generate individual reports for each library.
- **Data-driven decision-making:** Shared analytics helps consortia make informed decisions based on aggregate usage data, improving efficiency and ensuring resources are allocated effectively.
- **Increased transparency:** Member libraries can access the same reports, improving collaboration and transparency across the consortia.

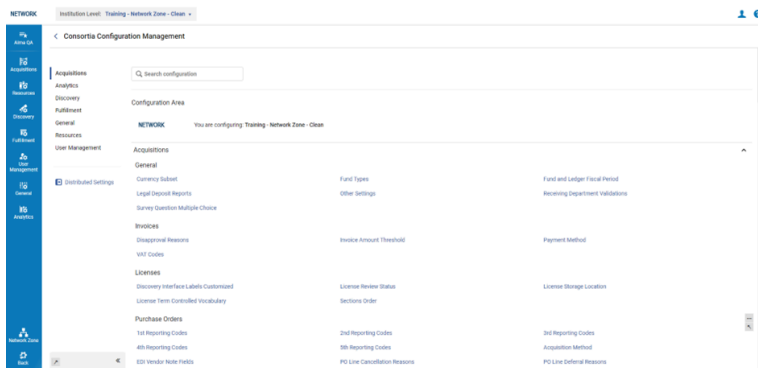
When to use this feature?

- **For consortia-wide reporting:** When consortia need to generate reports or analytics based on data from all libraries, such as usage statistics or collection performance.
- **For informed resource management:** When making decisions about resource acquisition, renewal, or cancellation based on aggregate usage data.
- **To streamline administrative processes:** When consortia want to reduce the complexity of compiling individual reports from each library.

Watch the [Shared Analytics](#) webinar.

Shared Administration

Shared administration in Alma allows consortia to manage workflows, configuration settings, and system behavior centrally, ensuring that all member libraries follow the same processes and policies for tasks like cataloging, acquisitions, and resource management.



What are the benefits of this feature?

- **Consistency across institutions:** Shared administration ensures that policies and workflows are applied uniformly across all consortia members, improving overall coordination.
- **Reduced duplication:** By centralizing administrative tasks, consortia can eliminate redundant efforts, reducing costs and time spent on tasks like configuration and updates.
- **Simplified workflow management:** Consortia can implement streamlined workflows that all member libraries adhere to, ensuring that tasks are completed more efficiently and without discrepancies.
- **Improved policy enforcement:** Shared administration ensures that network-wide policies, such as borrowing rules or vendor management, are applied consistently.

When to use this feature?

- **For network-wide process standardization:** When consortia want to standardize administrative workflows and policies across multiple libraries to ensure consistency and streamline operations.
- **When reducing redundancy is key:** If administrative tasks are being duplicated across institutions, shared administration can centralize the work and minimize wasted effort.
- **For uniform policy enforcement:** If consortia want to ensure all member libraries are operating under the same rules and procedures.

Watch the [Shared Administration](#) webinar.

Shared Discovery

Shared discovery provides a unified search interface for patrons to discover resources across all consortia member libraries. This feature can help improve resource visibility and access for users, whether they are looking for physical items, e-resources, or other materials.

Union View

Union View consolidates search results from all libraries within the consortia, presenting a unified view to the patron. It allows users to search across all participating libraries in a single search experience, improving accessibility and resource discovery.

What are the benefits of this feature?

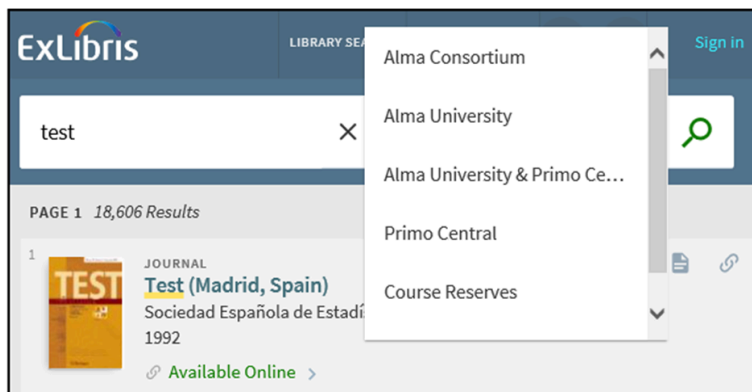
- **Seamless user experience:** Patrons can search for resources from any member library in the consortia in a single search, making it easier to discover materials across a broad network.
- **Increased resource access:** Union View allows users to access a wider range of resources, improving the chances of finding the material they need.
- **Time savings:** By having a single search interface, users do not need to search multiple library catalogs individually, saving time and improving user satisfaction.

When to use this feature?

- **When consortia want to improve the user experience:** If improving resource discovery and access for patrons is a priority.
- **For maximizing the visibility of shared resources:** When multiple libraries wish to make all their resources easily discoverable to their patrons in a single, consolidated search.
- **For enhancing access across institutions:** If consortia want to enable seamless resource discovery for users across libraries with different systems or configurations.

Consortia Search Scope

The Consortia Search Scope allows consortia to define the search boundaries and what resources will appear in search results. It gives libraries the flexibility to customize which materials are included in search results, either focusing on local holdings or expanding to the entire consortia.



What are the benefits of this feature?

- **Customizable user experience:** Consortia can define the scope of search results based on local needs, such as limiting results to certain libraries or including the entire consortia.
- **Improved relevance:** Patrons will see the most relevant resources in search results, tailored to their specific needs or

location.

- **Flexibility:** It allows consortia to offer different search configurations based on user roles or library preferences.

When to use this feature?

- **For customizing search boundaries:** When consortia want to define specific sets of libraries or resources to appear in the discovery process.
- **When different search experiences are needed:** Some libraries prefer to have localized search results, while others may want a broader, network-wide view.
- **For optimizing search relevance:** When consortia wish to provide a more tailored, user-specific discovery experience.