
Questions about NCIP patron elements

- **Article Type:** General
 - **Product:** Aleph
 - **Product Version:** 16.02
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Description:

We are using the new NCIP server on our ALEPH v.16. I have some questions related to the LookupUser response.

- 1) We are getting the error message, "Agency User Privilege Type Value: No patron description found". What is this element referring to in the ALEPH record? If this is based on the Z305 record, how does it choose which Z305 record to check and return?
- 2) Are we able to get other pieces of ALEPH patron data through NCIP such as Global Patron Home Library, Global Blocks, Local Patron Sublibrary, Expiration Date, etc. If so, how would I set this up?
- 3) Is it possible to get the z303 HOME-LIBRARY or at least some element to identify the library the patron is from?
- 4) There is a file in \$alephe_tab called tab_ncip_interface which seems to contain other element options. Is there any documentation available for this other than the How to one?
- 5) This NCIP server is seriously lacking in some very basic elements. We can't verify that the patron is not blocked from borrowing, we can't identify the home library and we can't even get the patron's item status to set privilege levels. Are there any plans to add these basic elements to the server responses?

Resolution:

Question 1:

The system takes the Z303-ID and looks for a matching Z305 record. In that record, it gets the Z305-BOR-TYPE. You get the error message if no matching Z305 record is found or if the Z305-BOR-TYPE field is blank. You have BOR-TYPES defined (in pc_tab_exp_field_extended.eng), but none of the Z305 records for your example patron appear to have this field set. Once it does not find that, it gives up. As for which Z305 record it chooses, it looks first for the Z305 record associated with the Z303-HOME-LIBRARY. If it does not find one, it looks then for the Z305 record associated with the current active library. If it doesn't find that, it gives the error you received: "No patron description found". It gives the same message if it finds a Z305 record which has no BOR-TYPE set.

Question 2:

There is a UserOptionalFields element, and it includes ValidFromDate and ValidToDate, as well as a BlockOrTrap element. However, the BlockOrTrap element does not seem to be implemented. The ValidFrom and ValidTo dates may appear once the Z305 record is in place. Otherwise, I don't see any way to modify what is passed in these elements.

Question 3:

It may be that the intention is for them to use the BOR-TYPE to convey all of this kind of information. There does not seem to be any additional documentation on how to set this stuff up.

Question 4:

I have not found any additional documentation other than the How To document. I was able to look at the code for the various "programs" that are provided (as noted in the tab_ncip_interface header) and I don't find anything terribly useful. I could answer questions about any particular "program" if you have any. I also think it would be good to flesh out the documentation on these "programs" in some manner and will talk with others to see if that can be done.

Question 5:

I don't know of any plans to extend the NCIP elements, but I'm sure they'd be open to it, particularly if you find you can't use it due to its limitations. As for the library, it seems clear that the "/UniqueUserId/UniqueAgencyId/Value" setting in tab_ncip_interface should be set to the name of the specific institution using it, rather than leaving the default value of "Exlibris Users Agency". However, in a multi-ADM environment or one where a single installation covers multiple libraries, the only choice appears to be to use the BOR-TYPE values in the Z305 record, along with the translations in the pc_tab_exp_field_extended.eng table to indicate privileges. This table can be set at the SUB-LIBRARY level, so it may provide sufficient information, if used judiciously.

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