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## PLIF Questions: how to specify ignored/blanked fields in XML format?

- **Article Type:** General
  - **Product:** Aleph
  - **Product Version:** 18.01
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### Description:

In ALEPH Version 18.01 there is a new field in the Z303 to identify the borrower's gender. (It's Z303-GENDER and the value can be M or F.) Can this field be populated by the PLIF? It can be helpful for us when we're corresponding with international students or those with names that don't easily indicate gender.

In order to populate these new fields, we have to use XML format for the PLIF file instead of what we're using now - the "flat file" PLIF format. The PLIF 18.01 document describes how to use XML format, but it doesn't tell us how to "ignore" or "blank" field in ALEPH like we do with the special "%" and "+" character in the flat file format. Can we get Ex Libris to tell us how to specify ignored/blanked fields in XML format?

Also, there is a field called "z303-user-type" in the table with a note "For future use. Use blanks for now.", but in the XML example, it is set to "REG". Should we leave it blank (but include the tags with no value), use "REG" or omit it from the XML file altogether?

There is a similar issue with the "z303-want-sms" field - do we leave it blank, omit it from the XML file, or use the value "N" as in the XML example?

In the example XML PLIF record I see:

```
<z303-delinq-1>00</z303-delinq-1>  
<z303-delinq-n-1></z303-delinq-n-1>  
<z303-delinq-3>00</z303-delinq-3>  
<z303-delinq-n-3></z303-delinq-n-3>
```

What does this do exactly? What happens to z303-delinq-n-2 - does it get preserved if it already exists (by omitting it from the record altogether), or does it get all blanks like the note below says?

"Any error in the XML format (like missing mandatory elements) causes the whole record to be ignored. Missing optional fields under elements are considered spaces."

Does this note mean that any field not included in the XML is filled with spaces in the database, even if it exists already?

### Resolution:

In the XML-format p\_file\_20, any Z303 field (or Z304, Z305, or Z308 field) can be populated.

The spaces character (P-SPACES-STR) and the ignore character (P-NULL-STR) apply to both the flat-file format and the XML.

You should specify blank as the ignore character when using the XML format. That way, when a field is omitted from the input file, the fields generated by p\_file\_20 with spaces will not affect the corresponding existing field.

Unless the field is one which is marked as "Mandatory" in the "How To Use the PLIF" document, it is not required. In the XML format, the fields which are "For future use" may either be omitted, included with blanks, or included with a value. For "z303-user-type" we suggest following the example and specifying "REG". And, for z303-want-sms", "N".

Since Missing optional fields under elements are considered blanks, if you specify blank as the ignore character (see above) and you omit a field, then the missing field will have no affect on the existing field.

If you \*want\* to make the incoming field blank out the existing field, you should include the spaces character as the value in the xml field.

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