
Alma and Primo VE - New Release Cycle FAQ

After nearly ten years of consistently issuing new releases on a monthly basis, Alma and Primo VE are changing to a quarterly feature release cycle starting in June 2022. The following questions and answers clarify why we are making this significant change, what it means for our users, and how this positive change will be beneficial for them.

Q: Why is Ex Libris changing from monthly releases to quarterly releases?

A: We decided to change our release cycle for the following two main reasons:

1. **To better meet our customers' needs:** Recently, customer feedback from libraries increasingly addressed the difficulty they have in keeping up with many new features delivered on a monthly basis. As such, our monthly releases were, at times, proving to be more of a burden than a benefit. This was compounded by COVID-19-driven budget cuts, which forced many libraries to reduce staff, leaving fewer people available to deal with the monthly changes. Therefore, in an effort to accommodate our customers' needs, we made the decision to change our monthly releases to once every three months.
2. **To roll out more fully developed features:** In an agile system, where we are constantly rolling out new features, we often release parts of development over multiple releases. This can make it difficult for our users to understand and implement these partial developments. A quarterly release cycle enables us to package and release a more complete set of features with improved deployment.

Q: What exactly is the change?

A: Alma and Primo VE will have four feature releases per year, which will be rolled out once every three months, introducing new features and functionalities. We will continue with monthly releases dedicated to resolving bugs and other issues. It is important to emphasize that we are not reducing the number of developments, but rather focusing on deploying fully developed functionalities with a higher emphasis on complete End-2-End features.

Q: Which Ex Libris products will be affected by this change to the release cycle?

A: Alma and Primo VE will change from their current monthly feature release cycle to a quarterly feature release cycle. This means that once every three months, we will roll out new product features/functionalities for these two products while bug fix releases will continue being released on a monthly basis. The rest of the products, including Leganto, Esploro, ProQuest Rialto, and Rapido, will remain on their current monthly release cycle.

Q: What is the proposed schedule for the new quarterly feature release cycle?

A: New releases will be issued once every three months - in February, May, August, and November. Click [here](#) to see the Alma updated Schedule which can be seen [here](#) as well for Primo VE.

Q: When will this process start?

A: The first quarterly release is planned for August 2022. May 2022 will be the last monthly release. June and July releases will include bug fixes only.

Q: What will this change mean for those customers who have multiple Ex Libris products, like Alma, Primo, and Leganto?

A: Customers with multiple Ex Libris products will get new feature releases once every three months (for Alma and/or Primo VE) as well as once a month (for Leganto, Esploro, ProQuest Rialto, and/or Rapido, and bug fixes in Alma and Primo VE). Customers can see on their respective login pages whether their new release is being updated every month or every three months.

Q: Will this change to the release cycle affect the monthly corrections and bug fixes?

A: After the new feature release cycle becomes quarterly, we will continue to make corrections and bug fixes at today's current pace.

Q: Will the change to the release cycle slow the pace of development of new features?

A: No, we are not slowing our pace of innovation. Our aim is not to reduce investment in our pace of innovation but rather to provide our customers with an improved cadence of releasing new features that makes more sense and enables them to implement the changes in a smoother and easier manner.

Q: Will Ex Libris have fewer developers working on Alma?

A: No, we will have the same number of developers working on Alma that we have now. We will continue to invest in developing new capabilities at the same level as before.

Q: Why did Ex Libris decide to change the release cycle now?

A: As our customers – and their user experience – are important to us, we seek feedback regularly. We realized that recent customer feedback was focusing more and more on the fact that libraries were finding the nature of monthly new releases increasingly challenging. We, therefore, understood the need to address this issue. In an effort to meet our customers' needs, we made the decision to change our monthly release cycle to a quarterly release cycle.

Q: Can customers stay on a monthly release cycle?

A: No, all Alma customers will have to move to the new quarterly release cycle. There is no possibility to opt out of it.

Q: Will Ex Libris continue to have one-two infrastructure releases every year?

A: No, as part of this change to our release cycle, we will no longer need infrastructure releases for Alma and Primo. Instead, we will simply have quarterly feature releases for these two products as well as monthly releases for other products. In addition, there will also be monthly corrections and bug fixes.

Q: Will customers continue receiving emails about the new releases?

A: Yes, we will continue sending out an email with an update prior to each new release rollout.

Q: When can customers expect to receive their release highlights?

A: Our release highlights will come out every three months instead of once a month.

Instead of this happening monthly, you can expect to receive an email four times a year, approximately one-one and a half months before the quarterly feature release is deployed.

Q: Can customers find out plans in advance for what's coming up in future Ex Libris releases?

A: Every six months, we'll continue releasing our roadmap highlights that contain a two-year look ahead.

Q: What's the industry standard for release cycles for cloud-based software like Alma?

A: There's no standard per se, but we see Enterprise Systems whose main releases come out every three to four months. Therefore, our change to a quarterly release cycle is in alignment with other cloud-based management systems.

Q: Will there be any change in Sandbox releases as a result of shifting to quarterly releases?

A: The sandbox release dates will stay the same as they are today. However, since feature releases will become quarterly, they will be released to the sandbox in a quarterly manner, two weeks before the production release, while bug fixes will continue to be released on a monthly basis.

Q: Won't having the three months of new features in the sandbox for only two weeks not be enough for learning them properly before the move to production?

A: Though it is true that there will be more to learn in a short period of time, our standard deployment method is based on an 'opt-in' approach, meaning there is no change to existing functionality in most cases. In the case of major feature

changes, customers and institutions will have the ability to opt-in and out of those features which means they will have enough time to get used to the new features.

In addition, due to the longer time period between releases, customers will get more support material, sneak peeks about the upcoming features, webinars, and videos to help them both understand the value and how the new features will be used.