

Electronic Resources in Alma: Terminology and Inventory Model

Welcome to this training session on electronic resources in Alma. In this session, you will learn some basic terminology, and the inventory model used by Alma to organize various kinds of metadata records. Along the way, you'll see a few examples of electronic resources and their records.

Let's begin with some terminology. When your institution has access to electronic resources from a vendor or provider, those resources will often be grouped together and sold as a unit by the vendor. The vendor may call it a package, or a database, or something like that. Alma uses the word "collection" to describe this group of e-resources.

You can use Alma's persistent search box to find an electronic collection.

Each collection has a field called Type. There are three Types of collections in Alma: the Aggregator package, the Selective package, and the Database.

With an Aggregator package, your institution usually gets full-text access to every e-resource within the collection, all for one price. For example, this is common for collections of newspapers, or journals in a particular subject area.

If the collection is a Selective package, on the other hand, it's because the vendor sells resources within the package as individual items. This is common for collections of e-books. Your institution orders individual e-books from the vendor, and then here in Alma you specify those e-books in the collection, so your patrons can access the full text in your discovery service.

The third type of collection is the Database. This is a collection that doesn't have any full-text resources in it; instead, it will contain things like abstracting and indexing resources.

You may recall from a previous training session that physical resources in Alma have an inventory model that is organized into three levels: the bibliographic level, the holdings level, and the item level. Electronic resources also use bibliographic records for titles, but those records are part of a larger, three-level organization due to resources being grouped in packages.

At the top is the Collection level, which we just discussed. Some collections can be set so that patrons can directly find the collection in your discovery service. For other collections, you may choose to have the patrons only discover the various titles within the collection.

The next level in the e-resource inventory model is the Service level, which determines full-text access to your collection. E-resources in Alma either have the full-text service, or no service at all, which is what you'll see for an A&I collection, for example.

The third level is the Portfolio. These are the individual titles within the collection, such as an e-book or an e-journal. For example, some selective-package collections have a Portfolio List of thousands or even

tens of thousands of e-books. Some aggregator-package collections have a Portfolio list with hundreds of e-journal titles. And this database collection has no portfolios at all, because it only has A&I content.

Now, let's look at some more examples, and dig into the metadata records at each level in the inventory model. When you find a collection you're interested in, use the row-action button to see the Descriptive Record. This is the bibliographic record for the collection. By the way, if you see an Edit button, that will take you to the Alma Metadata Editor to make changes to this bib record, which will be discussed in another training session.

Click on the row-action button to access the Portfolio List. Now click the title of one of the portfolios. This is the bib record for the portfolio.

You can also use the persistent search bar to search for an electronic title, which is a bibliographic-level search for electronic inventory. A particular title, such as an e-journal or e-book, could be available as a portfolio in many different collections. Therefore, each result has a row-action button to see the Portfolio List, which in this case shows all the collections with a portfolio that is this title.

Throughout this training session, we have been ignoring whether you subscribe to these e-resources. But you may already know there is a difference in Alma between searching in your Institution Zone and searching the Community Zone. And some institutions even have the Network Zone. So, in the next training session, you'll learn about the three Zones in Alma.