

Digital Resources in Alma

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

One thing to know first: Not every institution can work with digital resources. It is an add-on subscription to Alma.

In previous training sessions, you learned how your physical and electronic resources are organized in Alma. It's important to understand how digital resources are different from those other types of resources. Digital resources are electronic files owned by your institution, such as images, videos, sound recordings, PDFs, and so on, in the same way you own physical resources. E-resources, on the other hand, are owned by the vendor or provider, and your patrons access the resources on provider sites. For e-resources, only the metadata is managed in Alma. For digital resources, both the metadata and the actual digital files are managed in Alma.

Like physical and electronic resources in Alma, there are three levels to the digital resources inventory model. At the top, as usual, is the bibliographic record. This is metadata that represents each unique, intellectual entity, such as a photograph, a recording, or a document.

The middle-level contains one or more records with representations of the intellectual entity. You can have either a master representation or a derivative representation. For example, with a book, there might be a high-resolution master representation that contains the scans of each page, and a lower-resolution derivative representation with watermarks, with all pages packaged into one file.

The bottom-level records contain metadata about the actual assets or files associated with each representation. Often there is one file per representation ... for example, this derivative representation has a single file. This is probably the file your patrons will access. But if there are multiple files -- such as a master representation with high-resolution scans of each page of a document -- then there would be several file records associated with that master representation, one for each scanned file.

Just as with e-resources, digital resources are organized into Collections, which are groups of related titles in Alma. There can be many titles in a collection, or there may only be one.

When you create new digital assets in Alma, part of the process will include uploading the files into Alma. They are actually stored in a secure, cloud-based system. Only your institution has access to those files.

Once the metadata records are created and the digital-asset files are uploaded, the metadata will be provided to your discovery service. Patrons will then be able to find the digital resources in your discovery service, just like physical and electronic resources.

More details about managing digital assets can be found in Alma documentation and in other training sessions, in the section called Alma Digital.