URLs in Alma Bibliographic Records

Introduction

This policy establishes guidelines on the inclusion of institution-specific uniform resource locators (URLs) in bibliographic records for electronic resources within the Ex Libris Alma architecture. This policy applies to all staff members of Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC) institutions who work in Alma.

Background

The MARC 856 subfield $u is the standard location in the bibliographic record for URLs. These URLs may provide direct access to an electronic resource or they may link to ancillary documentation, such as summary, table of contents, etc. Access URLs may be generic, or may be specific to a particular institution. Institution-specific access URLs are problematic.

Records containing institution-specific access URLs in the 856 $u field may be introduced to the shared catalog via migration or from other sources, including Community Zone records created or edited by vendors and by other Alma libraries, or from services such as OCLC. When these records are introduced to a different local catalog, the access URLs are not functional, creating confusion for users.

Ex Libris is working to address this problem on a global level. Individual libraries can fix their own records and try to avoid further problems. The Alma local equivalent for the 856 field is 957, which is not transferred to shared records. Institution-specific URLs in the 957 field are not problematic. Transferring the URL from the 856 to the 957 field resolves the problem.

Policy

1. Institution-specific access URLs are not to be stored in the MARC 856 $u, but instead should be stored in the 957 $u or 856 $x.
2. Generic URLs (of any type: access or table of contents, etc.) that apply to all institutions are allowed in 856 $u.

Approval

Approved by Electronic Resource Committee on 1/28/21.

Approved by Metadata Committee on 1/29/21.