



"Scrubbing" Your Patrons

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The ALEPH500 system retains a link between records representing library materials that have been returned and the record that identifies the person who borrowed the material. This is the case for Multilis and other library management systems as well.

In November 2002 there was a meeting of Association of Research Libraries' directors whose institutions use the ALEPH LMS. The ARL directors requested that Ex Libris develop procedures for removing the link (described above). This request mirrored one in the SUNYConnect RFP (seeking a SUNY-wide LMS).



As of 2004 that procedure has been made available to SUNYConnect. It has been tested and put into place for a number of libraries (including Binghamton, Erie, Morrisville).

Here's the announcement regarding the "patron id removal" utility:

This is to announce the availability of the Aleph patron id removal utility for all SUNY[Connect] campuses on the multi-campus servers. This utility was added by Ex Libris as a post-patch 7 enhancement in response to concerns expressed by SUNY and other US ALEPH libraries regarding the privacy of patron borrowing records in light of long-standing library policies regarding this issue. The patron id removal utility removes the patron id from circulation history tables. It is currently in production at Binghamton and Erie CC campuses.

The aleph patron id removal utility has been installed for all campuses and additionally, job_lists for all campuses have been modified with a (commented out) version of this utility as a daily job to be run prior to the nightly backup.

Documentation can be found on the Oswego documentation site which is accessed through the [SUNY ALEPH500 Portal](#). The document is called "Protecting patron privacy: procedures for SUNYConnect Aleph systems" and is under the general heading of "documentation."

Please review the documentation before you implement the utility. We recommend (as with all aleph enhancements) that you test it first in your DEV region before running in PROD.

Andy Perry, Assistant Director of Libraries for Systems, Binghamton University, and OLIS Technical Consultant, aperry@binghamton.edu, 607-777-4331

Andy Perry (working for OLIS) is the contact person if you have questions about the patron id removal process.

The program allows for loan-patron linkages to be removed only for transactions that are X days old (from 0 to 9999 days). In addition, the removal will not take place if there is a fine or fee associated with the particular transaction.

David Ritchie (Cortland) gets at this last issue and other public service aspects of this

procedure in the following communication among SUNYConnect participants: "We've been de-linking the patron ID's from loan histories & holds & other events for several months on a trial basis.

"But before we'd been able to do that, I had failed to convince the rest of our librarians that we needed to make it blatantly public that the federal government could request information on patrons' borrowing.

"Now that we can and do de-link patron ID's, most will ask 'What's the point of announcing that the government can do it if we've protected our patrons'? I can think of two reasons: (a) it's responsible of us to inform patrons that the Patriot Act and other similar acts can require the library to give certain information IF it has the information -- sort of the reverse of the privacy act announcements; and (b) announcing that there still are a couple of conditions under which patrons' loan records remain in the system -- overdues and unpaid fines are two of them -- **might** just bring those errant overdues and delinquent payers back to rectify their situations. But probably not.

"I think we're in a much stronger position with the patron-scrubbing capability than we were before that, vis-a-vis the [ALA position](#) on the Patriot Act and our responsibility to our patrons." Dave

The OLIS is interested in your point of view on these and related issues.



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