



The Aleph v.18 Web OPAC

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A New Model for the Aleph Web OPAC

A new model for the local campus Aleph Web OPAC has been discussed in several SUNY library forums such as SUNYLA 2007, LiSUG 2007 and the Fall 2007 SCLD meetings. The model was approved by the [SUNYConnect Advisory Council \(S.A.C.\)](#).

Each campus will receive a new version 18 web OPAC configured to support the functions offered in v.16 as well as individual library logos and background colors. When the v.18 development environment is released, the campus will receive a checklist for reviewing your web OPAC functionality and configuration. You may see fields and information displays that you did not see in v.16 because all campus needs had to be accommodated in the standardized configuration.

The significant change to support of the v.18 Aleph web OPAC is that the OLIS will perform all Aleph table and HTML edits necessary to configure your campus functionality. Neither OLIS or the campus will perform customizations solely for the purposes of cosmetic preferences, i.e. changes that are not related to actual functionality. You may obtain authorization (described in detail below) to take full responsibility for the customization and support of their web OPAC, but the following explanation of the new support model should be considered carefully by library directors and their staff before the assumption of full responsibility.

(The Q&A for the v.18 SUNY Aleph Web OPAC was distributed in the Fall of 2007. It is [linked here](#) for your review.)

The Benefits of a Standardized Web OPAC

The OLIS has listened to the concerns of SUNY library directors regarding the amount of staff resources spent on customizing the campus Aleph web OPAC. We asked other Aleph consortia how they supported web OPACs and they all do so by providing a standardized design shared by each of their members.

- Standardization removes the drain on individual campus library resources that were previously spent on customizing the web OPAC.
- Standardization allows the OLIS to troubleshoot and maintain web OPAC functionality more efficiently as updates, fixes, and new functionality can be performed with scripts instead of manually, one library at a time.
- Standardization reduces the resources OLIS has to spend on assisting campuses with maintaining, troubleshooting and continually customizing the web OPAC. OLIS resources can be re-allocated to new initiatives beyond local catalogs.
- Standardization supports patron preferences across SUNY.

LiSUG and Patron Recommendations Were Supported When Possible

The majority of recommendations made by the LiSUG "Version 18 OPAC Task Force" are reflected in the current design.

Because the web OPAC is first and foremost a patron interface to Aleph, the OLIS conducted a patron usability study and incorporated design features preferred by SUNY faculty and students. The OLIS v.18 configuration received the highest percentage of overall approval as compared to one SUNY v.18 web OPAC and one non-SUNY v.18 web OPAC.

New Features for V.18

- SSL (secure sockets layer) for patron login
- all items in the Holdings screen are displayed, with navigation buttons to move between screens
- 2000 records displayed and sorted
- 856 displays as subfield z, 3 or a standardized message

What is Unique for Each Campus

- logos

- colors
- middle row of top navigation links
- index options (System Number and Barcode will remain as standard options)
- unsupported functions will not display
- field formatting established in v.16 will be retained

Functions Just for Librarians

- system number search
- barcode search
- barcode display
- MARC display
- CCL search

After the Upgrade Process is Complete for All Campuses

You can submit requests to modify your v.18 web OPAC to OLIS via Footprints. These requests will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Requests to fix errors in data displays or add necessary data elements are supported.
- Requests to add OLIS-supported functionality
- Requests to add or subtract index and filter codes are supported.
- Requests to change logos
- Requests for relocation of data objects, customized navigation, customized search forms and other changes that are based on preferences, rather than functional needs, will not be supported.

Examples of requests for functionality that can be fulfilled:

- add a new virtual base that limits all searches to serials only
- add a new Collection Code to the Advanced Search filters
- add a new index to Basic Search

Examples of requests for preferential/cosmetic re-design that are not supported:

- create a sidebar for search hints in the search forms
- integrate the patron login form into the Basic Search screen
- move the campus-specific navigation row above the logo
- adding a custom search form instead of using a virtual base

FYI Authorization to Customize the V.18 ALEPH Web OPAC

(the actual authorization form was, or will be, given to the Aleph campus contact)

The OLIS provides SUNY libraries with fully functional Aleph web online public access catalogs or OPACs. These catalogs are unique to the campus in the cosmetic areas of logos and colors as well as the functional areas of indexes, filter codes and external navigation links. Beyond the features that must be campus-specific, each campus shares a standard appearance for each catalog screen. In summary, the standardized OPAC will allow campuses to have unique:

- indexes
- logos
- local navigation links
- virtual bases
- 856 fields

Each campus will have 30+ unique tables and HTML files that OLIS will track and update as necessary during all maintenance and upgrades. This is in addition to ongoing support of the functionality of the library web OPAC. Please note that by default, library staff are not given the privilege to edit their web OPAC files. If the campus wants the OLIS to support the campus web OPAC, staff must request functional changes (for the items noted above) from OLIS staff via the Footprints service request application.

If a library wishes to assume responsibility for editing their web catalog files in order to implement cosmetic design changes, they must assume full responsibility for functional and cosmetic customizations as well as maintenance. When the campus assumes responsibility for the web OPAC, all customizations made by library staff to Aleph web OPAC files are not supported by OLIS.

Please be aware that the following knowledge and skills are necessary for customizing the Aleph Web OPAC:

Knowledge

- System librarian understanding of Aleph file structure, for example: tables under the alephe directory vs. tables under the xxx01 directory
- System librarian understanding of table relationships, in particular: edit_field.eng, edit_doc_999.eng, edit_doc.eng, edit_paragraph.eng, tab_buf_z403
- in-depth understanding of how to configure table tab_base.eng
- index names for the xxx01 and xxx30 libraries
- understanding of the purpose and relationship between the xxx01, xxx50 and xxx60 libraries
- knowledge of the Aleph GUI circulation module and how to locate and edit the Aleph profile
- knowledge of how to stop and start Aleph servers
- specific knowledge of the web OPAC file structure and the required re-naming of HTML files to the campus extension

Skills

- editing Aleph tables
- HTML editing in a text editor (Aleph HTML files cannot be edited in an HTML editor such as Dreamweaver)
- editing javascripts
- editing and applying cascading style sheets



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