



Embedding the library in the university's core business

How The New School library is realizing a powerful vision for the future

Reimagining the library technology backbone

Since its launch more than a decade ago, the Alma library management system from Ex Libris, part of Clarivate, has redefined how academic and research libraries manage their operations. Designed as a unified, cloud-based platform, Alma was built to streamline and automate library operations, making it easier to manage various types of resources. Its mission: to empower libraries to operate more efficiently, collaborate more effectively and deliver smarter, more impactful services to their communities.

Today, libraries are actively evolving into digital-first, user-centered institutions, yet still need to manage print collections. Alma is much more than a management system that eliminates silos: it's a strategic foundation for libraries that want to execute bold visions and seize opportunities to extend the reach of their collections in an ever-changing world.

Community at the core: Alma's collaborative approach to library innovation

Alma's development has always been community-driven. Ex Libris has worked closely with librarians worldwide to ensure the platform evolves in step with real-world needs. Over the years, Alma has become the hub of a connected library community, spanning more than 2,700 institutional subscribers. In partnership with its community of users, Alma has introduced advanced analytics, support for linked open data and robust consortial features. Its 2025–2026 roadmap includes AI-powered metadata enrichment, enhancements to predictive analytics and a more intuitive user interface — tools designed to reduce manual work and enhance decision-making.

"We are driving meaningful progress in library resource management while fostering a stronger, more connected global library community."

Dana Moshkovits, Senior Director of Product Management, Ex Libris



How Alma empowers The New School to grow, adapt and innovate

Allen Jones, Senior Director for Digital Library and Technical Services at The New School in New York City, is among the Alma customers who play an active and essential role in the development of Alma. He offers a compelling perspective on Alma's role in transforming libraries into institutional powerhouses.



"The transition to Alma was the next step in our journey. We're not just thinking about how Alma fits into the library's tech ecosystem, but how it integrates with the university's information services ecosystem."

Allen Jones, Senior Director, Digital Library and Technical Services, The New School

The New School Libraries are not a single institution, but an institution within many networks – their Network Zone, which they share with NYU, performs cataloging services, systems configuration and management, and shared patron services, such as circulation, guest access and shared remote storage. They are also part of PALCI, the Partners for Library consortium, where they share inter-library lending services via EZBorrow, as well as shared database subscriptions and purchasing. Finally, New School recently joined Rapido, Ex Libris' electronic and print delivery network for integrated request processing within Alma.

Jones emphasizes that libraries should not just be viewed as content houses or collections — they are critical infrastructure for teaching, learning and research. The integration capabilities of Alma and the Leganto course management solution are another interface for faculty and students to interact with the libraries, allowing them to offer copyright and licensing services to faculty directly, automate acquisition workflows and support institutional goals. He explains: "It's not just about backend management anymore. We're thinking about how Alma can support smart decision-making at the point of engagement or instruction — like automating supply chain logic when a book isn't available or setting up research alerts for students."

"Where I'm headed and what I'm thinking about in terms of integrations is just an evolution in thinking of where the libraries fit within the higher ed institution. Period. Not some place separate, but integrated."

Allen Jones, Senior Director, Digital Library and Technical Services, The New School

Embedding the library in the university eco-system

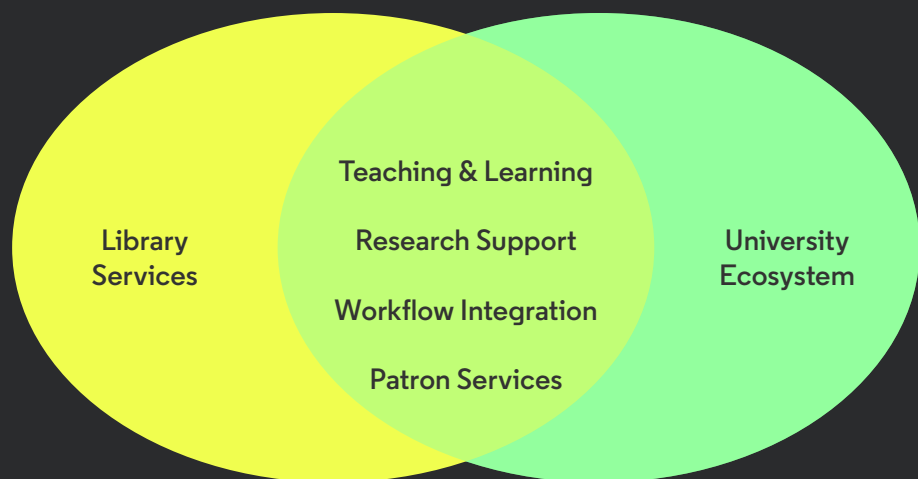
Jones uses the Leganto course management solution as an example of the way Alma enables a deeper integration between the library's services and the university's core mission.

"When you have something like Leganto that's focusing on the business of teaching, you get to that place where the core business of the institution and the library meet."

Allen Jones, Senior Director, Digital Library and Technical Services, The New School

Leganto, a tool that integrates with Alma, assists libraries in evolving beyond traditional roles such as managing collections to become active participants with the learning management/teaching environment. By offering improved access to learning materials and insightful engagement data, Leganto supports institutions in making more informed financial, academic and operational decisions, enhancing the library's impact within the institution. Leganto AI Syllabus Assistant further enhances this integration by automatically generating citations and updating syllabi based on curriculum changes, saving time and effort for educators. This AI-driven feature ensures that teaching materials are consistently aligned with academic goals, fostering a seamless educational experience.

Importantly, through integration with course management systems and faculty workflows, Leganto empowers libraries to directly contribute to curriculum development, student success and academic excellence. Alma, via Leganto, facilitates a "meeting point," where the library stops being a separate service and appears as an embedded partner in the university's educational ecosystem – where students find course materials and engage with learning management systems such as Canvas, Moodle or Blackboard and D2L Brightspace. The library learns what materials instructors are using in their courses and can then respond by prioritizing purchasing via Alma's integration with the Rialto acquisition marketplace.



Meeting Point Between Library and University

By enabling this kind of integration, Alma helps libraries align more closely with institutional goals. It's not just about managing resources — it's about enhancing the educational experience and demonstrating the library's value in measurable, mission-critical ways — where student, instructor and library meet.

"The question is, does the company deliver the tools to do what it is you want to accomplish at your institution? I feel like I have that toolkit."

Allen Jones, Senior Director, Digital Library and Technical Services, The New School

Jones also values Alma's integration capacity through resource-sharing standards and interlibrary lending. Rapido provides the General Title Index via the Primo discovery interface to send requests to EZBorrow, the libraries' PALCI interlibrary lending network based on the ReShare software, as well as to Rapido lending pods where New School is a member. If ReShare doesn't hold the item, Rapido libraries can fill the request. Philosophically at New School, discovery is about what materials a patron has access to, not just what a library or institution owns.



Innovation through customized library workflows

A powerful extension of the Alma platform has been the development and support of Library Open Workflows. Library Open Workflows is an automation and integration tool that allows libraries to create custom workflows using a drag-and-drop interface — little to no deep coding knowledge required. It's designed to help Alma users connect various systems and services, including:

- APIs and webhooks
- Cloud apps and external systems
- Forms and internal tools
- AI models and agents

This makes it possible to automate repetitive tasks, streamline operations and build institution-specific logic that enhances both backend efficiency and patron-facing services.

By offering a flexible, visual programming environment, Alma libraries can experiment and innovate. Admins like Jones see the potential for integrating intelligence and automation into library systems, using smart decision-making and fuzzy logic to streamline processes such as book requests and supplier networks. The goal is to automate repetitive tasks that would otherwise require human intervention. For example, Jones is working with Library Open Workflows to:

- Automate invoice creation within New School's finance systems through WorkDay's "web enabled forms" custom reporting
- Display invoice payment method and status from the procurement system within Alma
- Identify problematic metadata in interlibrary loan requests and provide basic remediation, like ISBN changes, moving requests to bibliographic records of different editions, and so on
- Identify potential duplicated bibs within the same system and potential automated remediation steps
- Automated metadata updates
- Scheduled research alerts and notifications from Primo
- Track/mark and recommend publications of university faculty in Rialto or other ordering platforms

Jones feels that tools like Library Open Workflows help libraries "meet the university" by integrating deeply into institutional systems. They allow libraries to:

- Build smarter, automated services
- Respond quickly to changing needs
- Reduce manual work and improve accuracy
- Align more closely with teaching, learning and research goals
- Connect reading lists to course catalogs

Evolving with technology to serve library needs

Over the years, Alma has continually expanded its capabilities. Key milestones include the introduction of advanced analytics tools, support for linked open data and enhanced consortial features that allow libraries to share resources and streamline operations across institutions.

In recent years, Alma has embraced artificial intelligence and machine learning to further its vision. The 2025–2026 roadmap includes AI-powered metadata enrichment, predictive analytics for resource usage and a more intuitive user interface. These innovations aim to reduce manual work, improve discoverability and help libraries make data-informed decisions.

"I am not a big proponent of AI in capital letters (general AI). I very much am a strong believer in AI with small letters (or tightly scoped “agents”). What I mean by that is, is that if you have small discrete tasks that can scale across many transactions, you can have a tremendous impact for staff and end users. The Alma metadata assistant is promising and I'm really excited to see where that's going."

Allen Jones, Senior Director, Digital Library and Technical Services, The New School

The **Alma metadata assistant** is a groundbreaking tool that leverages artificial intelligence to enhance the cataloging and metadata processes in libraries. Its primary function is to streamline metadata enrichment, ensuring that library resources are both accurately described and easily discoverable by patrons. It is “AI in small letters,” working quietly in the background, automating small, discrete tasks that cumulatively have a significant impact on library operations.

"It's one of the things that I appreciate about the Alma platform, particularly open workflows: not only can Clarivate integrate AI into their platform to perform some of these tasks, but Library Open Workflows enables institutions to integrate Leganto and Alma into other places, like Google Workplace apps, creating institution-level efficiency and impact. I would have had to create my own environments for those integrations."

Allen Jones, Senior Director, Digital Library and Technical Services, The New School

Jones also notes that while automation and AI tools are developing, this requires librarians to detect and address mistakes and potential bias. “When bias can be documented and identified,” Jones says, “I trust the ELUNA and IGeLU communities will raise the concern and we’ll work to resolve the issue.”

AI that keeps the human in control

One of the key benefits of the Alma metadata assistant is its ability to reduce manual labor in metadata management, saving librarians valuable time. It ensures consistent application of metadata, enhancing the reliability of the library's catalog and improving resource discoverability. By enriching metadata with contextual information, users can easily find relevant resources and decide whether to use that automated contribution or not – realizing the concept of the “human in the loop.”

The assistant supports predictive analytics, helping libraries anticipate resource demand and optimize collections, ultimately improving user satisfaction. Additionally, its integration with consortial features facilitates interlibrary collaboration, allowing libraries to share enriched metadata and broaden access to resources.

Looking Ahead: Libraries as strategic assets

As libraries continue to evolve, Alma is helping them reimagine their role within the institution. With AI-driven insights, customizable workflows and seamless integration, Alma enables libraries to become more agile, data-informed and impactful.

"This is as much a technological challenge as it is an existential one for libraries. What is library work when AI is involved? How do we oversee processing work that is ‘automatically’ done? This is a new generation of questions. Alma helps us to think about and answer both challenges."

Allen Jones, Senior Director, Digital Library and Technical Services, The New School

Would you like to see how Alma—now enhanced with the AI Metadata Assistant—can actively support your library’s strategic goals? Join your dedicated library consultant for a live demonstration and explore how Alma empowers your team to streamline workflows, enhance metadata quality, and unlock new opportunities for innovation and impact.

[Schedule your demo today](#) and take the next step toward making your library the core of teaching, learning and research.