

Hochschule für Musik Nürnberg

Ex Libris Alma and Primo
at the Nuremberg
University of Music



Image Credit: Andrew Phelps

Customized and affordable solutions even for small libraries

“We were given a very good hand from Ex Libris project management and then we managed the migration well.”

Falk Hartwig, Library Director at the Nuremberg University of Music



Image Credit: Andrew Phelps

About the Nuremberg University of Music:

The Nuremberg University of Music is the youngest and at the same time the smallest music academy in Germany.

Since the 1930s as a municipal conservatory operated, the institute became an institution in 2008 of the Free State of Bavaria. as a central institution the library stands for media and information the Nuremberg University of Music primarily the Students and teachers at the university available, with external people providing the resources at least be able to use it locally. The stocks of The library currently includes about 48,500 pieces of music, 9,200 books, 12,000 phonograms and audiovisual media and 30 magazine titles.

The initial situation

Within the library of the Nuremberg University of Music, there has long been a need for a modern library system that helps the staff save time through standardization and automated processes. The need for a change arose when the previous local system no longer supported users the way it used to, and the contract terms were no longer favorable. Additionally, the old library system offered little developmental progress, especially from the user's perspective. The library now wanted a contemporary design, combined with a new generation discovery system to replace the classic OPAC.

As a small institution, the library of the Nuremberg University of Music is part of the Bavarian Library Network, for which there was also a need for a new library system. At that time, however, no decision had yet been made in favor of a network solution, which is why the library, which had been forced to move, could not wait any longer and thus became a pioneer in Bavaria.

The award for Ex Libris Alma and Primo

As part of the reorientation, it was obvious to opt for a provider that offered the library system and discovery system from a single source, which is particularly practical for small libraries with few staff. Falk Hartwig, head of the library, emphasizes that this, in the view of the librarians' constantly growing workload, is due to numerous, often time-consuming routine tasks. The fact that both Ex Libris Alma and Primo were widely used in German-speaking and international countries proved helpful in the decision-making process. Because Alma and Primo were already widely used in these countries, numerous design examples of the search interface already existed in practice and could be viewed. Initial concerns about whether Alma, with its size and complexity, was suitable for such a small library faded when it became clear how simple, straightforward, and in line with the library's needs Alma could be configured.

For example, the flexible configuration options made it possible to initially put less relevant functionalities on hold or leave them out entirely. This allowed librarians to work and develop at their own pace.

Another decisive argument was the flexible pricing based on the size of the institution, which made Alma affordable even for small libraries. In addition, there were no further costs for additional hardware or IT support, as the solution was provided in the cloud. For the library of the Nuremberg University of Music, it proved extremely helpful that the timing for choosing a new library system coincided with a third-party funded project to digitize the library. It was a clear choice to choose to subscribe

to a new library and discovery system with the proposed pricing and to cover the implementation costs for Alma and Primo via the project funds.

The Implementation

Due to the small size and short administrative channels at the university, Mr. Hartwig, as the person responsible for the selection process, was able to present his evaluation of various library systems directly to the university management and to receive approval to subscribe to Alma and Primo. In June 2020, it was decided, that despite the pandemic, to begin implementation. Onboarding was started in August 2020, and the project itself then began in mid-October. It was completed by the end of March 2021. While the migration proved to be quite challenging, with the help of the project team, it was completed successfully and on schedule.

First Experiences

After half a year, the library team has already become well acquainted with the day-to-day business, including cataloging in Alma. Since the library isn't at full-staff capacity, they're not able to use all the various possibilities of Alma. For now, the staff will gradually learn at their own pace. The students, however, are not yet as accustomed to the possibilities of contemporary library resources like Alma and Primo. The library therefore plans to create short video tutorials that provide in-depth information about how to use Primo. The videos will explain to users what content exists and how the library can make it available to the students. These same students are also able to use resources on the Internet that were previously unavailable but are now freely accessible.

For the library, it is an immense step forward that the entire range of licensed electronic resources, including databases and streaming services, coupled with the option of remote access, is now available through Primo. Another subject-specific wish of the library is fulfilled by Alma Digital, the area for owned digital resources in Alma. It is intended to serve as a document server for multimedia productions, in which the library's own digital objects can be posted and managed. This is particularly practical at a music academy in order to avoid having to resort to third-party systems, such as, YouTube.

The simplification of routine tasks through Alma will be a significant relief for the small library with only three employees. It also offers staff the opportunity to be more service-oriented



Image Credit: Sören Balendat

and work more closely with the users, which they weren't able to do in the past.

"There has been enthusiastic feedback about what can be found through Primo." Falk Hartwig, Library Director at the Nuremberg University of Music

A quick look into the future

Following the Nuremberg University of Music, the Bavarian State Library (BSB), the largest and probably most important institution in the Bavarian Library Network, recently decided to switch to Alma and Primo. According to Mr. Hartwig, this decision by the BSB is likely to have a signal effect in the network, from which the Nuremberg University of Music and generally a larger user community in Bavaria could also benefit. A huge institution like the BSB will use Alma to its fullest potential, spreading it across the board and probably creating added value for smaller libraries in Bavaria as well. Alma and Primo came at a time during the pandemic when these resources were greatly needed and necessary, not only for the library of the Nuremberg University of Music, but also the library system in general. Both are confronted with an increased demand for electronic resources as well as an increased expectation of the users due to the effects of the pandemic. While the libraries were initially forced by circumstances to make all resources available online around the clock, this service is now perceived as normal by students. This development was undoubtedly accelerated immensely by the pandemic, but it will not be reversed and will continue long after the Corona pandemic ends.

About Ex Libris, Part of Clarivate

Ex Libris, Part of Clarivate, is a leading global provider of cloud-based SaaS solutions that enable institutions and their individual users to create, manage and share knowledge. Working closely with its customers and the academic community, Ex Libris develops creative solutions that increase library productivity, maximise the impact of research, enhance the teaching and learning experience, and promote mobile student participation. Ex Libris serves over 7,500 customers in 90 countries. For more information, visit our [website](#). Please visit us on [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).