How to Link to an ALEPH Catalog

Release 15.2

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1 Overview

ALEPH has a generic link-to mechanism that is designed to support Web browser queries from external applications and clients to ALEPH’s search engine, using the HTTP protocol. In ALEPH, the functionality of submitting queries has been integrated with the Web OPAC.

Queries are written in the address bar of the Web browser. When a query is sent from an external application or client, the control of the session is transferred to the ALEPH server. In many cases, this results in the opening of a new Web browser window (a choice made by the client/application that initiates the request).

ALEPH is a flexible system which enables each site to configure its own indexes, display format, options and workflows. For example, the creation of an ISSN index is a site-defined option. In addition, the name of the ISSN index is also a site-defined option. Therefore, the query must be tailored to suit the particular catalog being queried.

The resulting display is also site-specific. The result is presented in a library-defined format which can include Bibliographic information and a link to the Holdings information display. Other libraries might set up the display to include both Bibliographic and Holdings information. This is controlled by the particular site.

If the query does not find a record, a “NO HITS” message is returned, together with a different ALEPH window. The library has full control of the message text and format of the HTML file.

The above ISSN search is just one example. You can format other search queries (search based on title, author, subject, or specific ALEPH document number, and so on).
2 Query Syntax

Here is an example of the syntax of a generic query:

```
http://<aleph-server>/F?func=<functional-code>&<parameter_name>=<parameter-value>&
```

As you can see, a query string comprises a number of different components. These are as follows:

- `<aleph-server>` - the path to the ALEPH server you are addressing

- `<functional-code>` - this must be identical to the “action” value in the corresponding HTML form.

- `<index-code>` - the index code in the ALEPH catalog. This code is site-specific, and therefore you must determine the codes used by the specific ALEPH application. Examples of codes used by many ALEPH sites are 020 or ISBN for the ISBN index, 022 or ISSN for the ISSN index, AUT for author index, TIT for title index. When “doc_number” is the query type, no index code is required.

- `<library-database-code>` - the code of the database being queried
  (This is the code from the /alephe/tab_base.lng table in the library’s tab directory on the ALEPH server.)

- `<parameter-name>` - this must be written in lower case, whereas the “parameter-value” may be in either upper or lower case. The occurrence of the parameters field is endless, where each pair should be delimited by an ampersand character (“&”).

- `<parameter-value>` - this can be written in either upper or lower case.

- `<query-text>` - the text of the query. When “doc_number” is the query type, the query text is the internal identification number (system number) of the record.

**Note:** The occurrence of the parameters field is unlimited, and each pair should be delimited by an ampersand character (“&”).
3 Examples of Queries

3.1 Example 1 – FIND Query
Here is an example of link-to syntax to support a keyword search queries (the ALEPH’s FIND command).

Search for “great barrier reef” under words from title with adjacency:

http://<aleph-server>/F?func=find-b&request=great barrier reef&find_code=wti&adjacent=Y

3.2 Example 2 – Logical Base (Direct) Query
This is an example of link-to syntax to retrieve a document in logical base “xxx”:

http://<aleph-server>F?func=direct&doc_number=<system-number>&l_base=<xxx>&format=<format-value>

This link-to syntax supports retrieval of a specific record, based on its ALEPH record number.

The resulting web page of each query is identical to the same result page received when using the OPAC application.

3.3 Example 3 – FIND Query
To retrieve a record based on words from the title field, the following is entered:

http://chicago.exlibris-usa.com:4210/ALEPH/-/find-ext?base=exu01&find=TTL=Jo
urnal%20of%20luminescence

This gives you the same result as a direct query by ISSN.

Note that the <query-text> is URL-encoded (spaces are represented as ‘%20’).

3.4 Example 4 – Logical Base (Direct) Query
http://chicago.exlibris-usa.com:4535/ALEPH/-/find-ext?base=exu01&find=022=0022-2313

This retrieves bibliographic record/s with ISSN=0022-2313 and displays them in an ALEPH display window.

In the above example:
<aleph-server> = chicago.exlibris-usa.com is the Ex Libris (USA) test and training server located in Chicago.
<library-database-code> = exu01 is a training database
<index-code> = 022 is the Index code defined by the library for ISSN numbers (based on the MARC tag name.)
<query-text> = 0022-2313 is the ISSN number to be searched
Notes

1. The “-“ in the above URLs stands for a “guest” session-ID.

2. Examples 3 and 4 can actually be tested on our testing and training server in Chicago. However, please note that the database/catalog is used for testing and training purposes and its stability and availability cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, it is suggested that it be used only for initial testing.