Business Question
GOBI Library Solutions accounts for a large volume of print book acquisitions in libraries, but increasingly, credit card purchases from book distributors such as Amazon are competing with traditional library vendors for this market share. Tracking expenditures for such suppliers is of interest as an evolving trend in library spending reflected in Library Acquisitions Patterns, a 2018 ITHAKA S+R study. This poster shows one method for tracking these purchases using ExLibris ALMA Analytics. ALMA’s Data Analytics is a user-friendly interface offering a custom version of the Oracle Business Intelligence (OBI) reporting tool. OBI exposes ALMA database fields in “Subject” areas ranging from Finance to Fulfillment that assist with building reports using filters. The OBI interface offers detailed analytical features using the Acquisitions & Finance database model with a learning curve far simpler than that of SQL query language programming traditionally used to extract library system data.

Methods & Approaches
This software extracts data with access to nearly every database field that can be filtered, calculated, and formatted for presentation. Field attributes are selected from Subject Areas reflecting database values to build an analysis. Database fields are entered as Columns and Filters are applied such as Sent Date for orders, numeric ranges for expenditures, etc. This poster shows how credit card purchases from vendors like ABE Books, and others can be tracked. Expenditures by vendor can be tied together by use of a reporting code such as PCARD used for credit card purchases, regardless of vendor name. The report can be filtered by vendor codes to capture desired distributors or suppliers and transaction amounts by fiscal period can be calculated. Filters are searchable to see all possible values before applying specific variables to a report. Virtually all your data is exposed to view with no programming skills required. PO Line numbers and funds can be output for further research into spending patterns. Date ranges can be specified so tracking over time by fiscal period (years, quarters, etc.) is simple and quick. Analytics can compare spending by vendor to track spending patterns over time between traditional and non-traditional suppliers.

Future Options
Uses for the OBI reporting tool are unlimited. Reporting for purchase types such as firm, shelf-ready, and demand-driven content has potential to analyze and expose additional aspects of these transactions due to the granularity and scope of the tool’s reach into ALMA’s database structure. Reports can be scheduled or run on-the-fly. They can be used in custom-built dashboard environments provided by the OBI tool and shared with designated users to run on demand. Analytics answers business questions in real-time.

ALMA Analytics leverages the power of its Business Intelligence reporting to build analyses using all the transactional and contextual data your library system provides. The tool’s formatting capabilities are extensive, ranging from mathematical calculation to combining results of multiple reports. The PCARD REPORT above displays information about expenditures but can be expanded to include PO and Invoice Numbers, bibliographic data and much more.