Avalon User Guide

Introduction

This guide applies to Avalon release 5.1 and above.

The Avalon User Guide explains front-end Avalon features, functionality, and how to navigate the system. It is designed for users of Avalon, whomever may be searching for items, accessing and playing audio or video, or performing other similar actions.

Definitions

- **Authenticated users** - A user who can access Avalon using a valid identifier and authentication combination supported by your institution. Publicly accessibly items do not require authentication for access.
- **Collection** - A collection is a grouping of items for administrative and discovery purposes. Items belong to one and only one collection.
- **Collection Staff** - Collection staff refers to individuals that have been assigned specific roles for a collection: managers, editors and depositors. Administrators are also considered collection staff although they are not listed per collection. Collection staff have set permissions to edit, delete, publish items based on their assigned roles.
- **File** - A single media file (i.e. sound recording, moving image) that is part of an item; one or more files can exist for a single item (e.g. 3 mp4 files combined to form an entire movie, 6 wav files together make up the recording of an entire orchestra concert, or a sound file and a moving image file together represent a video with accompanying lecture commentary).
- **Item** - A single item (media object) accessible through one Avalon page; consists of one or more media files and metadata describing the media file(s).
- **Unit** - A unit is a grouping of collections for administrative and discovery purposes. Usually, a unit will map to an administrative unit. Collections belong to one and only one unit. A collection's unit is just a label: there are no privileges associated with units.

Accessibility

See the Accessibility entry for information regarding the accessibility of the Avalon site and media player.

Logging In

Authenticated users can access additional functions by logging in to the Avalon Media System. Some items are not publicly available, but may be available to an authenticated user if they have been assigned access by collection staff. Additionally, authenticated users can create and save playlists.

1. On the Avalon home page, click "Sign in>>" (upper right)
2. At the Login page, enter your username and password, click Login/Sign In Button.

Browsing and Searching

Browsing and searching is powered by Blacklight and Solr indexing. Flexible search features include Unicode support, Advanced Full-Text Search Capabilities, and faceted searching to help end users and Collection Staff refine their search results. Avalon also auto-generates search suggestions. Avalon provides multiple sorting options for search results, including relevancy sorting, and allows the user to set the number of results shown per page. Once items are added to Avalon, Near Real-Time indexing occurs. No additional steps are needed to index newly added or changed items.

Labels for sections are not searchable.

Boolean Commands (AND, OR, NOT) and Truncation are not supported by Avalon at this time.

By default, Avalon uses Solr's DisMax Query Parser (or dismax), which is designed to process simple phrases without a need for any complex syntax. There is support for + (required) and - (excluded) words, as well as the use of quotes for phrase searching.

Solr also comes with an Extended DisMax Query Parser (edismax), which supports the capabilities of dismax as well as:

- Boolean operators AND, OR, and NOT in addition to + and -
- Parenthesis groupings for complex queries

- Wildcards
- Range queries on Numeric and Date fields (e.g., 1963 TO 1971)
- Better "proximity boost" matching
- Smart partial escaping

Avalon does not use edismax by default. Contact your system administrator to make changes to the Solr configuration.

Player and Controls

Avalon uses the MediaElement.js player for playback of both audio and video files.

Player controls - When viewing the Avalon player in the browser window, player controls can be found below the video. When in fullscreen mode, hover your mouse over the bottom area of the picture and you will see player controls appear.

- To start and pause the player, click the center Play button (for video) or the Play button in the bottom left corner.
- To advance quickly through the audio or video, click on the timeline bar at the desired point, or scrub forward with a click and drag movement.
- To magnify the timeline for more precise scrubbing, click on the magnify icon in the bottom right corner of the player.
- To adjust volume within the player, click on the desired level in the speaker loudness icon. To mute, click the speaker icon.
- To go to full screen for video playback, click on the square icon located in the bottom right corner of the player.
- To switch between playback quality tiers, click on the gear icon located in the bottom right corner of the player.

To view a specific section when available, click the desired section for playback under the Section heading below the player.

Sharing Recordings

To share the recording, click the Share button below the player, then copy the relevant share link or embed code.

- Share the permanent URL for the item, or for one of the sections if the item contains more than one file.
- Embed the player in another web page by clicking on the Embed tab under the player and then copying the embed code. Pasting the code into the HTML of another web page will embed the media. If the video is access-restricted, authorized users will be prompted to authenticate before being able to access the media. Note: Embedding does not work in all environments (see Known Issues for Player Embedding).

Mobile viewing: Avalon works on iOS and Android devices.

See Known Issues for Player & Controls

Working with Playlists

See the documentation for Using Playlists for more information.