Barcode Labels

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Label Types and Reports

Once you've decided how to barcode your collection, the next thing to consider is what kind of labels will work best for your library. COMPanion offers a couple of label types to choose from. You can either order pre-printed photocomposed labels, or print your own with blank labels by using Alexandria's **Reports** tool.

Label Types

Label Classes

There are two classes of barcode labels:

- **Photocomposed labels** are made using a photographic process to create high-quality, long-lasting labels. Rather than printing ink on paper, the photocomposed process makes the barcode image an integral part of the label. These labels usually come with high-quality lamination and adhesives that make them durable and easy to attach. You should use photocomposed labels on all permanent items.
- **Blank labels** use a printing process that places the ink on top of the label. These labels require protection of some kind to keep the ink from rubbing off. An extra protection label of transparent Mylar or Label Protectors can be placed on these to extend their lives. Although the cost of these labels is less than photocomposed labels, the protection and labor they require can sometimes cause them to cost more. Printed labels without extra protection are most cost-effective when printed by you in your library and used for temporary items such as magazines and newspapers.

If you choose to use a label protector of any kind, be sure to test whether or not your scanner can successfully read barcodes through the protective layer.

One and Two-Part Labels

One-part labels include the library name, barcode, and written number. If you want to place a barcode label in two different locations on an item, you can order two copies of these one-part labels.

Two-part labels include the same information as the one-part label. But these have an additional part that displays the written barcode number again. The second part can be attached to a shelf list card or placed on the book in a different location than the upper portion. With two-part labels, you can have two labels for each item at a lower overall cost.

Label Reports

You can customize and print your own barcode labels using Alexandria's **Reports** tool. Both patrons and items reports have a variety of different formats (e.g. spine, envelope, horizontal, barcode, etc). Note that it is possible but not recommended to put barcode images on 4x20 size labels.

Patron Barcode Reports

Operations > Reports > Patrons > Labels

Barcode Labels

- *Patron Barcode Labels (3x10)*
- *Patron Labels (4x20)*

Copies Barcode Reports

Last Updated: $action.dateFormatter.formatDateTime($content.getLastModificationDate())

Operations > Reports > Copies > Labels

- *Copy Labels (3x10) – Barcode Labels, Envelope Labels, Info Labels*
- *Copy Labels (4x20) – Study Programs, Small Labels, Envelope Labels*
- *Copy Labels (5x10) – Spine Labels*

Unused Barcode Report

To print barcodes for patrons or items that are not yet in the system, go to **Operations > Reports > System > Barcodes > Unused Barcodes report**.

Feeding a single sheet of labels through your printer more than once when using the *Labels to Skip* option is not recommended. Labels may peel off and damage the printer. COMPanion Corporation is not liable for any damage caused directly or indirectly from this use.

Alignment Troubleshooting

Alignment Troubleshooting

Here are some basic troubleshooting measures if your barcode labels are printing misaligned, overlapping, or off-centered:

- We recommend using Adobe Reader for printing any kind of labels. Make sure you're using the most current version. A free installer can be downloaded from Adobe. Be sure you continuously update to newer versions as they become available.
- Choose the landscape orientation in Adobe Reader if you're printing wide labels.
- If your barcodes appear misaligned, then it's more than likely your Adobe Reader PDF page scaling percentage isn't set to 100%. Turn off any “scale to fit” settings if they're enabled (e.g. Fit to Printable Area, Page Scaling, or Shrink to Printable Area). Essentially, all printers have an unprintable area (called margins) on the page. Misalignment issues can occur when the default Print dialog attempts to scale the PDF in order to conform to your page margins. Selecting an “actual size” setting ignores any arbitrary page margins and forces your PDF to print correctly.
- Please update to the most current version of your printer's drivers to avoid (or eliminate) most printing problems.
- Also, take advantage of your printer's latest features to ensure maximum print compatibility and quality.
- Check your printer's RAM, especially if you are printing hundreds of barcode-intensive labels. Insufficient printer RAM is responsible for many of our reported printing issues, including incorrect alignment issues—even when the Vertically Center Label report boxes are checked.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Where should I place my barcode labels?

You can place barcode labels on either the inside or outside of items. But keep in mind that while a label on the outside is easy to locate, it is subject to much greater wear and tear. Here are some things to consider:

- Most Alexandria users place their labels on the inside back cover of books and on the outside of items such as records, tapes, and CDs.
- If you plan to place barcode labels under a transparent jacket cover, test your barcode reader to make sure it can read the labels through the jacket cover.
- Placing barcodes vertically on the back cover next to the spine can make inventory easier since you don't need to fully remove the books from the shelf to scan them.

When should I label my items?

You can label items either before or after you enter your item information.

- For an **existing collection**, it's usually easier to purchase your barcode labels early and place them on items before the item information is entered into the computer. Use two-part labels for this method. As you place the barcode on the item, place the second label on the shelf list card that will be used for entering item data into the computer.
- If you are starting a **new library**, be sure to purchase bibliographic information for your items in a computer-readable format (MARC or MicroLIF). Either order your books with barcode labels attached, or tell your supplier which numbers to assign (in the MARC/MicroLIF records). Have the numbers assigned in call number order so it's easy for you to locate the item for each barcode label you have to apply.

What kind of barcode reader should I use?

Your computer requires a special device designed to read a barcode number and enter the corresponding value into the computer. This device is called a *barcode reader* or *scanner*. There are a number of different types of barcode readers available, including light-pen readers, laser readers, and portable readers. The best device for you depends on your budget and library's requirements.

- Wand or pen-type readers are the least expensive devices for reading barcodes.
- CCD wedge or laser scanners are more expensive but do a better job reading the labels, especially in those hard-to-reach places.
- Portable readers give you the freedom of going to your bookshelves to scan labels, rather than having to take the books to the computer to be scanned. These are especially useful during inventory.