

## Ex Libris Staff (1978-2005) Questionnaire -- Tania Gutman

1. When did you start working for Ex Libris? How did this come about?

Tania Gutman: I started working in Ex Libris Israel as QA Tester in 2001 when I was a student in the School of Library and Information science in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Irina Dijour was a prominent programmer in Ex Libris, and her younger sister Yelena was an A+ student at the Library school and a friend of mine. Together with another friend we started working in Aleph QA team under the management of Marina Spivakov. I learned later that the QA Team did not exist at the beginning and the product was quite 'buggy'. (In Irina's words, in order to fix a bug programmers had to fix several on-the-way bugs before getting to the program). Marina was the one who organized the team and the product was much improved since then. It was Aleph 14, already with the Graphical User interface and frameless Web OPAC, while in the Hebrew University's Library Aleph 300, with dos commands, was still used. The report system (called PRB) was Aleph 12, and issues and resolutions were entered as bibliographical fields. Aleph 13 never existed, for superstitious reasons :-)

2. What was your job title, or, more generally, what did you do? Were there particular projects you were involved in?

Tania Gutman: I started working in 2001 as a student in the QA Team, and after my graduation continued as a full time employee in the Aleph Support Team. In 2017, I am still Aleph support analyst :-).

*Thinking of the 1978-2005 time period....*

3. Why was Ex Libris as successful as it was? Why did customers go with Aleph rather than other systems? Some possibilities:
  - a. Superior system and program design? (-- primarily Yohanan's doing? Others?)
  - b. Superior functional design? (-- primarily Judy Levi's doing? Others?)
  - c. Superior strategy (Oren Beit-Arie -- and others?)
  - d. Superior marketing (Barbara Radel, et al.)
  - e. Superior organization (Azriel and Udi and ???)
  - f. Other?

Tania Gutman: I think the Aleph product was successful because it was very flexible, with more than one way to achieve a functionality, and with almost any functionality possible in Cataloging and display – 'powerful' as Yoel Kortick called it. Aleph was continuously developed (and is still developed now in 2017). One of the librarians in Israel confessed that Aleph was chosen because of its flexibility, but later became a 'monster' due to that flexibility. It became a very complex software indeed.

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10. Are there particular interesting, fun, or odd things that you remember?

Aleph 13 never existed due to superstitious reasons – Aleph 14 followed Aleph 12. (The idea was coming from the customers, as 13 is not a 'bad luck' number in Israel).

11. When and why did you leave?

Not known yet.