Ex Libris Staff (1980-2005) Questionnaire – Tami Ezra

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

I started in June 1990. Just finished Library School at Hebrew University. Judy was looking for another "system librarian" (she was on her own) and someone told me about it. We spoke and I think I started the next day/week.

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

I don't think I had one (we were so small) but if anything System Librarian. Except for programming I did almost everything – design, QA, documentation, training, implementation and project management and even some marketing.

Projects:

- Acquisitions module in Aleph 200.
- Training the first Aleph 300 customers
- Implementation of our only customer in Egypt – the Mubarak Public Library
- Training the first Aleph 500 customer (Gent)
- Getting Aleph to work for the North American market
- Development of MetaLib
- Development of Aleph Update Express
- Development of Primo

Thinking of the 1980-2005 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?*

Probably a bit of all. Flexbility of the systems was a key point I think – although it is also a problem. Yohanan was the basis for it all but in addition the entire team was really good I think.   I don't know that much about it but I think Azriel and Udi were key in getting the system to sell abroad.

4. *Who were Ex Libris' main competitors?*

Voyager, III, I think Serials Solution also started to compete with SFX. And we had some MetaLib competition but I don't recall names

5. *I think that two decisions – perhaps just coincidence or luck – were very important: ..*

6. *Comments on the role of user groups (ICAU, NAAUG, SMUG, etc.)?*

An Ex Libris strong point – listening to customers and getting them invovled. We also had System Seminars early on and customers loved them (they were much more intimate and fun in the early days I think).

7. *Were there particularly interesting/valuable customers that you remember?*

Gent – Herbert van de Sompel. That is where SFX started.
DTV and Mogens Sandfer. They were a major development partner although I am not sure we used that term at the time.
Notre Dame – 1st N. American customer

8. *Were there modules which you felt were particularly good, distinguishing Aleph from other vendors' versions of the same module?*
9. *It seems that, with ALEPH 500, the choice of a Linux / Oracle environment was important -- but maybe most of the competitors' products also operated in this environment?*

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

- The first office Aleph Yissum had (or the first I knew) were 3 crummy rooms in the Hebrew U campus. I am told we lost a customer from abroad because they were so "impressed" with the office.
- EXL briefly had an agent in Cairo
- The first N American office in Chicago was above a bar that started blaring music from 4 PM

11. *When and why did you leave?*
Havent left yet ☺