

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF *ALEPH* USERS

LIBRIS Reports

First ALEPH Licensee in Germany

Ex Libris is pleased to announce that the Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Research Institute (RFE/RL) of Munich has chosen to lease **ALEPH** - the Integrated Library Information and Management System.

To start, **ALEPH** will provide the Research Institute with an integrated solution to locate, track and measure the use of library resources and periodicals distributed across RFE/RL Inc.

ALEPH will supply a base for the development of a broad range of databases and indexes, supporting both library and archival inquiries. The system will be used for inventory management of the library, using the **ALEPH** Periodicals Management, Acquisition and Book Circulation modules.

In the longer term, the Research Institute's Information Resources Department plans to use **ALEPH** capability to enhance bibliographic data with digitized images and to access other databases via the **ALEPH** On-line Public Access Catalog (OPAC).

The use of various character sets, such

as Cyrillic, and the multi-lingual capacity - inherent features of **ALEPH** - will add to the compatibility of this system with other **ALEPH** systems throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

....ALEPH at OSU Libraries

The major project of the Jewish Studies section of the Ohio State University Libraries this year was the implementation of the new **ALEPH** online, real-time management system for our Hebrew and Yiddish book collection. With the generous help of the Melton Center for Jewish Studies we purchased the needed hardware (MicroVax 3100 and 5 VT420 terminals) and leased the **ALEPH** software.

The major advantage of the program - from our point of view - is that it can accommodate not only the Roman script, but also the Hebraic, Arabic, Cyrillic and Greek scripts. We at OSU are using the **ALEPH** system not only to give access to our Hebrew and Yiddish collection in the Hebraic script, but also for the Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish and other languages that are using the Arabic script. Works written in the Roman script

are not included in **ALEPH** at OSU, as these are accessed through LCS (Library Computer System), a previously leased and used system.

Through **ALEPH** we are also able to access the Israeli nationwide **ALEPH** system, using Internet. In this way we have access to the online catalogs of all academic libraries as well as to several databases in the humanities and sciences. For example, the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem that includes the Bibliographical Center in Contemporary Jewry.

This Center compiles a computerized database of bibliographical information relating to various aspects of 20th century world Jewry. The Center registers, indexes and annotates descriptions of books, articles, films, taped interviews and other archival material at, or available to, the Institute. These bibliographical records are then accessible for online searching.

With the start of the academic year in the Fall of 1992, we will open **ALEPH** at OSU for use by the public. As of end of August 1992, the **ALEPH** system has about 24,000 bibliographic records. It

includes all new purchases as from January 1, 1992 and all the non cataloged books and more. In the coming year, we are hoping to add all cataloged books that are available on LCS (Library Computer System) and add the titles in the vernacular. We also hope to purchase a printer for our system capable of printing in the Hebraic script. This printer will enable us to compile bibliographic lists for our faculty and other patrons in Hebrew and Yiddish.

For more information please contact Prof. Amnon Zipin or Joseph Galron at the Main Library.

Joseph Galron-Goldschlager
Ohio State University
Library.
E-mail: TS4132@OHSTVMA.BITNET

New ALEPH Distributors

Two new ALEPH distributors are now in operation in Hungary and Poland. Their names and addresses:

IBR General Ltd. Co.,
PF 658,
Budapest H-1539
Tel: +36-1-1565062
Fax: +36-1-1565062
E-Mail:
NEM3474@ELLA.HU

Managing Director:
Mr. Agoston Nemeth

Agoston is an old hand in Library Automation Systems and in computers installations and system implementation. IBR is expanding its operation to system support and training of new users in Hungary.

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The Tomasz Chlebowski Company.
Ul. Bartycka 18,
00-718 Warszawa
Tel: +48-22-410041
Fax: +48-22-414115
E-Mail: TCH@SIRIUS.
ASTROUW.EDU.PL

Dr. Tomasz Chlebowski is completing his work as a Professor of Astronomy at the Warszawa University. He owns and manages a large Hi-Tech distribution and consulting company in Poland.

Ms. Radosława Dziubekka, known all over the librarian establishment in Poland as Sławaka, is an experienced System Librarian who taught Library Automation in the Warsaw University. Sławaka will do the follow up and support of our users in Poland.

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We wish them success in their efforts to promote, lease and support ALEPH in their areas.

ALEPH at the 44th International Bookfair in Frankfurt

By invitation of the Frankfurt Municipal and University Library, Ex Libris had the distinct privilege, together with only three other selected suppliers of integrated library systems, to present the latest ALEPH version at the International Center for Librarians and Documentalists from September 30th through October 5th, 1992.

The Center operated as a special entity, reserved to professionals, as part of the Bookfair, by far the largest exhibit of its kind.

The fair comprised some 8236 exhibitors from 103 countries - editors, booksellers, authors, suppliers of furnishings, hardware and software - and was attended by 246,000 visitors from the four corners of the world. The fair was also the occasion for the award of the prestigious annual Peace Prize of the German Booksellers' Guild to the well-known Israeli author, Amos Oz.

The Ex Libris stand was staffed by representatives from our Tel Aviv and Luxembourg offices and was visited by an impressive

number of potential and existing ALEPH users. All displayed vivid interest in our demonstrations, which highlighted new development features as well as our multi-lingual and multiscrypt capabilities.

We had the pleasure to greet new and old friends from Germany, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Norway, Hungary and Poland.

We intend to continue exhibiting at a number of specialized fairs and trust that our participation in such events will contribute to the growing awareness and to the widening use of ALEPH.

Robert W. Simon
Ex Libris S.A.

Developing a System - Part II

The role of the user

In developing a computer application or "system", the user's contribution is of ultimate importance. There are several aspects and reasons to his importance and this article will try to analyze the role of the user in developing ALEPH and the ALEPH way of cooperation.

The early days

Ex Libris was founded in October 1986 when

the ALEPH version 1.2 was in its final design and development. In 1987 we worked mainly in Israel, marketing the system, testing it and shaping our knowhow as to the implementation process including installation, training and support.

When we first contacted several European possible clients we noticed that the ones who stayed past the first introduction meeting and continued the discussions toward leasing, were characterized by two main features: they were experienced users of another system, which they wanted to replace and they were "strong" clients in that they had staff and knowhow in computer software, who were able to specify their needs.

This was quite surprising. In a normal marketing environment an organization usually climbs the ladder of references from small users to the larger ones and here we faced the opposite.

When we analyzed the reasons of this phenomenon, by talking to our first clients (DTB and CERN), we understood their two main reasons. They were convinced that the structure of the system was to their liking and they were under the impression

(proven later to be true) that they would be able to inspire and influence the development of ALEPH.

(We added one more reason to the fact that we signed with such large users: They were strong enough to make a decision to lease a system, which was not, at that time, known or supported in Europe.)

(It should be noted here that CSIC of Spain, was the first ex-Israel ALEPH user, and leased the system before the establishment of Ex Libris.)

"He is the wise..."

From our association and previous meetings, you know by now that we use proverbs and stories as a cultural tool. We have a saying in Hebrew, roughly translated as, "He is the wise who learns from the experience of others".

This is actually the first role of the user in system development. You may have encountered computer systems which were developed exclusively by programmers. The frequent result is a beautifully constructed system, colors and windows, sounds and all the fanfare, but a superficial product with no professional sophistication.

The role of the user is to help specify the system based on his professional knowhow, experience, personal advancement and his exposure to other systems and developments in his field of work.

"He who has the hundred..."

"... has the opinion". (Rhymes in Hebrew)
It is not a secret that development costs money and a lot of it. Following the basic system development there are many directions in which the system may be developed.

For example, you may find, in the Library Automation System field, quite a variety of OPACs, which differ from one another in many basic approaches as well as in their "window dressing". However all of these systems are designed to perform exactly the same role. There is a lot of personal taste and unwavering religious belief as to the "right" and "wrong" ways to build each function.

Even within the users of ALEPH you will find persons and organizations, which have quite opposite ideas about the construction of various features, the screen appearance and functionality flow. Several of these issues are solved by the TABALEPH (see our

previous article), but there are always different philosophies, which cannot be satisfied by such techniques.

The decision of a certain approach is quite often influenced by the users who ordered the new functions and features. You may find the fingerprints of DTB in the OPAC and Cataloging, the mark of CERN in SDI and Q-Aleph and the stamp of Sandoz in the bulk handling of Serials.

The Kibbutz philosophy
You may have heard about the Kibbutz movement in Israel. Its main philosophy is that every member contributes as much as he can and receives as much as he needs.

It is quite difficult to try to analogize this philosophy to our business environment and relations, but, in a very broad sense, there is a similarity.

The philosophy of the ALEPH/EX LIBRIS business approach is that in certain areas, users, who want and are able to pay for development, have a major influence on the construction of the system. However, if this is a development feature of a general type, the development is included in the forthcoming version and distributed to all the users free of

charge.

This actually works, balancing the cooperation of the Israeli Users' needs, the evaluation and acceptance of the ICAU users' requests and the developments for new users under new contracts.

Azriel S. Morag
Managing Director
Ex Libris Ltd.

New Installations

In one of our last newsletters we reported that The Hungarian Academy of Sciences had signed a contract to lease ALEPH.

The library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is one of the country's most important bases of scientific information.

The Department of Manuscripts and Old Books stores codices, linguistic records, literary remains of writers and scientists, collections of manuscripts, approximately 1,200 incunabula, 6,500 pre-1711 Hungarian books and other museum pieces.

The internationally renowned Oriental Collection is, besides its modern holdings, in possession of numerous unique, rare Oriental manuscripts,

scientific correspondence-collections and such remains, to name but a few, as the Kaufmann Hebraistic collection, and the Tibetan collection.

The total holdings of the Library at the moment are 1,800,000 items, of which there are about 950,000 books, 270,000 volumes of periodicals, manuscripts representing approximately 550,000 items and microfilms 21,000 items.

The library is, at present, using the Search, Cataloging and Acquisitions modules of ALEPH and plans to start using the Serials module in early 1993.

Being Part of a Global Information Universe

In the world of information, there are two major axioms:

The information world will always be based on a heterogenous environment based on different applications, using different records formats and operating on different platforms.

Users all over the world prefer and appreciate a consistent and common user interface to all information applications.

The above two axioms

seem to reflect a conflict.

On the contrary, they are the fundamental stones upon which the whole design and development of the ALEPH program is based.

The solution is achieved by basing the development of ALEPH on the following two elements:

Develop and maintain an OPAC user interface which is based on a standard User Interface and a standard Query Language.

Link the ALEPH system to common standard "browsing systems". The standard "browsing system" is linked to different databases while providing a common user interface to the different applications which are interfaced.

ALEPH OPAC user interface

Traditionally, for the last 5 years, ALEPH development has been committed to adhering to ISO standards. This commitment insures a standard approach by ALEPH, that if followed by other software vendors, can provide a standard application interface.

Examples of this commitment are:

CCL common command language based on ISO 8777.

ALEPH fully supports the ISO 8777 standard command language, which includes a "full text retrieval" language, in parallel to the traditional browsing of the Authority Files.

Right and left truncation, masking of characters, and proximity search, are some of the many features provided by the ISO 8777 standard.

Multilingual capabilities based on ISO 8859.

ALEPH User Interface includes different languages of conversation which supports multiple complete sets of Screens, help screens, commands and error messages for the user.

Based on ISO Latin 2 (8859 standard), data can be entered and displayed according to different character sets. For example, besides the extended Latin character set, Greek, Cyrillic, Arabic and Hebrew, are special character sets supported by ALEPH.

Graphic User Interface (GUI) based on X windows.

The Graphic User Interface is part of ALEPH's present development. This User Interface, based on X WINDOWS will provide a

standard presentation of ALEPH to all those who are used to the X WINDOWS interface.

UNIX System V

ALEPH is operational on the UNIX System V release 4 operating system. This environment is a standard open environment which leads not only to a platform independent application, but mainly to the compatibility of ALEPH with all the UNIX standards.

Linking ALEPH to the WORLD-WIDE WEB browser.

Although it is quite obvious, that developing a User Interface and a Query Language according to International Standards, provides a common approach to the ALEPH system, this track of development is multi-vendor dependent. That is, only if other Software application vendors will provide their users with the same international standards, a common User Interface to all different applications can be reached.

To avoid this multi-vendor dependency, ALEPH adopts in parallel a second track of development:

Integrating the ALEPH OPAC to an International Browsing System, such as WORLD-WIDE WEB, thus en-

abling users, who are using a global standard User Interface, to search in ALEPH through the World Wide Web browser.

Ehud Arad
Ex Libris Ltd.

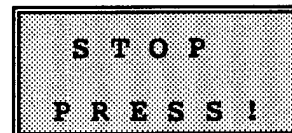
A letter from the Editor

"Ex Libris Reports" is one year old. As a result of our meeting together one year ago at the Second ALEPH Users' Meeting in Copenhagen, Ex Libris decided to provide users with a quarterly newsletter of information. We have tried, in this year, to fill these pages with information about new users; stories about how users in different countries and types of applications are using the system; preliminary details about new developments or development lines.

We could not have done this without the generous contributions of our users who responded so well to our requests for "stories". We hope that this flow of information from you will continue to reach our offices.

We are gratified by the apparent popularity of "Ex Libris Reports". Our mailing list has grown to nearly 200, and it is always a special pleasure for

us to receive a request to have a name added to the mailing list.



The National Library of Turkey in Ankara

The National Library of Turkey in Ankara has signed an agreement with Digital Equipment (Turkey) for the supply and implementation of its Library Automation System. DEC, as the main contractor, has leased ALEPH, as the software system suitable for the integrated library solution.

Work has started immediately, in order to meet the demands of a very restricted time table of implementation, resulting from problems of implementation with another system.

Use is being made of ALEPH's well-known flexibility in accepting and sorting foreign alphabets, according to a user's defined needs.

More will be reported about this installation in a later news letter.