

# **The First Real Year of IGeLU**

## **Chair's Report on IGeLU Activities in 2007**

by Jirka Kende

### **I. Introduction**

I am very pleased to open this 2<sup>nd</sup> IGeLU meeting, which represents users of all Ex Libris products worldwide. This new user organisation was created by the user community to act as a single strong body, to communicate with Ex Libris with one coherent voice, and to serve as a platform for users of all Ex Libris products to exchange information and experience across geographical regions. I am especially proud to welcome you here to the Czech Republic, my former home country, and to this beautiful town of Brno.

It is my pleasure to announce that there are 270 participants at this conference, who represent 130 member institutions from 24 different countries including Australia, Israel, Island, South Africa, Taiwan, most European countries, and the USA. The slightly lower number of participants compared to the Stockholm conference is partly due to fact that the System seminar took place in May this year and the budget of many institutions did not allow them to send participants to both events.

In spite of the integration of the users of ALEPH, MetaLib, SFX, Verde, Digitool, and — last but not least — Voyager, the IGeLU meeting is scheduled for only 3 days, in contrast to 4 or 5 days for ICAU and SMUG at the previous conferences, not to mention the additional 3 days of the EndUser meeting for former Endeavour customers. Thus the organisation of the meeting was quite a balancing act and we will, as usual, evaluate your responses very carefully to see if the organisation was successful and adjust it where necessary for future conferences. So please don't forget to fill in the questionnaire at the end of the meeting!

### **II. Activities**

Before I report on our activities since the last conference I would like to thank all the colleagues involved in these activities: the members of the Steering Committee Ana Azevedo, Pat Busby, Michele Newberry, Beate Rusch, Guido Badalamenti, and Dale Flecker; the PWG Coordinators and other active members of the Product Working Groups, especially Lukas Koster for the MetaLib/SFX PWG, who was incredibly active in many fields, far beyond the PWG activity; Gerard Bennett for ALEPH, Pascal Calarco for Digitool, and Andreas Sabisch for Verde, as well as all others who worked in official or non-official positions like Marcus Zerbst, Peter Klien, Marco Streefkerk, Ragnar Helin, and many more. And of course thanks to our new colleagues Lesley Gray and Simon Huggard from the former EndUser group, which leads me directly to our first activities of the previous year.

#### **1. Endeavour Merger**

At the end of November 2006, a short time after returning from our first great IGeLU meeting in Stockholm, the SC received information from Ex Libris about merger plans with Endeavour Information Systems! What we had expected to be a hard-working but quiet year of consolidation of our new organizational structures turned out to be quite a turbulent one from the very beginning. Conference calls between Ex Libris and the SC about the impact of the merger on the company, on the product suite, and last but not least on the organisation of the user community took place over the next months, followed by face to face meetings in Prague in February and during the Endeavour EndUser user group meeting at the end of April in Schaumburg, USA.

Before and during the meeting in Schaumburg there were of course very intensive discussions between the IGeLU SC and the EndUser Board about the future structure of the joint user

organisation. Intensive discussions also took place between the SC of IGeLU and ELUNA because the vast majority of Endeavour customers are in the USA.

This was the first time that the flexibility of our new organisational structure was put to the test — and it proved solid. Thanks to the product-oriented organisation of IGeLU and also ELUNA, we agreed with the Board that the EndUser will be transformed into a further PWG of the respective organization. To facilitate this process we also agreed that the US members of the EndUser Board will become temporary members of the ELUNA SC until 2008 and the international Board members will join the IGeLU SC for the same period. This has proved very valuable for managing the merger in a smooth way, and I hope we have your approval for this decision.

So we welcome our new colleagues from Endeavour to our user community. But don't be surprised if you see many "old faces" in the Voyager sessions for many former Endeavour users were already members of IGeLU because of MetaLib, SFX, or other Ex Libris products.

Lastly I should like to stress at this point that the fact that this complicated process has worked out so well is largely due to the intensive support of Ex Libris and the very close cooperation with ELUNA. This close relationship between Ex Libris, IGeLU, and ELUNA SCs also proved to be crucial for our further activities during the last year.

## **2. Enhancing Communication**

The organisation of IGeLU established new shared responsibilities for activities among the SC and the new PWGs, and thus necessitated the creation of new channels of communication between the IGeLU bodies on the one hand and between IGeLU and Ex Libris on the other.

To gain information about the progress of the PWGs' activities a quarterly reporting system was created where the PWG Coordinators informed the SC about all relevant issues in their PWG. On the other side the SC informed the PWG Coordinators on a continuous basis about its activities and the results of negotiations with the Ex Libris management. Via mailing lists the SC also informed the user community about important issues.

A further important aspect was the increased cooperation with ELUNA in various areas, which resulted in an increased need for better communication, not only at the level of the SCs. To improve communication at the product level the SC proposed to Ex Libris that monthly conference calls be instituted between the PWG Coordinators of IGeLU and ELUNA and the respective product and, if necessary, implementation managers. This proposal was gladly accepted and in the meantime has become routine.

Of course the most important communication channel is communication with the user community. In addition to the new mailing lists that have been established for the product and special interest working groups and communication with national user groups, the IGeLU website will be completely redone. If you visited it over the past few days you will have seen the first steps in this direction. In addition to professional help with the design, most of the work was and is being done by IGeLU officers and volunteers whom I would like to thank again very much for their great work.

## **3. Product Working Groups, Special Interest Working Groups**

The main tasks of the PWGs were to establish a functioning working body, to set up or adjust existing enhancement procedures in cooperation with Ex Libris and ELUNA, to submit input for the system seminar and for the respective focus groups, to set up their website sections and mailing lists, and of course to prepare the contents of the product sessions of this meeting.

Thanks to the great commitment of everyone involved, most objectives were achieved. Therefore, after the first real year of IGeLU, the situation in the PWGs can be viewed as stable, although in the ML/SFX PWG (which probably will split into two separate PWGs during this meeting) as well as in the Digitool PWG the current Coordinators might not be able to continue and these positions will

have to be filled at this meeting just as well as other vacant positions all PWGs. Here I would again like to thank both Lukas Koster and Pascal Calarco for the great work they have done, laying the foundations for the successful work of their PWGs and I hope to see them still be involved in IGeLU matters in future!

Besides the PWGs for Aleph, MetaLib/SFX, Digitool, Verde and the forming PWG for Voyager, the SIWG ALEPH consortia with the emphasis on ALEPH shared systems, the SIWG for Special libraries and the new SIWG for the Aleph Reporting Center continued or began their work under the umbrella of IGeLU, creating their own mailing lists and sections on the IGeLU website.

#### **4. Development Cooperation with Ex Libris**

In August 2006 the SC submitted a proposal to Ex Libris for a new agreement on product development cooperation as a framework for all products except for Aleph where such an agreement already exists. The proposal was accepted by Ex Libris at the Stockholm meeting and it was agreed that the PWGs will negotiate the details of the procedures for their products with the respective product managers.

In the context of this agreement the SCs of IGeLU and ELUNA agreed that for all products except for Aleph there will be single enhancement procedures worldwide and that the PWGs of both organisations will work closely together to bundle the interests of the whole user community.

In June 2007 the first PWG, the ML/SFX PWG, reached an agreement with ELUNA and Ex Libris on a new Enhancement Request Procedure for these two products. The aim of the agreement was also to set up a procedure that is generic and transparent enough to accommodate all products, maybe with minor differences at the level of individual products. In the meantime the Digitool PWG is working on an agreement based on this framework, and the Verde PWG will explore the suitability of the suggested procedures for Verde as the product matures.

According to the agreement there will be single enhancement request lists, voting procedures, and product enhancement committees for the respective products: the enhancement committees will consist of an equal number of representatives from both IGeLU and ELUNA.

The product enhancement committees will work together with the Ex Libris product managers in processing the requests submitted. Once they have been processed, the enhancement requests will immediately be published online and submitted for voting on; only IGeLU and ELUNA member institutions have the right to vote.

Twice a year — at both the ELUNA and IGeLU annual conferences — Ex Libris will report to the membership on the status of each enhancement recommendation and Ex Libris aims to implement enhancements with the highest number of votes as soon as possible. Every year an evaluation will be conducted to decide whether adjustments to the procedures are needed.

As a database for submitting, processing, and voting on enhancement requests a new platform, Bugzilla, is being set up at the Free University of Berlin; it will be used by the ML/SFX PWG first, but should also serve for all other products. In the context of Bugzilla an IGeLU LDAP server is being set up to enable authentication of IGeLU users for the enhancements procedure, at the IGeLU website, and also during future conferences. Here great efforts were made by many, and I would like to thank in the first place Beate Rusch, Lukas Koster, and Ana Azevedo.

As an important part of development cooperation across the product suite a great number of focus groups worked together with Ex Libris in various areas over the past years and this has had great results for product development. For 2007 it was agreed with Ex Libris to set up a new focus group on eBooks, which would cover the discovery and delivery aspects of eBooks across the whole Ex Libris product suite. The subject of eBooks, a hot topic for all libraries, will be addressed in one of the keynote sessions on Wednesday, where also Dale Flecker will report on the work progress of the focus group.

## **5. Total Cost of Ownership**

As a result of the ongoing joint efforts of the user community and Ex Libris to lower the TCO for customers, the SC has in Stockholm agreed with Ex Libris that there will be collaborative pre-release testing of the upcoming version 4 of MetaLib. This first collaborative testing was organised through close collaboration between IGeLU and ELUNA and with the support of Ex Libris in December 2006 at the Ex Libris office in Jerusalem with participation of the Ex Libris testing and developer team and 2 users chosen by IGeLU and 2 by ELUNA. Both sides agreed the collaborative testing was a great success and it will be continued for all Ex Libris products to improve the quality of the released versions. Meanwhile plans for the collaborative testing of ALEPH version 19 are well under way.

Further activities to lower the TCO were the ongoing efforts of the SC and Ex Libris to improve further the ERM Pivotal and quality control plus the quality of support and documentation. Last but not least the revival of the International System seminar — desired on the part of the user community — which took place in Potsdam, and the collaboration with the user community on the content of the Seminar were a substantial help in easing operation of the company's products.

## **III. IGeLU Membership**

As many institutions use multiple Ex Libris products, membership numbers have not grown as quickly as some may have expected after bringing together the users of all Ex Libris products. Nevertheless, the number of IGeLU members is increasing constantly: from 210 IGeLU members at the time of the Stockholm meeting to 265 IGeLU members as of August 2007: this is a greater number of members than the predecessor organization ICAU ever achieved. We are proud to have almost 30 new members who are Voyager customers and all in all to represent users from 31 countries world wide!

## **IV. Budget**

To facilitate detailed analysis of the financial situation of IGeLU the final budget and IGeLU draft balance sheet have been published on the IGeLU website prior to this conference. The main tables are attached to this report.

The 2007 budget includes some one-off expenses for the relaunch of the new IGeLU website and for the implementation of the enhancement platform Bugzilla. Although the main part of the work was done by IGeLU officers and volunteers we did need some professional support.

According to the interim Steering Committee proposal, the draft budget for the coming year includes the usual expenses for SC, PWGs and focus groups meetings etc.

We are able to present balanced budgets for 2007 and 2008, but only because of the surpluses from the previous years. The surplus from 2007 is already smaller than from 2006 but it is still relatively high only because we didn't carry out all planned meetings. Next year, if all planned meetings take place, or even more, for example, because of new focus groups or other unexpected issues, we could run into trouble financing them. For this reason, the SC proposes to the Assembly that there be a moderate increase of the membership fee, starting in 2008, from 220 to 250 Euro per year to secure the work of the association. I hope we shall have your approval.

## **V. Voting on Amendments to the Statute**

To split the work load and for legal reasons the SC suggests that the seat of IGeLU be kept in Siena and that the Chair be allowed to delegate administration to a third party. This constitutional change can only be passed if two thirds of the member institutions vote and a majority approves these Amendments. We also hope for your approval of this.

To reduce the workload for the Chair the SC has asked Siena University whether it would be willing to carry on with the IGeLU administration, and in this context Guido Badalamenti was

asked if he would — based on his great experience — be willing to continue to act as the IGeLU treasurer: the SC was very grateful indeed to get positive answers in both cases. Especially in this transition period with your approval we would therefore like to invite Guido to the SC meetings whenever necessary.

To make the Amendments effective, there has to be a high quorum. So I would like to stress here the importance of your vote during the Assembly of members in Session 10 on Tuesday!

#### **VI. Voting on New Members of the Steering Committee**

This year there will be voting on the three open positions on the Steering Committee; the call was distributed via all mailing lists and the voting will take place during the conference. Two positions are vacant because according to the statutes Beate Rusch and Ana Azevedo were voted in for one year only and Pat Busby has had to resign for occupational reasons. Many, many thanks to all three of them for their great commitment and the work they have done for our association! Here too, I hope to see Ana and Beate still be involved in IGeLU matters in future! The voting on the SC members will also take place during the Assembly of members in Session 10 on Tuesday.

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In the end I would like to thank on behalf of all of us the Moravian State Library for its warm hospitality and the organising team — Kateřina Jílková, Marcela Walterová, Petra Žabičková, Tomáš Prachař, Martin Fasura, and others — for the great work they have done and especially Petr Žabička who chaired the team and devoted a great deal of time and energy to preparing this conference!

Welcome to the 2nd IGeLU Annual meeting in Brno!