

ILS-Next Generation/URM *Some Questions for Focus Group Discussions*

IGeLU -- September, 2008

Introduction: The underlying model for our Integrated Library Systems such as Aleph and Voyager is now more than 30 years old. While that model continues to serve libraries well in some aspects of their operations, in other ways it feels increasingly out-of-date. The library of 2008 is *dramatically* different from that of 1978, and much of that difference comes from the explosive growth of digital information and services.

Given the level of change in recent years, it is not surprising that there are increasing tensions in our environment about the function and role of the ILS. After years of stagnation in the ILS world, suddenly there are talks and papers and projects all around us addressing the need for change. However, while the need for change is becoming widely recognized, it remains far from clear *what* new needs the systems that will replace the current ILS must address. We know the old model is inadequate, but we have yet to agree on what the new model should be.

This IGeLU meeting will focus on the topic of the next generation processing system. In an early session Ex Libris will present current ideas about a new system, currently named the *URM* or Unified Resource Management system (*Session 4, Monday 12:00 – 13:30*), followed by reactions from a user panel (*Session 6, Monday 15:00 – 16:30*). Then throughout the remainder of the meeting will be a series of small focus groups where attendees can share their thoughts about a next generation system, discuss how their needs for such systems have changed, react to the ideas presented by Ex Libris and the panel, and give both Ex Libris and IGeLU advice on how to move forward in this domain. Following is a series of topics and questions which may be addressed by the focus groups (although these sessions are intended to discuss whatever is of interest to the participants.)

PLEASE NOTE: These focus group sessions are intended to provide those who attend with as much opportunity as possible to express their ideas, explain their needs, and to interact with other users as they do the same. As such, the session will be held in a small room conducive to discussion. Because of the size of the room attendance at one of the group sessions **REQUIRES PRIOR SIGN-UP**. Sign-up sheets will be available at the registration desk..

Sample topics for discussion:

1. *Unmet needs.* The new generation of discovery environments such as Primo are divorced from back-room processing systems. As we think about a possible new generation of processing systems as well, we need to consider how changes in the environment and in the roles of libraries will affect requirements for automated systems.

- * What are the most important needs you have for processing support that are not met by current the ILS?
- * As you look to the next decade, what new processing functions do you think will become important?

2. *Changing priorities.* As the environment evolves and new needs grow, the importance of some existing functions will certainly decrease.

- * What functions of today's ILS are becoming less important to you?
- * Are you seeing (or do you expect to see) a significant decrease in the processing of physical materials?

3. *Scope.* The Ex Libris URM is intended to provide a unified processing environment for many types of collections materials.

- * Besides books and journals (both physical and licensed/electronic), what types of materials are or will be important to your library?
- * Is a unified processing system important to you? Why?

4. *Environment.* Since the original ILS era, there have been significant changes to the environment in which libraries operate, and these will have implications for a new generation of systems.

- * What are the major environmental changes that would affect your requirements for a new processing system?
- * Are there environmental factors that will affect the timing of your moving to a new system?
- * Integration is a constant theme in today's environment...with what other systems would you need close integration of a new processing systems? Are these systems within your control, or under the control of others?
- * Are there technological considerations that will be important for a new system?
- * Are there economic factors that will be important as you consider a new system?
- * Open source is another constant theme in today's environment...will open source be an important consideration when you consider a new system?

5. *Motivation for change.* Changing from the current ILS to a new system will likely be costly in terms of both effort and money.

- * What factors are most likely to induce you to change systems?
- * Would the ability to outsource your processing system ("software as service") be an important issue for your library?
- * In what timeframe would you guess your library is likely to migrate to a new generation system?