

IGeLU News in Brief, June 2011

Welcome once again to the IGeLU news-in-brief, our round-up of the latest activity from the International Group of Ex Libris Users.

It's been a very busy few months for IGeLU - conference planning is reaching a crescendo, as the Haifa team prepare an excellent programme of exciting talks and presentations for the summer event (don't forget to register at <http://www.reg.co.il/exlibris-igelu2011/>), but the Steering Committee and Product Working Groups have also been busy with work on NERS, enhancement processes for a variety of products, as well as meeting with Ex Libris, Alma developers, and much more.

Please read on for the latest news from IGeLU - or you can read the stories on the IGeLU website at www.igelu.org, and follow us on Twitter for the latest updates <https://twitter.com/igelu>.

Michael Fake, IGeLU Steering Committee.

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+++++ IGeLU 2011 - Haifa, Israel

Thanks to a tremendous response by colleagues from around the world, we now have an excellent programme of user presentations and posters to inspire you at the IGeLU conference in Haifa in September. Presentation topics include:

- Enhancing collection management and technical processes
 - Providing improved, unified search experiences for users in supporting e-research
 - Experiences of implementing and managing Ex Libris products
 - Customizing and enhancing interoperability, and using Ex Libris products with other proprietary, open source and home-grown systems
 - The use of Linked Data
 - Analysing resource usage, and developing product usability tests
 - Widening and enhancing staff skills
- ...and many more.

Please watch the conference site as full details of all presentations and posters will be added

to the draft programme soon. We look forward to sharing expertise, experience and ideas with you in Haifa. Don't forget to register at <http://www.reg.co.il/exlibris-igelu2011/>
Pat Busby

+++++ Keynotes at Haifa

Alongside our member's presentations we are happy to announce that we have two prominent keynoters at the coming IGeLU conference in Haifa .

The event will be opened by Marshall Breeding, Director for Innovative Technologies and Research at Vanderbilt University , who will be providing his view of the changing landscape of library technologies in a talk entitled The New Frontier: Libraries seek new technology platforms for end-user discovery, collection management, and preservation. In it he will be exploring how many libraries find themselves involved with content areas outside of traditional collections, including the need to manage or archive scientific data sets, and to deliver new types of services in support of research, teaching, or other strategic activities. He will look at how traditional automation tools increasingly fail to meet expectations in this context, and will discuss some of the issues and challenges involved as new technologies emerge to address the changed realities of libraries today .

Wrapping up the conference will be Professor Sheizaf Rafaeli, Director of the Sagy Center for Internet Research, and Head of the Graduate School of Management (Business Administration) at the University of Haifa, who will be presenting a talk on Reading, Writing, and Making a Living: the changing business models of publishing. Prof. Rafeli will be exploring what the economy of publishing, libraries, reading and writing will look like in the future, as the rise of electronic publishing changes the nature of access, search, delivery, and distribution. The talk will attempt to sketch the parameters of the problem and raise the questions. Does technology play the role of the villain? Will it possibly provide answers? Is the net a trap for culture looking into the future, or its panacea ?

We hope you'll find these thought-provoking and engaging!
Jirka Kende

+++++ Steering Committee visits Ex Libris Headquarters

In February 2010 the Steering Committee visited Haifa, as part of our planning for the summer conference, to view the venue and meet with the enthusiastic local organizing committee.

While we were in Israel we took the opportunity to visit the Ex Libris headquarters in Jerusalem to meet with the management team, and various other members of the Ex Libris staff. The main topics of our discussions were: Alma status and pricing; Primo Central and the Ex Libris cloud environment update; the need to strengthen Primo support, and to increase the amount of input from the user enhancement process in Primo development; the future of MetaLib; the implementation and improvement of the CKB enhancement process; preparation for the System seminar and the IGeLU conference; and of course general support and documentation issues.

The discussions were as always very open and constructive.
Jirka Kende, Chair of IGeLU

+++++ ELUNA Annual Conference, Milwaukee, May 2011

This year's annual ELUNA conference was held last month in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and was attended by over 400 library delegates from the US, Canada and up to 30 other countries, as well as a number of IGeLU delegates. Its hidden theme was "transition" - moving from old to new in a reflection of the change in the information world as a whole.

In addition to Ex Libris' corporate and product updates, roadmaps and Alma progress reports, a rich programme of over 70 customer presentations covered many aspects ranging from strategic change talks, through enhancements and NERS, to sessions on specific aspects of product usage and innovation throughout the Ex Libris product portfolio. For many delegates, the conference was preceded by a two-day Ex Libris Technical Seminar, so a long, hard week will have left delegates enthused as they flew out of Milwaukee for the year ahead until ELUNA 2012 in Salt Lake City.

Read a fuller report in the IGeLU website at <http://igelu.org/>.

+++++ Alma developers visit European libraries

During the Spring meeting between the IGeLU Steering Committee and Ex Libris management, IGeLU proposed that Ex Libris send some of their Alma developers to visit IGeLU member libraries, in order to experience the variety of workflows that different institutions use. The aim was to give developers a direct experience of the work their customers do, and to highlight those functionalities which are important and must not get lost in the transition to Alma.

Ex Libris immediately agreed to this as yet another way to learn about our needs and, in early May, three groups of Alma developers / programmers went to three different European libraries - ETH Zürich in Switzerland; Nottingham Trent University in the UK; and the Free University Berlin. The developers spent a week in each library, working primarily in the acquisition and circulation departments, but also looking at all the relevant services the libraries offered.

From both sides the visit was considered as a success. As one of the developers put it: "It was a chance for us to see how the theories we know and develop are in use in real-life. ... It was also interesting to meet the people working with different library aspects: circulation, E-resources, cataloging and acquisitions, and in different roles, systems, IT, etc."

Omri Gerson, the Alma development director, praised the initiative: "I'm sure the visit contributed to [the developers] professional and personal development....We will definitely try to replicate this model and continue to send Alma development staff to different libraries."

I accompanied the Alma developers during much of their visit to our library in Berlin, and

could see how important it is for those who program a system to understand the real workflows and to experience the needs of interoperability between the systems involved. We hope that the knowledge the Ex Libris staff took home will have a positive influence on the Alma development, and the Steering Committee will definitely support the continuation of this initiative.

Jirka Kende

+++++ IGeLU expanding into Asia

We are very pleased that we now have 4 Asian IGeLU members, after a recruitment drive to include more of our Asian colleagues in our "world-wide" family. We have also made contact with the Chinese and Korean National User Groups, both of which are very active in their countries.

In addition to Yonsei University Library in Korea, whose representatives we met in Ghent last year, we now have Keio University (Japan), and both Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Temasek Polytechnic (Singapore) as part of IGeLU.

We are very happy to welcome our new members, and look forward to working with them, and to growing our membership base in Asia.

Pat Busby, INUG Coordinator

+++++ What is happening with NERS?

NERS, the New Enhancements Request System, has been up and running for over a year now and has supported software enhancement processes for Digitool, Primo, and Aleph, and multiple rounds of CKB enhancements voting for SFX and MetaLib. The NERS team has been collecting feedback for the system over the past year. While the system is usable, we are aware of some ways in which we can make the experience better. The team met in Siena, Italy in late March to talk about system enhancements and a road map for improving existing functionality and adding new functionality. We are actively working on enhancing the system and expect to see many changes over the next 6 to 12 months.

The NERS team is also expanding. Since implementing the system we have found the need for more people to help support the system - both in communicating with users and with system developments. We are grateful to have some new volunteers including Scott Gillies from Georgia Gwinnett College, Josef Branse and Boaz Dotan from the University of Haifa, Omar Reygaert from the University of Ghent, Wonsang Lee from Yonsei University, and Laura Morse from Harvard University. We can still use more help as many hands make light work and the commitment won't be too heavy for those interested. If you would like to participate in the NERS project, please send an email to ners@igelu.org.

Finally, at ELUNA this year, we led a couple of focus group sessions to get impressions about NERS. These were very helpful and we plan to replicate a session at IGeLU in Haifa. We will also sponsor a couple of usability sessions to test how well the system meets user expectations. Please feel free to stop by if you would like to participate.

Mark Dehmlow

IGeLU SFX Product Working Group Coordinator NERS Co-Developer for the NERS Team

+++++ SFX PWG update

The SFX Product Working Group has been busy at work this year. Our biggest achievement has been co-managing the ongoing CKB enhancement request process with ELUNA. To date, we have initiated 5 voting cycles and over 30 resources have been submitted to Ex Libris for consideration. 11, including 3 regional resource, have been implemented in SFX, and while that is less than half of the resources, the others are in various stages of implementation - from needing more information to waiting on vendor participation. To date, 7 resources have been rejected from consideration - 1 because it was a duplicate target, 2 because the vendors were unresponsive, and 4 because Ex Libris determined the resources weren't appropriate for the CKB. A list of the resources that have been elected and their statuses is available in ELCommons

(<http://www.exlibrisgroup.org/display/CrossProduct/NERS+SFX+voting+results+and+regions>)

The experience from managing the enhancement process shows that not all information resources fit into SFX naturally and consequently not all submissions will make it to the SFX KB. However, the in-depth evaluation of user requests still helps the member organizations and Ex Libris to extend the SFX KB in a transparent manner. As we move the process forward, we continue to evaluate its effectiveness in close collaboration with Ex Libris.

The SFX Product Working Group met in late March in Siena, Italy. At our meeting we spent a good deal of time talking over the enhancements process for both the CKB and SFX software. We discussed how things were going and where we could make improvements in both the process and the NERS software. As a result of this conversation, we are discussing some potential changes to our planned process which we will communicate to the member base soon. At the meeting we also focused some time on ways Ex Libris support could improve in the areas of installer releases and communication. This has initiated some conversations with Ex Libris support. Finally, we also talked about how the member base can help Ex Libris, particularly in situations where vendors are being uncooperative. We are in the process of drafting some customer support letters that can be sent to vendors both as member organizations and as individual institutions in situations where customers would like to indicate the need for cooperation with Ex Libris. In the coming months, you should see the fruits of this initiative.

We are also pleased to report that we have a full slate of SFX presentations for the IGeLU conference in Haifa - 7 total customer presentations, and with the SFX PWG business meeting and the SFX Product update, that is a total of 300 minutes of SFX related content. There is still time to get in proposals for posters though, so if you are doing something interesting with SFX, please consider submitting a poster proposal.

The next major event for the SFX Product Working Group is to begin initiating a software enhancement voting process for SFX. The goal is to have the selected enhancements considered for implementation into the 4.2, 4.3 minor releases or even possibly a software

update depending on the scale of the enhancement. The process for entering enhancements into NERS will begin within the next month with voting occurring over the month of August.

Mark Dehmlow

IGeLU SFX Product Working Group Coordinator on behalf of the SFX Product Working Group

+++++ Voyager PWG update

The Voyager 8.0 combined Collaborative Testing and Field Testing has begun and will last through early June 2011. Nine customers are participating, and have reported that the testing is going well. Of those nine libraries, three are members of IGeLU, three are members of ELUNA, and three are members of both User Groups, and the institutions were picked to reflect the range and variety of libraries using Voyager - from small to very large, and running on both Solaris and Linux.

Voyager 8.0 is planned for July 2011 release.

Meanwhile the Voyager 8.2 Enhancement Review Process continues. Following the initial balloting last year, a few ambiguous enhancement requests were returned by Ex Libris to the IGeLU and ELUNA Voyager PWGs for additional clarification. The Voyager Development team will make the final review and assessment of the top 21 requests for the next release.

+++++ Aleph PWG update

Mike Ryan, Aleph PWG Coordinator, met at the ELUNA conference in early May, with the ELUNA PWG and Mark Dehmlow to continue NERS discussions. IGeLU and ELUNA will have simultaneous enhancement voting processes on NERS beginning this fall. We anticipate that we will be ready to begin accepting new Aleph enhancement requests in NERS within the next few weeks. We will not be importing leftover requests from the old ICAU database so if you have requests there that you wish to enter for consideration, please plan on re-entering them in NERS.

The Aleph PWG continues to seek a Deputy Coordinator for Enhancements. If you are interested in hearing more about this important position please contact Mike at: mryan@cclaflorida.org.

+++++ Primo PWG Update

The Primo Product Working Group met for their annual face to face meeting at the British Library in London on 24th March. The agenda focussed mainly on the enhancement voting on NERS as the first round of this completed on 21st March.

Jiri Kende attended the meeting in the place of Pat Busby, the IGeLU Steering Group member responsible for Primo, who was not able to attend. The results of the voting were discussed within the group and with Jorgen Madsen, Primo Product Development Manager at Ex-Libris, on a teleconference. Also on the agenda was an update on the Haifa conference as Naomi Greidinger from the University of Haifa is a member of the PWG.

Jeremy Acland, Metalib Product Working Group Co-ordinator, also attended the meeting in the afternoon so that the group could discuss with him the possibility of merging the Primo and Metalib groups, how and when this might take place.

The meeting was very useful and included an interesting tour of the British Library taking in the historic Kings Library in the centre of the building which we all very much enjoyed.

Mandy Stewart

+++++ Developer meets developer: Chicago 2011

Ever wondered what happens at a 'developer meets developer' meeting? I have been inspired by presentations from past meetings on EL Commons and wanted to find out more. So this year I packed a few Strathclyde developments into my suitcase, put on my best techie shoes, and headed off to Chicago for the Voyager developer meets developer meeting.

I discovered a meeting full of Voyager customers interested in customising, extending and developing their systems in exciting and interesting ways. Some people have been doing this a long time, others like me are just starting out. But whatever the level of experience it seems we have much in common, often trying to achieve the same ends: system monitoring; data manipulation; mobile applications; web services; and a more context sensitive WebVoyage are just a few of the common themes.

Alongside customer presentations we heard about new and upcoming Voyager developments directly from the developers who worked on them. Just as importantly, the Voyager developers hear the customer presentations, hopefully ensuring the understanding and ideas generation goes both ways.

I came back with new ideas, confident that we have the tools and environment to develop Voyager to meet our local needs. I am really impressed by what other customers are doing in this area and am looking forward to seeing more, either at future meetings or on ELCommons.

Judith Smart, University of Strathclyde (and Voyager Product Working Group member)

+++++ Alma focus group finishes its work

With Alma development reaching its final phase, the work of the Alma Focus Group has completed its work in contributing to the design phase of the new system. Over 80 participants from our member institutions took part in the various Alma Focus groups on Acquisition, Fulfillment and Metadata management which were later united into a joint Alma Focus Group.

During and after the numerous live sessions via Webex Ex Libris got a great amount of feedback from the Focus group members to all aspects of the product design. Susan Sterns, the leader of the focus group and the Vice President of Strategic Partnerships, highly valued the contribution of the Focus group and named some examples of the major areas where the

feedback had a great impact on the development of Alma, including: streamlining workflows; simplifying setup and configuration; integration and interoperability with external systems; simplification without losing robustness and flexibility.

The work of the Alma Focus Group ended with the release of the recordings of the Partner release 3 to the group and also here strong feedback from the members is expected. After this, new ways of collaboration on the further Alma development will need to be found. The day is also coming nearer for an Alma Product Working Group within IGeLU to be established.

Jirka Kende, IGeLU Chair