New Tasks, New Challenges

By Jirka Kende, IGeLU Chair

Coming from Eastern Europe where — at least in the official statements — we always used to fulfil the plans, I am a little reluctant to say once again, it was a great conference in Madrid! But the feedback I got via mail and personally at the conference as well as the evaluation of the questionnaires indicates very clearly that the high expectations placed in Madrid after the most successful Brno conference were fully met! I was especially pleased that some of the first-time attendees, from Australia, UK, and elsewhere, expressed great satisfaction with the conference!

In my opinion, too, the conference was very inspiring and rich in content, and Ex Libris gave us a lot of opportunities for discussing the future of our business in the years to come. We appreciate very much the forward thinking of Ex Libris and the openness with which they shared their plans and ideas with us in Madrid. I know that even during the beautiful Madrid evenings many people were sitting all over the city talking about strange things like URM and URD[2], to the surprise not only of the Madrilenians, but also to our new colleagues from Asia, where talking business at social events does not seem to be usual. But many of us simply could not stop.

So what are the new challenges for the coming year? Certainly, still improving on the conference organisation, trying to find the best mixture of general and product-specific information, sharing user experiences and networking, taking time to make new friends and to enjoy the old ones so that Helsinki will be as successful as Madrid, Brno, and Stockholm were before.

I guess I shall not be wrong if I expect the greatest challenge in the coming year to be the activities of the user community concerning the transition process to the new generation systems. The Product Working Groups of IGeLU are the best base for the combined efforts of Ex Libris and the user community to make the transition as smooth and effective as possible. Here also the collaboration with ELUNA needs to be tightened, and a first step will be taken through a joint meeting of the PWG Coordinators of IGeLU with the Product Group Chairs of ELUNA in January 2009 in Denver. Meanwhile the Steering Committee and Ex Libris have begun their discussions on how to make the transition process as transparent as possible, and about the best ways to organise the involvement of the user community in this process.

In this issue:

Conference Evaluation, Your Opinion

By Michele Newberry, IGeLU SC

We had an impressive 30% response rate to the conference evaluation questionnaire—104 forms were turned in. Many thanks to everyone who provided feedback to the organising groups. It will certainly help us with our planning for next year in Helsinki!

Regarding the venue, everyone liked Madrid and there many compliments for the CSIC campus. And a great appreciation of our CSIC hosts for all of their hard work.

The things that people didn't like all had to do with the reality that IGeLU has become too big to be held in member facilities — in essence all the comments came down to having enough room to do everything we need to do and to do it well.

87% of you were satisfied or better with the conference in general, and 80–94% were satisfied or better with the product breakout sessions. You also were positive about the performance of your organisation leaders' activities, the Steering Committee (92%), The Product Working Groups (94%), and the Special Interest Working Groups (86%). The satisfaction rate for the entire conference was 90%. Some of the comments, however, told us that there are improvements we can make, especially with respect to communication with the members. For Helsinki, we are planning a general session on the activities of the organisation to keep all of you more informed and to help new members get more acquainted with what all the units do. And we promise that all the Steering Committee members will be introduced to you on the first day!

There was very strong approval of the Next Generation ILS and the Digital Preservation presentations; 92% and 89%, respectively. Regarding the former, comments were generally very positive, but there was also a desire for more information on the URM and the direction ExLibris is taking with the current products. There were a lot of ideas to absorb and an update on this topic will definitely need to be on the programme next year.

73% of the respondents were in favour of the expanding the conference from 3 days to 3.5 days. It is too late to do this for Helsinki because the space has already been booked, but we will look at this option for 2010. Of course, we received some expected conflicting requirements: keep the meeting itself and the days short, and at the same time have more content without any conflicts in sessions for any of the products.

Speaking of 2010, we still need a volunteer for 2010: Are there are any customers interested in hosting?

There is much less enthusiasm for combining the system seminar with the IGeLU conference, although 45% were still in favour.

Some more general observations from the attendees and the response of the SC:

"Questions from the floor — speakers should introduce themselves, stand up." "…Not enough signing or housekeeping info. There should have been announcements of housekeeping info daily, e.g., lunch arrangements, email facilities."
— These are all valid comments and we'll try to do better next year.

"Why are meetings in special interest working groups not on the agenda?" "Where was ARC?"
— There were meetings of the ILS Consortia and the Special Libraries SIWGs. No proposals were received for ARC. A similar question was asked about the Primo PWG. The Steering Committee does not create PWGs until there is an expression of interest from the product's customers. Once there is, it is a simple process to create a formal group. All that is needed is that those members inform the SC of their interest and identify who they've chosen (or who has volunteered) as their coordinator and other leaders. There is some information available on the IGeLU website and of course the SC are happy to advise. However, faced with the URM and the changing ExLibris product landscape, IGeLU might have to rethink the organisational structure in the near future.

"Location of welcome reception changed — lack of communicating it. I had an old printout and was at Retiro Park."
— This was an unfortunate situation that happened at the last minute; however, that being said, we do need to do a better job of communicating (seems to be a running theme) and to use the IGeLU listserv and not just the website to inform attendees of last-minute changes like this.

"Some native English speakers talk as if everybody were native speakers."
— The native English-speaking Steering Committee members know that we're sometimes guilty of this and we apologise. We have added a line to the presenters/ moderators guidelines reminding native English speakers to talk more slowly and to avoid using jargon and colloquialisms.

Conference Evaluation, Your Opinion (cont.)

"Preparations for voting new SC or PWG members should be made in advance with candidates published a week before the meeting." "Need to change voting system so that it is not dependent on nominees attending IGeLU. Difficult for people who can't travel to IGeLU each year."

— Regarding the first comment, the SC agrees. We do need to publish the information about the candidates prior to the meeting and we will work on making that happen next year. Regarding the second question, does the membership want to have SC and PWG leaders who are not present at the conference or who cannot be present? How can we have leaders who don't attend the conference? That being said, however, we may need to consider how members who can't attend the conference can still contribute to the work of the organisation and its various groups. Any suggestions on this subject are very welcome.

CSIC (Lukas Koster)

Next Generation ILS—Some Random Thoughts

By Beate Rusch, IGeLU SC

The third IGeLU conference in Madrid was very much about the next generation of library systems. ExLibris concretised its plans for development and presented a conceptual model as well as various mock-ups, and also in small groups in a workshop-like atmosphere people sought to discuss the system of the future.

In the user community there appears to be a consensus that the present systems with the usual Web–OPAC interfaces have become too sedate for users who grew up with Google. Users who were born around 1990 and are now entering university grew up with the Internet make demands connected with retrieval and interactivity that the principle design of the current systems cannot meet — much has been written and said on this topic. With Primo ExLibris has offered a solution featuring a new user front-end, independent of the ILS, which offers many things that Internet users of today expect as a matter of course: Google search box, fast answers, ranked results, "did you mean ..." feature, tagging and more networking via Web 2.0 functionalities.

The strategically important decoupling of front-end and back-end appears to be accepted by Ex Libris customers. For example, in Madrid the British Library, Strathclyde University, and the CCLA consortium from Florida all proudly presented their implementation of Primo as a success story.

Up to now, however, the conceptions concerning the desired back-end functionalities had been vaguer. The current situation is characterised by the fact that the proportion of electronic resources in libraries is constantly growing, and traditional tasks in the libraries have been supplemented by new ones, such as digitisation and preservation. Increasingly questions present themselves about the software basis that we work with on a daily basis: Aleph and Voyager are based on concepts that are thirty years old.

Next Generation ILS—Some Random Thoughts (cont.)

When system architects are asked about a next generation system they measure the models on offer against their level of modularity and openness, and demand in unison Web services, standards, and open interfaces. Decision makers, however, calculate the costs: what will be the total cost of ownership of a new system, how can further staff reductions be made, how to optimise existing personnel resources, synchronise workflows (for electronic and print material) more efficiently, save money through re-using data, for example, bibliographic information (from publishers and other libraries), or financial data from budgetary systems. Yet all these requirements still remain rather vague; the ideal workflows on a time scale of five to ten years have simply not yet been formulated. There is also no consensus about how far libraries are in fact willing to radically redefine their customary routines, their cooperations, and also their long-standing standards (e.g., for describing metadata).

Thus ExLibris faces a big challenge: to design a back-end system which supports routines that are still being debated and formulated.

In the plans that ExLibris presented in Madrid for a "uniform resource management system" (URM), as ExLibris names it, the company generalises its concept of knowledge bases, which has been successful for electronic resources. Metadata that are globally valid are collected in accessible central knowledge bases and are activated by individual libraries instead of being created by them. This is a radical departure from traditional practises of cataloguing and the inventory of

printed material — a change that makes it necessary to redefine the significance of traditional cataloguing. Thus it was not surprising that this model did not meet with immediate and unanimous acceptance among all conference participants in Madrid. There was quite a controversial debate about the future relevance of metadata (who creates the metadata and to whom do they belong?). The issue of how the transition from old to new should be envisioned was also discussed. What obstacles will a Voyager or Aleph library have to overcome to change over to a next generation system? Which data will be doubled, and which routines will be fragmented still further? What are the reasons that argue for adoption of the new system which will convince funding agencies?

According to Oren Beit-Arie, Chief Strategy Officer at ExLibris and Kathryn Harnish, the new product manager for the URM, the new functions will first be tested on the electronic resources area whereby the ERM system Verde will be put on a new footing.

The discussions that were initiated in Madrid continue to have an effect. We shall have to give some serious thought to our workflows and procedures and concretise our "motivation for change". At this third IGeLU conference ExLibris shared their ideas with us with rare openness. We should take up their offer of dialogue and use every opportunity to give ExLibris access to our discussions, not least in order to structure the transition period together and to smooth the paths of migration. It is an exciting discussion.

URM (Flickr, Mikelikebike)

IGeLU People, Pictures / Quotes

Edward has attended two IGeLU conferences and is a member of the ELUNA Steering Committee. There are several reasons for him to visit the conferences. First, there are the meetings between the ELUNA SC and the IGeLU SC. There is also the merger between ExLibris and Endeavor.

Edward Corrado,
Binghamton Univ. USA

- If you only attend the ELUNA meetings you miss the international aspects and there are many international students where I work. What's more it's fun to visit different places and meet people!

Edward finds URM an ambitious product — if they can pull it off it's a great approach. But there are things to worry about, for example, the technical abilities and directions of libraries.

Huw has visited two IGeLU conferences and works with Voyager. He finds the conferences interesting because of the presentations. You meet somebody else who has got the same problem as you — but has solved it. Many problems are shared and you can reach common solutions. The conferences are also a good opportunity to visit beautiful European cities!

Huw Jones,
Cambridge Univ. Library, UK

The URM is in principle a good idea and seems to be the right way to go. But then he starts to think of his own institution and how it is going to work in their particular reality. Moving from an idea to a reality is particularly tricky. You have to translate the way you work today and then start again working in a new environment.

Daniel has participated in two IGeLU conferences and finds it important to meet representatives from ExLibris and to network with colleagues. This is especially important when you have a local distributor. Future development is an important issue for the conferences.

Daniel Forsman,
Jönköping Univ. Library, Sweden

He likes the conceptual model of the URM system, but thinks that there will be some trouble when it is put into practice. How will local exceptions be handled? And what about read/write access to the common metadata (compare with the SFX knowledge base where changes are sent to the global base)?

This is Emanuela's second IGeLU conference and she likes sharing experience and knowledge. The union makes the force. She is interested in the discussion about next generation ILS, presentations from different libraries, question and answer sessions, and the exchange with ExLibris.

Emanuela Pisanu,
Univ. of Siena, Italy

- The URM system seems like a nice dream, but I don't know about it in reality. It is different in each national context. The knowledge base seems Anglo-American oriented therefore she wonders if this will be good for the Europeans.

Interviews: Ulrika Domellöf Mattsson

Photos: Ragnar Helin

IGeLU People, Pictures / Quotes

Sigrun has attended all three IGeLU conferences. She thinks it is important to know what is happening. Iceland is a bit isolated which is why it is necessary to have contact with and network with other people. Networking is definitely very important. She is interested in Aleph issues and new ideas being introduced.

- Overall, the idea of the URM system is good. But they will have to do a lot more work on, for example, metadata and consortia issues.

Sigrun Hauksdottir, Copnsortium of Icelandic Libraries, Iceland

Fiona works with Voyager; she used to attend the Endeavor conferences and gained a lot from them. That is why she wanted to visit her first IGeLU conference and see what it was like. It is interesting to see different needs, different people and different discussions. It is important to hear about the development of the new URM, the strategy plans, and to hear people talk about those issues.

Fiona Burton, Macquire Univ. Library, Australia

The URM system looks interesting. The separation between search/back office looks good but one needs more information.

Yongmin Lee, Yonsei Univ. Library, South Corea – Cheolmin Cho, Yonsei Univ. Library, South Corea

Cheolmin and Yongmin are first-time participants at the conference. They find it important for customers to share information. They are in the process of implementing Aleph 20 and all of the ExLibris products — so we can learn a lot! They had their own presentation during the conference and they find the product information important.

URM is a big issue for the future.

Vera and Nina have worked with Aleph since 2003 but this is their first IGeLU conference. The conference is a way to find new information, and it was interesting to hear about the new direction of library systems. Their library is the National Library of Russia and they are about to migrate from Aleph version 14 to 18. The most important issues are product information, URM, Primo, SFX, and the relations between the products.

About the URM: - We will wait and listen until we know more.

Vera Kazakova, Russian State Library, Russian Federation – Nina Chub, Russian State Library, Russian Federation

Now, Voyager

By Michale Fake, Voyager Product Working Group Co-ordinator

2008 was only the second year we Voyageurs have been members of IGeLU, so it was encouraging to see so many new representatives of Voyager sites at the Madrid meeting. Several delegates had travelled a very long way indeed — particularly the Australian and New Zealand members — and it was very pleasing also to see several North American Voyager customers, including the chair of ELUNA, Janet Lute, taking the time to come to the Madrid conference.

The conference was an excellent opportunity for Voyager users to share their experiences of working with the system, but perhaps more significantly their experiences of working with a supplier that had undergone such dramatic changes over the last couple of years, and was preparing to make an even more dramatic gamble in the shape of the URM.

In his presentation **Experiences of the Voyager 7 Field Testing and Other Topics**, Bob Trotter of the University of Georgia, USA, gave a useful summary of the pitfalls and triumphs of the field testing process. Such testing has of course been a standard part of the Voyager release schedule for many years, but it was interesting to hear how this was now integrating with the new collaborative testing process pioneered by Ex Libris (in collaboration with IGeLU) for Voyager 7. The **Voyager Business Meeting** chaired by Michael Fake, London School of Economics, UK, gave the new Voyager Product Working Group a chance to highlight the work that has been going on since the Group was formed late in 2007. Madrid was the first time that the PWG had met face-to-face, but plenty of work had been taking place via web and phone over the course of the year, and the Group was able to present some important developments on Global Data Change, the collaborative testing, and on a future enhancement process.

Bob Trotter returned later in the conference to give some practical tips on Voyager reporting techniques in his talk **Let the Voyager Reporting System Work for You**. This was followed by the presentation **How to Take a Fiscal Snapshot of Voyager Acquisitions: Using Access to Capture Data**, by Janet Lute of Princeton — both of these will have helped many Voyageurs get a handle on one of the perennial headaches of any ILS — getting useful management information out of a mass of data in a way that is straightforward and doesn't require complex programming.

Peter Price, of the University of Plymouth UK, presented **Cracking the Code — Decrypting Voyager and passing signals to institutional systems**, which gave a useful overview of some of the tricks involved in getting large institutional systems to talk to each other, and which gave the audience some interesting ideas for how Voyager can be made to integrate more effectively with other systems. This was followed by Huw Jones of Cambridge University, who presented **From Data to Discovery — Building automated cataloguing tools with Perl**, an insight into building relatively straightforward perl code into powerful tools that can be used to clean out the murkier corners of our catalogue databases.

One essential session was the **Voyager Product Update and Q&A** by Mike Dicus of ExLibris, where Mike gave an interesting tour of the new Voyager 7, and outlined the development plans for Voyager 8 and beyond. This led onto the question and answer session. Not surprisingly several questions also focused on the long-term plans for Voyager, how it would continue to be integrated with ExLibris's other products, and how and when it would eventually be superseded by the URM.

Voyager had a cameo in several other presentations: Ed Corrado of Binghamton University, USA, and a stalwart Voyageur until his recent move to an Aleph library, presented a very useful guide to RSS in **RSS — A to V: Using RSS feed with Aleph and Voyager**, which pointed out some of the innovative ways that libraries around the world are using simple RSS technologies to disseminate information and draw users into their collections. A little more controversially, Esa Kurki of the National Library of Finland presented **Rescuing a sinking ship: Replacing Voyager Universal Catalog with Aleph Central Catalog**, which discussed the reasoning behind, and the practicalities of, the Finnish move away from the Voyager Universal Catalog and over to the Aleph product.

Beyond the main meeting rooms Nikki Herriott of the University of Gloucestershire, UK, gave a poster presentation **If I were the only librarian in the world**, which discussed some of the pros and cons of working with both Aleph and Voyager. At the same time Voyager libraries were well represented at the various **Next Generation ILS** discussion groups, which fed into the main theme of the conference: the URM. These discussions were all

Products and Experiences

Now, Voyager (cont.)

attended by Kathryn Harnish and Oren Beit-Arie of ExLibris, so it was again encouraging to see Voyager delegates taking a lead in several of the discussions.

Simon Huggard and Lesley Gray, interim members of the Steering Committee, came to the end of their terms at the Madrid conference after a period of sterling work; however, Voyager customers should be pleased that Voyager libraries continue to be well represented on the Steering Committee with **Clare Whittaker** of the Scottish Digital Library Consortia continuing her role, and **Fiona Burton** of Macquarie University, Australia, elected to the Committee.

In all, it was an excellent conference for those of us who are new to IGeLU, and as Voyager customers it was good to see how much a part of the IGeLU community we're already becoming. See you all in Helsinki!

On Aleph

By Gerard Bennett, ALEPH PWG Coordinator

In the grounds of the Spanish Council for Scientific Research where the conference took place, there was a curious modern monumental sculpture — a twisting, branching, arching structure, which might stand as a metaphor for a conference that ramified in many directions, yet had an overarching shape (dominated by the "NextGen ILS"), which was not finished, but evolving. Focusing on the Aleph branch, yet noting its ramifications with the other branches, how can we sum it up?

In any account pride of place must go to the user presentations, which provided much of interest, especially for those keen on extending and integrating user-focused aspects. Mark Dehmlow from Notre Dame explained how they were anticipating the new generation system by incorporating features proper to it into the OPAC and doing so now. And Daniel Forsman from Jonkoping University Library, Sweden, startled us again (as he did at last year's conference) by showing how much can be achieved with existing technology, with the twin aims of bringing the library services to the users where they are (a matter of disintegrating parts of Aleph and other systems to place in the Web environments that users choose) as well as presenting an integrated graphical and organised interface to library services (integrating Aleph with MetaLib, SFX, the library Web site, and other systems). Staying on the user interface theme, Edward Corrado from Binghamton University, explored the rich variety of uses that

RSS feeds allow and how to create them for Aleph (and for Voyager). Away from the user interface strand, Pascal Calarco, also from Notre Dame, grappled with an issue that is creating many a headache for technical services staff — how to get vendor-supplied e-books into the catalogue. But for Notre Dame, every record set provides a new adventure, not a headache, and Pascal had much to teach us not only about workflows and automated tools, but also how to rise to this now constant challenge.

The poster from Günter Hupfer, HBZ, Germany, on ALEPH 500: Gateways and interfaces to/from different other software systems, also anticipated NextGen systems in demonstrating complex flows of metadata between homogeneous and heterogeneous software systems, a Metadata Management System "avant le lettre", while also showing the present-day possibilities in Aleph.

In the Aleph presentations from ExLibris, the Aleph Update and the Aleph Q&A, both presented by Karen Groves, there was also much that was positive. Karen reviewed the new features of v19 and v20, stated the company's commitment to v21 and beyond, and detailed the new version release approach being adopted from v20. With this approach (already established for MetaLib) version 20 will comprise a major release (may require Oracle and/or major GUI changes) delivered via upgrade kit, followed by two minor releases (no

On Aleph (cont.)

database or mandatory GUI changes) delivered by service pack, plus quarterly SPs (bug fixes only). Karen stressed the advantages of this approach — more enhancements in the version overall than could be delivered with a single release, more flexibility for the customer in choosing when to upgrade. Further, all releases will be delivered worldwide. (On the small point of the quarterly SPs a number of users expressed concern after the session — a quarterly SP is far too long a period when the version is newly released and fixes are urgently needed!)

Despite the positive answers to some of the topics in the Q&A there was disappointment with the confirmation that the OPAC is not going to be made accessible in v20, and with the lack of any development path for ARC. Again, in the general Q&A when the question of investment in Aleph development came up vis a vis the adoption of projects such as that bringing Aleph OPAC functionality into Primo at the expense of OPAC accessibility (an old product/new product clash), ExLibris stressed the investment in integrating and interoperating Aleph with other systems. There is a distinction to be made, however, between such development effort that may benefit all Aleph customers (e.g., integration of Aleph with external financial systems) and that which can only benefit Primo customers.

The Aleph Business Meeting welcomed five new members to the module coordinator group, and besides the Coordinator's review of the year, heard Mike Ryan sum up the enhancement work of the group and the schedule for the coming year, and Marcus Zerbst discuss website work and the new wiki.

Outside the main conference, Aleph figured in the NextGen discussion groups, in meetings with the IGeLU SC, with other PWG coordinators, and with national user group representatives. Development cooperation, collaborative testing, and the future of existing products in the light of the URM dominated here. The input into the NextGen discussions from Aleph users was very prominent, and gave rise to many probing questions about issues ranging from the cost of transition, to types of indexing, to the management of user data, to the native search and discovery that the back-end system will have. Scepticism and enthusiasm in equal measure.

Beyond the conference centre the broad thoroughfare of the Paseo de la Castellana took one through many magnificent squares to the treasures of the Prado and the Reina Sofia. Another kind of ramification and many stirring sights to set aside ruminations on the future for Aleph and the ILS.

Rocasolano

Jorge Manrique

Enviro Sci-Mtg

Products and Experiences

On SFX

By Mark Dehmlow, IGeLU SFX Product Working Group Coordinator

Now that the annual IGeLU conference is over and everyone is back to their normal work, it is a good time to begin thinking about the year ahead and what is in store for the SFX Product Working Group.

This year was yet another busy one for the SFX Product Working Group, and I want to thank our working group members for their tireless efforts, Inga Overkamp from the Max Planck Digital Library in Germany, Nikki Crowster from the CALICO consortium in South Africa, and Carol Fuchs and Luba Gornstein from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. As we say goodbye to Carol and Luba, we are fortunate to have some new volunteers join us, Matthias Kratzer from the Bavarian State Library in Germany, Jaclyn Bedoya from Napier University in Scotland, and Liesbeth Oskamp from the National Library of the Netherlands. For another year, we have a strong team and I look forward to our work ahead.

Last year, we focused largely on organizing the working group, getting acquainted with the SFX product managers, discussing the future of SFX, and beginning some work on the CKB enhancements process, in addition to organizing the SFX portion of the annual conference and helping to organize the new wiki. This coming year we plan to focus on the upcoming SFX version 4 release and the related collaborative testing, the CKB enhancements process, and continuing our collaborative work with both ELUNA and ExLibris.

SFX Product Group related questions, comments, or recommendations are welcome and can be sent to sfx@igelu.org.

A crowded opening ceremony on Sunday

A crowded seminar on Tuesday

Questions & Answers

Products
and
Experiences

Next Generation – On MetaLib

By Lukas Koster, IGeLU SC

From the perspective of MetaLib customers, the IGeLU 2008 conference in Madrid can be characterised as the "Next Generation" meeting.

First, there was the unexpected announcement by Ex-Libris product manager Karen Groves at the MetaLib Product Update session that MetaLib minor release 4.3, scheduled for spring 2009, was to be the last official release for the MetaLib product. The future lies in a "next generation metasearch tool" with a completely re-designed metasearch engine, and Primo, with meta-search or "remote search" option only, as user interface.

OK, we could have seen it coming: there was talk of this new "URM" project, and there were also some MetaLib User interface enhancement requests that received the official ExLibris comment "not on MetaLib's roadmap; functionality is provided in Primo". But nevertheless it still took us by surprise.

To be honest, a complete re-design of the metasearching back-end appears to be a very welcome and useful step. And Primo offers front-end functionality that MetaLib customers have been dreaming of for quite some time now.

Second, in the customer presentations during the break out sessions, there was considerable emphasis on extending MetaLib with either front-end Web 2.0-like functionality, or back-end usage data reporting tools, as well as several integration issues. Here we also see evidence of users' needs for "next generation" functionality.

A third indicator can be found in the Report on the first MetaLib Enhancement Request Procedure, presented at the MetaLib PWG Business Meeting. Although 11 requests will be implemented in release 4.3, or have already been implemented in service packs, a large number of enhancements were designated "too large", "not on roadmap", etc.

As a matter of fact, Karen Groves explicitly stated that the nature of the enhancement requests was one of the reasons for deciding upon the "next generation metasearch tool".

Finally, we are also facing a "next generation" MetaLib Product Working Group. In Madrid the current PWG Coordinator Lukas Koster was elected as a new mem-

Next generation (Flickr, Ocean.Flynn)

ber of the IGeLU Steering Committee. This means that the PWG needs a new Coordinator and preferably also one or two new Working Body members.

Fortunately, after the conference current PWG Working Body member Meg Bate (AARLIN, Melbourne, Australia) agreed to take over as Coordinator, and two new people have joined the team. They are:

Stefan Lohrum, KOBV Berlin, Germany

André Keyzer, Library of the University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Together with the two other current Working Body members, Jeremy Acland (Queen Mary University of London) and Ari Rouvari (National Library of Finland), they will make a great team.

Entrance to the Conference Venue

On Primo

By Mandy Stewart, British Library

At the PRIMO break out session Gilad Gal, PRIMO Product Manager, gave a presentation on the Road Map for PRIMO versions for the future followed by three separate presentations by organisations which are implementing PRIMO now.

Mandy Stewart, Resource Discovery Projects Manager at the British Library, gave the first presentation. This focused on the fact that as a national library the British Library has different issues from university libraries. The BL also has some interesting catalogues that it is planning to load, including the National Sound Archive database and the new Archives and Manuscripts database. The presentation gave information on how the project has progressed, some issues the BL encountered, and future plans.

There was also some information about managing iterative projects as this is becoming a more common way of running IT projects; the BL have discussed how this differs from standard implementation projects and the problems it presents.

Nick Joint, Head of Reference and Information at the University of Strathclyde, gave a presentation entitled "SUPrimo at the University of Strathclyde: Less is More". This presentation summarised the broad range of reasons for their decision to implement PRIMO. There were some insights into their assessment of PRIMO's functionality, describing how PRIMO fits in with recent strategic initiatives aimed at re-invigorating the Library service at Strathclyde with enhanced digital content, to be made available via a radically improved search and retrieval mechanism (PRIMO, with a planned later installation of Metalib).

The final presentation was by Gary Johnson from the College Center for Library Automation in Florida, USA. This organisation hosts PRIMO as a consortium for 28 institutions with 74 campus libraries. It is not a library in itself and has no patrons or materials. Gary demonstrated some of the varied college interfaces that have been set up and explained how these have been implemented and how they are planning to manage the project going forward.

The session was well attended and the joint Question and Answer session raised some interesting points — not all of which were answerable!

Special, secure, and beautiful

By Jesus Bustamente, Special Libraries Special Interest Working Group

The Special Libraries SIWG hosted its second meeting on 9 September 2008 at the Third IGeLU Conference in Madrid. The group was created in 2006 to represent special libraries in their dealings with IGeLU and Ex-Libris. Even though still young, it has found its own place as a SIWG of IGeLU, and it currently has members from special libraries and documentation centres of European Union organisations, national banks, and corporate libraries.

The 2008 meeting provided participants with a new opportunity to debate the role of the Special Libraries SIWG, as well as the needs of our libraries and documentation centres. Among the issues discussed were the need for multilingual products and user interfaces, the accessibility of the ALEPH web OPAC, as well as the issues deriving from the high-security environments in which some special libraries operate (e.g., national banks).

Our debate generated ideas and strategies of how we can be more effective in promoting the enhancement requests from our libraries. We also identified a need for further definition of the role of the SIWGs (vis à vis product groups or national and regional user groups) within IGeLU itself. As our next steps, the group agreed to share ideas and solutions, and hopes to set up a mailing list or discussion group.

You can read more about the Special Libraries SIWG on the IGeLU web site: http://igelu.org/special-interest-working-groups/special-libraries. If your library is interested in participating in the Special Libraries SIWG, please contact jesus.bustamante@cedefop.europa.eu.

Verde Now and Ever

By Andreas Sabisch, Richard Cross, and Christina Anastasopoulou, Verde PWG Working Body

Around 40 attendees participated in the two Verde sessions, but only a few in the business meeting of the PWG. The reason: many participants interested in Verde are either new to the product or at an early stage of the implementation cycle, and thus not ready to participate actively in the PWG.

PWG elections

At the business meeting, the following members of the Verde PWG working body were elected:

Andreas Sabisch, Coordinator

Richard Cross, Deputy Coordinator

Christina Anastasopoulou, Communication

Verde update

The Verde update session was attended by 42 participants (including 8 ExLibris representatives).

The main issues in brief:

(a)   The principal strategic goals remain:

- URD**2 as a user interface (Primo ++)
- URM as back office, now in two steps, URM 1 (aim: end 2009) for licensed resources,
  URM 2 for the rest (aim: end 2010)
- a Data Source component, including the CKB from different products
- 'beyond' for data preservation
- the Open Source platform 'El Commons'

Developments in the existing products must fit in to the URM strategy.

(b) Verde 2 will continue with small enhancements and bug fixes every three months. (Open question: how often will be the update from SFX?) Version 3 of Verde will not be developed any more. Instead, existing Verde customers will be upgraded without any additional costs to URM 1.

(c) Verde reporting functionality will integrate with the BIRT software (http://www.eclipse.org/birt/phoenix/), which will be used for Primo as well.

(d) SFX4 has been announced for mid 2009. The main change will be a new database design with some important features and ready for use with URM 1 / Verde 2.

(e) The main features of the new database:

- New tools to support collection management.
- More targets for the KB — focus on eBooks.
- More frequent and seamless KB updates.
- Enhanced eBook support.

(f) A transition strategy from old to new products is necessary, but not available yet. For Verde / URM 1 this will not be available before the beginning of 2009.

Verde Q&A and session presentations

The Verde Q&A session at the IGeLU 2008 conference will available soon via the IGeLU website, as well as the PowerPoint presentations from the Verde sessions.

Other matters of interest

Initial analysis of the ExLibris Customer Satisfaction Survey was presented to the conference.

The System Seminar will be held in Tel Aviv, Israel at the end of March or beginning of April 2009: the program will be published and registration opens at the beginning of December 2008. Customer input is wanted!

Pivotal will incorporate "Me Too" functionality, whereby enhancements requests already submitted can be flagged by other sites as of interest.

The customer platform El Commons, comprising a Developer Zone and a user wiki, has now been launched. We will send a separate mail when the Verde section goes live.

Products
and
Experiences

From DigiTool and DPS too...

By Guido Goedemé, IGeLU DigiTool PWG Coordinator

Digital asset management was not an unimportant item at the 3rd IGeLU conference. In the ExLibris range of products, it is realised by DigiTool and libraries were interested to know how the product would develop in relation to the new digital preservation system.

And, it must be said, the new product looks very promising. Steve Knight, Associate Director National Digital Library of the National Library of New Zealand gave an impressive talk: "Securing the Future: Digital Preservation at the National Library of New Zealand". Among many other points, he talked about the digital preservation system development with ExLibris and the relationship with DigiTool and development of the new system. Since August 2006, New Zealand depositing electronic documents in the National Library is a legal requirement, and the digital preservation system has to ensure access to the documents "in perpetuity". One would expect that the technical infrastructure could be delivered by DigiTool; however, an analysis of DigiTool versus the Library's functional requirements highlighted over 70 gaps, over 9 categories. As a consequence, ExLibris and the National Library of New Zealand started to develop DPS.

The goals of DPS were presented by Yaniv Levi, DPS Product Manager, at the first DigiTool break out session, and Tomer Paz, DigiTool Product Manager, presented the DigiTool road map for the near future. After the presentations Marc Daubach, corporate VP and GM Europe, indicated that DigiTool and DPS will soon evolve into one system. The price setting of the new system will depend on the initial agreements between ExLibris and clients, including workflows, functionalities, volumes, and so on. Obviously, there is a lot of stuff still to be discussed, including the name of the new system.

The other DigiTool break out sessions were less exciting, but also interesting as a whole. Tomer Paz highlighted the DigiTool enhancements that will be installed in the next service packs or new versions. What he said about DigiTool harvesting by Google was not entirely what we had expected.

The presentations of Matthias Gross about DigiTool as a SFX target, and of Kevin Nguyen concerning the use of handles were technical. Matthias is constantly searching for connections between the different ExLibris components (remember his talk about DigiTool and Aleph at the Brno conference?), and Kevin talked about a high level application of DigiTool functionalities. Personally, I was very pleased with the talk of Bárbara de Solano and the results of her work at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, because we work on similar projects in similar conditions: an important part of The Biblioteca Digital Hispanica is realised with DigiTool, and the Bibliotheca Nacional is not an Aleph user. De Koninklijke Bibliotheek will partly use DigiTool for Belgica and Aleph is not used for the library management functions.

Electronic books were already a topic at the Brno conference; at this meeting there was a report of the e-book Focus Group, and the 4th DigiTool break out session, presented as a panel discussion, was also related to this topic. Joe Shubitowsky of the Getty Research Institute is involved in a book-digitising project, and Pascal Calarco will store digitised documents that are freely accessible on the Internet in a local repository. Pascal suggested creating an e-book focus group for DigiTool users; this idea has to be developed in the future. In the last break out session, Peter Verhaar and Eugénia Santos reported on user experiences at their institutions, Leiden and the University of Lisbon, respectively.

Two years ago, at the 1st IGeLU conference in Stockholm, we had one DigiTool break out session and no presentations. At this conference we had five break out sessions, including important information from ExLibris, a panel discussion, and high level presentations. I had the impression that most DigiTool colleagues were very pleased with the conference programme and its realisation. There were also some very helpful external factors: Madrid is a beautiful city, and the weather was excellent. This is very important for those of us who are from the north, the west, or from the low countries by the North Sea.

How Clare Met a Dancing Policeman

By Clare Whittaker, IGeLU SC

Is it possible to have a relatively good experience of having your bag stolen? That's what happened to me in Madrid. I felt really stupid — it's not as though I hadn't been warned to keep an eye on my things. Anyway, my bag was stolen from under my chair in a restaurant. It was done without me even noticing. None of my companions saw a thing, and in the scheme of things it wasn't bad — no-one was hurt, or even jostled.

I don't remember much about the next half hour or so, except I think I was probably a bit hyper. I was relieved that I was with friends, and that my bag contained a lot less than it would if I'd been at home in Edinburgh. Even so, my wallet was gone, and my phone, and worst of all — my passport. I was due to fly home the following day.

At the police station Salamanca, I found myself using those sentences you never want to use from your phrasebook. Luckily for me, there was an English-speaking officer on the end of a phone who took my statement in English and gave me a reference number which allowed the officer on duty to print out the crime report in Spanish on the spot. I was out of the station in about 45 minutes — I'm not sure it would have been that efficient at home. I'm also quite certain that the Edinburgh police don't enjoy their jobs as much as the man in Salamanca. He was dancing to the radio in his seat as he worked.

The next day I was first in line at the British consulate and was given an emergency passport to get me home. Although it was very official and Frightfully British I couldn't quite believe that I was going home with only a sheet of A4 as my ID. I needn't have worried. As soon as they saw my emergency passport all the airport staff were very, very sympathetic. I got home as planned.

Another dancing policeman
(Flickr, Gitboy)

Madrid
Short
Stories

How I Got Nearly Arrested for a Kiss

By Peter Klien, The Austrian Library Network, Comments by Lukas Koster, IGeLU SC

What I would not have expected: kissing in Spain can be dangerous. And I am not speaking about Spanish women. Nobody would be surprised that kissing Spanish women might be a cause of disaster; as we all know they can be truly "emocional"! But I am speaking about kissing grass. Well — here is the whole story.

After my arrival in Madrid, the first place I visited (to be accurate: the first place *after* dropping off my suitcase at the hotel) was somewhere I had been thousands of times before, although only on television: the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium of Real Madrid's football team.

[*On Saturday we went to visit the Real Madrid football (for North Americans: "soccer") stadium Santiago Bernabeu, with a small group of football fans: Roxana, Marcus, Mark, Peter, and I. Of the group, Peter is by far the most fanatical football fan; he supports Rapid Wien (Vienna) and the Austrian national team, both of which hardly ever win. This is probably the reason why a visit to the sanctuary of one of the world's most successful football clubs almost drove him crazy.*]

As we were there together with some friends, we booked a stadium tour. First, it gave us an astonishing panoramic view inside the stadium, and then took us to the club's trophy room with its highly impressive collection of many different national and international cups.

[*The tour started at the top of the highest tier, took in the Real Madrid museum with all the trophies and "official replicas" of the European Champions League, and then we finally reached the inner sanctuary of the stadium: the pitch with the turf that has been touched by the feet of gods like David Beckham, Van Nistelrooy, Figo, Zidane, and Ronaldo.*]

And there it happened.

[*There were uniformed guards everywhere, watching all our moves closely. Suddenly, Peter kneeled down, face towards the grass, and started bending over.*]

All of a sudden I was overwhelmed by a force that compelled me to fall to my knees, lean over the barrier, and — as a sign of respect — solemnly kiss the pitch. Although still overwhelmed by my feelings, I im-

mediately heard voices from far away: "ino! ioiga! ino!". But it was not the voices of the Gods of Football who were unwilling to accept me into the holy players' community — as I had assumed at first. It was the voices of two stewards who were shouting at me in the very real (Real) world. One (I am sorry to say) quite rude Spanish lady jumped at me, took my arm, opened a gate, and began to lead me outside the stadium.

[*A small woman in uniform, who looked very angry indeed*]

While doing so, she did not stop hurling thousands of harsh Spanish words at my still dreamy head. I realised that I needed to put on a very upset face and that I'd better repeat "so sorry! so sorry!" for a couple of minutes. But it was only with the help of my friends that in the end I was happily rescued from this Real (real) furia.

[*I knew straight away what to do to avoid an international diplomatic incident. I confronted the guard, demanding that she release Peter, assisted by my official interpreter Roxana (she speaks Spanish quite well), and explaining that he was a little dumb and a mental case.*

The guard recognised my authority and handed Peter over to me after I had assured her that we would keep an eye on him.]

And how lucky I was to have been allowed to continue the tour! Next, it took us very, very close to where the football stars usually are on match days: benches, players' tunnel, and dressing rooms. We even caught a glimpse of the silver Real Madrid urinals, which I was not tempted to kiss by the way. I am telling you this to show you that psychologically I seem to be quite alright. Although now I might get a little bit frightened the next time I reach out to kiss a piece of grass somewhere…

[*Unfortunately, there is no evidence of this adventure, because Mark was forced by another guard to delete the photos he had taken of the affair.*

That night the Austrian national football team beat former European and World Champion France in a world championship qualification match and gave Peter his revenge. But more importantly: we had saved the moderator of the general Q&A session.]

Breakfast Experiences

By Lukas Koster, IGeLU SC

I have attended quite a number of conferences over the past five years, but this was the first time that I saw so many breakfast meetings. I was familiar with lunch and dinner meetings during these events; yes, I have even organised a few myself, but until now I have not experienced any breakfast meetings other than gathering together with the purpose of having coffee, orange juice, eggs, and toast to recover from the previous night's get-together and prepare for a new challenging day of presentations.

Maybe this phenomenon was stimulated by Madrid's specific breakfast culture, where you go out to a cafe for coffee and sweets or croissants, maybe it was something else, but the fact remains that a lot of work was done and decisions were made between 7:30 and 9:00 AM. At least this was the case in the Café & Té bar at the corner of Goya and Velázquez, five minutes' walk from the Hostal Don Diego, where a lot of IGeLU 2008 participants were staying.

During the days of the conference, each morning groups of three to five people could be seen sitting at a table surrounded by notepads, laptops, and papers, while enjoying a café solo or americano and a cheese and ham toasted sandwich or a chocolate donut. After finishing their business they would grab a taxi, hop on a bus, or disappear into the metro station around the corner to go to the conference venue.

Sunday morning before the conference at around ten o'clock I stumbled upon a meeting of the SFX PWG coordinator and members preparing the SFX Business meeting later that week, before leaving for the joint Steering Committee and PWG coordinators and INUG meeting at the National Library of Spain at 11 AM.

On Tuesday morning I myself participated in a meeting with Fabrizio di Fuccia, Mark Dehmlow, and Pascal Calarco exploring the options of extending the existing Aleph Enhancement Request system into a new general all-product system.

Wednesday morning saw a Notre Dame working breakfast where two presentations to be held that morning were adapted to the latest ExLibris announcements.

Given the fact that conference days lasted until 7 PM or even 7:30 PM, you can easily say that quite a few participants were active for 12 hours every day. And it did not end there: after a walk home and a refreshing shower people gathered again over tapas and beer or wine to continue discussions until after midnight. My last day of sessions and discussions ended at 4 AM, although I must confess that the topics of conversation had shifted away from digital libraries by that time.

My last breakfast meeting was with myself.

Social event at Madrid Casa Monico (Marta Fialho Nogueira)

Madrid
Short
Stories

Open Platform / EL-Commons

Open Platform Strategy

By Lukas Koster, IGeLU SC

In Madrid ExLibris officially announced its Open Platform Strategy. This program enables a kind of Open Source community on top of the ExLibris commercial product suite, by:

- providing the community with open interfaces, APIs to all existing and future products, through which these products can be linked to from all kinds of other applications;

- providing a platform for facilitating collaboration and sharing between customers utilising these open interfaces; see: EL Commons at: http://www.exlibrisgroup.org

Within this program there will be a series of Developers' Meetings at ExLibris headquarters: the first will take place November 12–13 in Jerusalem, focusing on Aleph, MetaLib, SFX, and Primo. Another meeting is planned to be held at the Chicago office to deal with issues related to Voyager.

See:

http://www.exlibrisgroup.com/default.asp?catid=
{916AFF5B-CA4A-48FD-AD54-9AD2ADADEB88}
&details_type=1&itemid={16EB0CCC-55B2-4EF2-AFE7
-D70A4587A13A}

EL Commons

By Beate Rusch, IGeLU SC

With the website EL Commons ExLibris

http://www.exlibrisgroup.org

is offering a new sharing platform, which includes a customer wiki and a developer zone to upload user-developed software. The wiki is managed by volunteers from IGeLU and ELUNA, and the developer zone is administered by ExLibris. All customers are entitled to login to EL Commons with their Docportal ID. Please note that the password is case sensitive. In case of any problems (members of consortia may encounter difficulties) contact Ex Libris at:

elcommons@exlibrisgroup.com

Lunch in the Cloister

Short News

More Short News

By Beate Rusch, IGeLU SC

ExLibris' New Owner

Since August 2008 ExLibris has a new owner: Leeds Equity Partners, a New York-based private equity firm. After barely two years Francisco Partners sold their ExLibris shares for an undisclosed sum. Together with ExLibris, Leeds Equity owns eight companies — all in the information industry.

According to Matti Shem Tov, president and CEO of the ExLibris Group, the corporate structure will remain unchanged. He comments: "This change in ownership will provide ExLibris with additional resources for accelerating our current and future product strategies and our plans for international expansion."

More information:

http://www.leedsequity.com/

http://www.exlibrisgroup.com/default.asp?catid= {916AFF5B-CA4A-48FD-AD54-9AD2ADADEB88} &details_type=1&itemid={9ED4A073-B805-463B-B29C -801418FE1779}

New IGeLU Steering Committee

At the 3rd IGeLU Conference in Madrid the members voted on the three vacant positions in the IGeLU Steering Committee. Michele Newberry from the Florida Consortium for Library Automation (FCLA) was re-elected for a further term. Michele has served on the committee before as a committed ALEPH liaison and as a patient and thoughtful coordinator of the conference program.

Newly elected is Fiona Burton from Macquarie University Library, Sydney, Australia. Fiona is Digital Repository Project Manager and has long years of experiences with Voyager, Meridian, and Open URL Resolvers. Fiona has helped ANZREG (Australia & New Zealand Regional ExLibris Group) to become established.

The third new committee member is Lukas Koster, head of the Library Systems Department of the Library of the University of Amsterdam. Lukas is well known in the IGeLU community for his committed work as coordinator of the MetaLib Product Working Group.

Together with the new members, the Steering Committee is now as follows:

- Jirka Kende, Free University of Berlin, Chair, Verde Liaison
- Fiona Burton, Macquarie University, DigiTool Liaison, Voyager Liaison
- Lukas Koster, Library of the University of Amsterdam, SFX Liaison
- Michele Newberry, Florida Center for Library Automation, Aleph Liaison
- Beate Rusch, KOBV Consortium, MetaLib Liaison
- Clare Whittaker, Scottish Digital Library Consortium, Voyager Liaison

New MetaLib Product Working Group Coordinator Meg Bate

Meg Bate is a member of the AARLIN team. AARLIN is a cooperative venture of eleven Australian University Libraries and we deliver to each Library a discovery portal to assist in accessing their electronic resources. In this endeavour AARLIN is using ExLibris' MetaLib, X-server, and SFX software.

Meg joined AARLIN in 2002 and since then she has continually supported both SFX and MetaLib. Thus she has seen MetaLib change from ML2 to ML4, and SFX change from v2 to v3.

Meg's librarianship background is in reference, and when looking and supporting these products her focus is always from a user's perspective.

AARLIN has been a member of IGeLU for the last four years and Meg joined the MetaLib PWG at the beginning of 2007. On a personal note, Meg is a keen cross-country skier and her current aim is to become a Worldloppet Master Skier. To do this she needs to ski in ten different Worldloppet races; so far Meg has completed six.

Short News

More Short News (cont.)

ALEPH Product Working Group Coordinator Gerard Bennett re-elected

With Gerard Bennett from Westminster University, London, the new ALEPH Product Working Group Coordinator is actually the old one. Gerard has been Coordinator of the Aleph Product Working Group for the last two years, since it was set up within the newly established IGeLU user group. Gerard's background is as a systems librarian at the University of Westminster in London where he has worked with various ExLibris products during the last ten years: Aleph, MetaLib, SFX, and most recently Verde.

Together with his deputies Marcus Zerbst from Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Switzerland, who will also serve for another term, and Mike Ryan from CCLA plus a committed team of module coordinators from around the world, Gerard will chair the ALEPH Product Working Group during a period of further change and challenge.
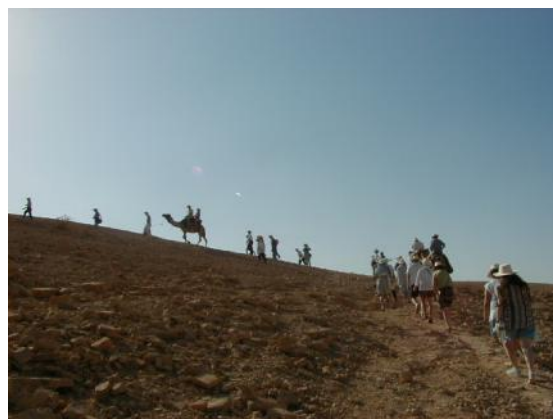
ALEPH-Dach is conducting a research study on Next Gen ILS

The ALEPH User Group of the German Speaking Countries (**ALEPH-DACH**) is conducting a survey on the Next Gen ILS together with the Library School at the Humboldt University, Berlin. Selected representatives from ALEPH-DACH member institutions will be interviewed on their view of the future ILS. The interviewees will be IT people as well as systems librarians and library directors. Against the background of a changing information landscape the survey aims to analyse the needs and wants of a new ILS from the perspective of ALEPH-DACH. The results of the survey are expected to be published by end of this year. For further information contact Dr. Ronald Schmidt at hbz Cologne: schmidt@hbz-nrw.de

ExLibris, Systems Seminar 2009, March 9–13

The ExLibris Systems Seminar will again take place in Tel Aviv, Israel. Holding the seminar close to the ExLibris headquarters and development centre allows a great many ExLibris development, support, and product management staff to take part in the event. The seminar begins with a welcome cocktail party on the evening of March 9, followed by three days (March 10–12) of in-depth product sessions, which will be presented in five parallel tracks. The seminar proper concludes with a gala dinner on the evening of March 12. On Friday March 13 participants are invited to join a full-day guided tour of Jerusalem.

Registration for the Systems Seminar will begin in early December 2008. Announcements of the event will be sent out via direct e-mail and customer listservs, and will also be posted on the IGeLU and ELUNA Websites.

After the Systems Seminar in Tel Aviv 2000 (Ragnar Helin)

Short News

Ex Libris "Developers Meet Developers" Meeting 2008 Jerusalem

By Lukas Koster, Library of the University of Amsterdam and Mark Dehmlow, University of Notre Dame

The first official meeting between Ex Libris' and customers' developers was held at Ex Libris Headquarters in Jerusalem on November 12 and 13, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together developers from libraries and Ex Libris product developers to begin building a developers community. For the libraries, this represented a significant opportunity to have unfiltered conversations with those closest to Ex Libris' product development. For Ex Libris, it was a chance for developers to see how libraries were extending their products and hear the benefits, challenges, and needs of us who work closely with their products. 13 representatives from 10 customer institutions in the USA, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, and Germany, who use Aleph, SFX, MetaLib, and Primo and who are actively involved in developing plug-ins, add-ons and extensions to one or more of these products, attended the meeting. We had the chance to meet with Ex Libris product developers and development managers to discuss the new open-platform strategy and specifics about the products we were most interested in. A separate meeting will be organized in the USA for Voyager developers.

The two days were divided into 4 main sections:

- an introduction to the open-platform strategy by Ex Libris
- participants' presentations
- working groups per product
- reports from working groups, discussions and conclusions.

Work in progress 1st day (Lukas Koster)

Open-platform strategy Introduction

The first day started with a welcome by Einat Zviran, Vice President of Development, and Tamar Sadeh, Director of Marketing and also leader of the open-platform program. Shlomo Sanders, Ex Libris Chief Architect, presented Ex Libris' roadmap for the open architecture of Ex Libris systems both as it stands now and what they are thinking of for the future. Shlomo gave us a privileged look into where Ex Libris hopes to take the open platform and the various programming interfaces to their products. Much of this information hasn't been made public yet, so we are unable to share all of the details, but undoubtedly, Ex Libris will be announcing aspects of this strategy in the year to come. What we can say is that the plans look exciting, and offer extensions to the products that will fulfill on some of the customer wishes we have heard over the past couple of years, as well as extending access to the products that we hadn't even thought of.

Revital Marck, Aleph Development Manager and Open Platform Program Development Leader, presented the realization of the open platform program. She outlined more specifics about how Ex Libris is formalizing the open interfaces to their products, how these interfaces will be carried out, and what this will mean for us developers. She discussed issues like commitment to backwards compatibility, how product documentation will support our efforts, how consistency across products might be achieved, and what tools Ex Libris might be able to offer to support validation of the open interfaces and what kinds of samples they might be able to provide. Some of these ideas are in the formative stage and aren't quite fixed, so it gave us an opportunity to provide feedback into Ex Libris' direction.

Participants' Presentations

After lunch, 7 customer institutions gave presentations covering some of their local developments and/or challenges with Ex Libris products to a large audi-

Breaking News: Developers Meet Developers

Ex Libris "Developers Meet Developers" Meeting (cont.)

ence of Ex Libris staff. One presentation (regarding the need for back-end and management API's) was held on the second day.

Working Groups per Product

The morning of the second day was dedicated to meetings between Ex Libris developers and customer representatives on specific products (Aleph, SFX, MetaLib, Primo). For each product, three or four customers representatives and three or four Ex Libris developers talked about product specific issues and more general cross-product and EL Commons topics. They also discussed API development plans for each product and brain stormed ideas about other services that customers might be interested in having exposed through APIs. These working groups were very useful and gave an opportunity for developers to have practical discussions of the products as well as an opportunity to talk about the products on a more fundamental level. All working groups reported their findings to the complete group after lunch.

Reports from Working Groups, Discussions and Conclusions

The last part of the two days was used for summarizing and discussing a number of more general issues, mainly focused on the structure of the EL Commons platform. All attendees agreed that EL Commons needs more content, better internal and external integration, and a more vibrant and active community. While there were many ideas on how to accomplish this goal, there will need to be more discussion on how to drive participation. Everybody agreed that the meeting should be repeated. In order to keep these meetings as efficient as possible, we all agreed that the group should not be

Dome of the Rock (Lukas Koster)

too large and the collective feeling was that participation should be offered to people who actually contribute content to EL Commons. So next year's library developer group composition is likely to include some familiar faces, but will also open opportunities for others to participate.

Social Events

In addition to work there was also an opportunity for entertainment and leisure. On the first evening Ex Libris organized a tour of old Jerusalem by night and a very nice dinner party at a fantastic restaurant that gave us all a taste of the regional fare. On the second evening the Ex Libris support staff invited everybody for drinks at the "Dublin" Irish pub.

All in all, this was a tremendously productive meeting for all of the developers, both ours and Ex Libris'. Building robust openness into commercial products is not a trivial prospect and what is most encouraging is that Ex Libris' planning around this effort is starting with some initial dialog about their direction with those of us who are most engaged in extending their products. We got a unique look into the heart of Ex Libris' organization, how they plan and execute product plans, and a chance to meet those, often anonymous, people that are responsible for building their systems. We also got a privileged look at Ex Libris' strategies going forward.

There is much work ahead to ensure that this community is active and engaged. As customers, we will need fervent and engaged participation to keep the momentum going and to ensure the lasting success of this effort.

We can safely say that the friendly and warm reception by Ex Libris made all participants feel very welcome and we are grateful to Ex Libris for their hospitality and openness during this meeting. We can't wait for the 2009 meeting. In the meantime, it is never too soon to begin contributing code to the developer's zone and to begin building a robust developer community.

Breaking News:
Developers Meet Developers

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Welcome to IGeLU

The International Group of Ex Libris Users

*As we all know, insufficient communication is the source of much disappointment. **IGeLU** provides an open and transparent organization for all users of all Ex Libris products.*

***IGeLU**: promotes information exchange among institutions that use Ex Libris products in order to enhance their library services by sharing information, documentation and resources; and represents the user community in dealings with the vendor, Ex Libris.*

***IGeLU** is the successor organization of ICAU and SMUG.*

Pictures from Helsinki