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NEWSLETTER FOR SFX/METALIB USERS

Design Ingeborg Kleijnjan for ProBiblio

Photo by: "droolcup" Scott Fitzgerald

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Photo by: "fitzgene"

Hot dogs and cars - The drive-in McLibrary

BY BEATE RUSCH, KOBV BERLIN
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A hot dog vendor expanding into selling hamburgers. Or a car company expanding into tire manufacturing. What do the two have in common? And how does this relate to libraries? Both of them are examples of integration activities – according to Investopedia - horizontal and vertical integration. Horizontal integration means expanding your business into different products that are similar to current lines, while vertical integration is expanding your business into areas that are at different points of the same production path.

If libraries describe their philosophy they'll certainly also talk about integration – integration of services, integration of assets and resources.
Like the car manufacturer, libraries have been expanding vertically from providing content only into providing discovery tools and services, publishing and digitisation.
Like the hot dog vendor, libraries have been expanding horizontally by offering an ever wider range of menus and tastes in tools and services.

With their own vehicles (computers and web browsers) clients are now visiting the McLibrary drive-in to order servings to their own taste from a selection of menus: OPACs, Meta-searching tools, OpenURL resolvers, Full text databases, etc.

To make an excellent service all these tools need to function as an integrated system. Not only with each other, but also interacting with the rest, such as the institutional website, the institutional portal, third party's learning environments.

Technically speaking, integration may result in a functioning or a unified whole. This distinction refers to different concepts, which are discussed passionately again and again. A "functioning whole" may be understood as an integrated structure of cooperating tools in which the different parts (like in this case SFX, MetaLib or other tools) can be distinguished as such, whereas a "unified whole" would mean that the end users experience one "new" system or user interface that conceals the integrated parts. In the case of SFX and MetaLib we ask the vendor: how can we integrate SFX and MetaLib with each other and with other Ex Libris tools? For the sake of our patrons we are asking ourselves: what's better: a "functioning whole" (using linking, deep links, common databases, etc.), or a "unified whole" (Primo?, home grown systems using a single user interface and X-server and other API's?)?

Both SFX and MetaLib offer the option of only using the backend via the X-Server API's, which is in fact a form of disintegration. One consequence of this separation of (meta) data and presentation could involve another form of integration, that of combining different databases in real or virtual collections that can be accessed by a number of integrated or non-integrated tools.

When libraries are talking about integration, they are not only thinking about the user's perspective, but also about the backend of their business, where internal workflows are in focus. In general, our aim is to reduce duplicating work, to store the same information only once, to cooperate closely.

By the way: Have you ever thought of the varieties of hot dogs? The different flavours: with salsa, chilli pepper, beans, ketchup, mustard, relish, remoulade. Organic, veggie, kosher. Split, scrambled, smoked. Tastes are endless and (thank God!) no international standard committee is in sight. This is one of the main differences! While we have standards our clients, around the world, have many different tastes. But that might be another story. Maybe the McDrive metaphor is really inappropriate and silly and we libraries are more like a three star restaurant.

In Portrait

Small and beautiful Luxembourg

By michel donven and carlo blum, National library of luxembourg

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The National Library of Luxembourg is a heritage library and also the largest scientific and research library in the country. Since the creation of the University of Luxembourg in the summer of 2003 the collaboration between the university's libraries and the National Library has grown stronger. The government has announced its intention to merge the National Library with the various libraries of the university into one single institution, a National and University Library.

At the moment this collaboration is realised by a common purchase policy regarding electronic publications as well as the integration of all the resources in a single MetaLib portal. The aim is to evolve this portal into the Luxembourg research library, in cooperation with the University of Luxembourg and public research organisations.

Infrastructure and team

All of the infrastructure and applications used by the National Library are hosted by the Luxembourg government computer centre (Centre informatique de l'État http://www.cie.etat.lu) who is also in charge of the hardware support and the backups.

We currently run MetaLib v. 3.13 and SFX 3.0 (one instance of each) on a Sun Fire 280R Solaris 8, authentication is realised through EzProxy.

Having quite a small team to run both MetaLib and SFX (0,5 FTE system librarian, 0,2 FTE for contents development and licence negotiation, application support by the BnL IT-team) we avoided too much customization. Our portal has to be in three languages (English and two of the official languages of the country, i.e. German & French), which we managed to implement without too much difficulties thanks to the wonderful paper about translating the user interface by Lukas Koster

Access

Historically, the National Library of Luxembourg has always provided free public access to its collections. Therefore electronic content is also freely accessible by patrons, remotely via EzProxy if licence conditions allow it (more or less 95% of our licensed content is remotely accessible for our patrons). Authentication is done via the EzProxy Authentication Adapter for PDS developed by the Nelli portal team from the Finnish National Library (thanks to Ere Maijala...!). A subset of the patrons is migrated on a daily basis from the ALEPH database to MetaLib which allows our patrons to use the same authentication passwords in Aleph and in MetaLib.

All registered patrons of the National Library (conditions: >16 years of age, resident) have access to the portal. In 2006 50% of the new registrations were people below the age of 30 years and 60% were non-Luxembourgian patrons.

Contents

At the moment we've activated about 15000 e-journals through the SFX-KB (with 30% being free or open access journals) and over 200 resources in MetaLib (50% being open access resources).

Historically, collections of the National Library were focused on humanities. Over the last 5 years Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) content was added, reflecting the needs of the research community and the University of Luxembourg.

Future developments

Migration to MetaLib 4.0 is planned for September 2007 after the acquisition of new server hardware running Solaris 10 and zones/containers. There is also a plan to install several ExLibris applications (ARC, Verde, MetaLib, SFX, ...) on the same consolidated hardware in local zones.

Also planned is the implementation of various portals to present different views for different patron types, as the cooperation with research institutions increases.

Photo by: Carlo Blum

Luxembourg Team:
From left to right: Carlo Blum, Patrick Pfeiffer, Michel Donven

Photo by: "hellsbells"

"We want to remain who we are"

Photo by: Carlo Blum

Luxembourg National Library

Pen pals

Postcard from the University of Notre Dame

BY MARK DEHMLOW, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME (INDIANA)

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This year has been a very busy one for Notre Dame and our implementation of MetaLib.

As a stepping stone toward an X-Server implementation, we are currently using the deep links method to direct user queries to the MetaLib application. This allows us to use our website as the interface to MetaLib and to put search boxes virtually anywhere that they are useful. This method holds some promise for further integration with environments like our Course Management System (WebCT) and our Campus Portal. In this configuration, we are using MetaLib only as a search engine. We've chosen to remove all of the portalization and personalization aspects, so the only functions that are available are the search results screens and the basket function so people can see their results, link out through SFX, and download or email any records that are of interest.

The central issue with using the deep links configuration is navigating back to the website search boxes where our users began their query. MetaLib can't interact with our website in a dynamic way and so, for a while, we had no way to direct users from the MetaLib results screen back to the search box a user might begin with. We've solved this using two tools, a handful of search-processing/navigation scripts and web browser cookies. The scripts perform a number of functions from navigation to query processing - we've been able to make our implementation of MetaLib 3.13 process typical queries as a boolean "AND" search instead of a phrase search. Our scripts set cookies that store the necessary information to maintain state between MetaLib and our website, namely the URL the user came from and the session id that MetaLib assigns. Our search boxes send user queries through an initial script that sets the cookies and processes the query, then links within MetaLib direct the user through another script that reads the cookies and directs users to the appropriate web page. This has enabled us to create "new search" and "advanced search" links within MetaLib while continuing to use the deep links method. Our process ensures that a user gets back to where they started from and if they choose to send another search, they are kept within the same MetaLib session. We're still putting 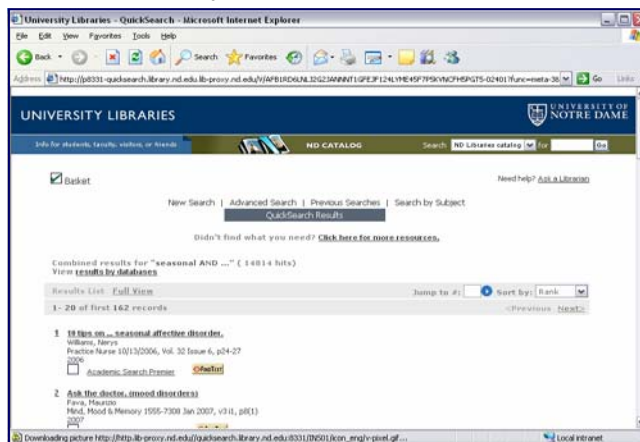the finishing touches on this particular way of integrating MetaLib into our library website and we are currently working on a "refine search" function. Our next stop is configuring this all to work with MetaLib 4.0 and then on the long road towards an X-Server implementation.

Notre Dame Campus
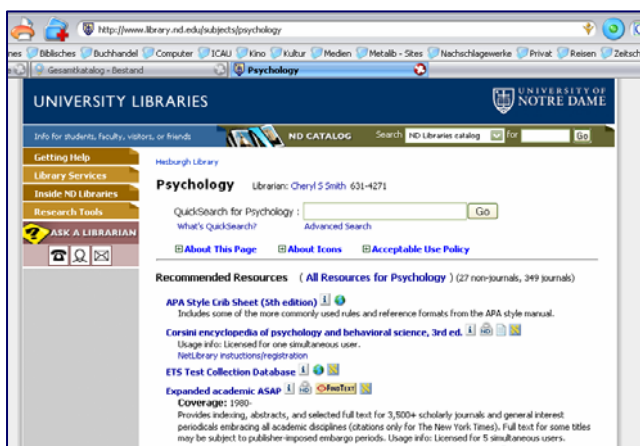
Notre Dame Screenshot Quicksearch

Notre Dame Screenshot Results

Photos by: Mark Dehmlow

Interview

Ex Libris and Endeavor merger: 5 Questions to Matti Shem Tov

MATTI SHEM TOV IS PRESIDENT OF EX LIBRIS GROUP.
THIS INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED BY EMAIL. THE QUESTIONS WERE FORMULATED BY BEATE RUSCH AND LUKAS KOSTER

At the end of December 2006 Ex Libris and Endeavor merged under the ownership of Francisco Partners. The combined entity Ex Libris Group, headed by Matti Shem Tov, offers library software deployed at more than 4.000 institutions around the globe.

1. With a combined install base of over 4.000 institutions, the merged company is second in size to SirsiDynix in the academic, public, and special library automation sector. The third position is held (with a larger gap) by Innovative Interfaces.
Could you give us some more details on the combined user base, their size and characteristics?

Following the merger, the majority of the combined Ex Libris customer base is still top-tier academic institutions. Ex Libris products now run in the libraries of 9 out of 10 of the top universities in the world. Our second largest sector (25%) is that of special research libraries that require sophisticated search, discovery, and retrieval solutions to carry out their in-depth work efficiently. The flexibility and customization options offered by our products make them the natural choice for consortia of all sizes. Our customer base boasts 220 consortia, representing over 1400 member libraries.

The merge with Endeavor Information Systems has served to expand the footprint of the Ex Libris customer base. North America is currently our largest market (54%), followed by Europe (36%). Our focus on the Asia Pacific market during the last few years has paid off greatly. New sales into this region during 2006 are among the factors that have led this territory to represent 8% of our customer base. Another growing market is that of South America. Most recently the Department of Public Libraries in coordination with the Office of Libraries, Archives, and Museums of Chile selected ALEPH 500 for its nationwide network of 378 public libraries.

2. Between Endeavor and Ex Libris there used to be a great overlap of products. If you look at the new product suite now, it doesn't look like a merger, but that Ex Libris won the battle for the library market. Except of Voyager, the ILS, and JOS (Journal on Site) none of the other Endeavor products shows up any more. Why is this?

Ex Libris is committed to protecting its customers' investment by ensuring that the products they invest in at present will continue to be the best-of-breed in years to come. This requires a significant, on-going investment in research, development, and support. Prior to the merger, Ex Libris Group management together with that of Endeavor, assessed the combined product suite of the two companies focusing on the technological acumen of each of the products, the development roadmap, and the number of customer sites for each product. The goal of this was to develop a focused product suite, which would enable us to dedi-

cate maximum resources to the pre-eminent products. These were found to be the existing Ex Libris product suite with the addition of Voyager and Journals Onsite (JOS).

3. It appears that within the next two years, Meridian customers will be migrated to Verde; Discovery: Resolver customers will be migrated to SFX; and Discovery: Search customers will be migrated to MetaLib. What a huge migration workload! How will this enormous tasks influence development plans?

The Ex Libris staff of 400 professionals consists of a large, international, and very experienced product implementation team. Prior to announcing the merger, detailed plans were made to ensure that sites running LinkFinder Plus, ENCompass, Curator, and Meridian would be migrated to SFX, MetaLib, DigiTool, and Verde respectively—without our research and development team "missing a beat". Migration of LinkFinder Plus and ENCompass sites is our first priority; followed by the migration of institutions running Meridian and Curator. Ex Libris will support Meridian and Curator throughout 2008, when we expect the migration process to be completed.

As a former Endeavor customer, where do I find more information?

Ex Libris customers, running the above mentioned systems, will be contacted by their local office or distributor to discuss and schedule optimal migration plans. Details regarding global migration plans will be provided at the Ex Libris Systems

Yin and Yang or the perfect merger

Photo by: "d.rex"

Growing stronger day by day

Photo by: "d.rex"

Interview

Ex Libris and Endeavor Merger: 5 Questions to Matti Shem Tov

Seminar in Potsdam, and the End-User Seminar.

Support from the TDNet Discovery: Resolver and Discovery: Search products will be handled via the support centre at our Des Plaines office. TDNet has committed to continue providing outstanding second line support for these products. We invite Discovery: Resolver and Discovery: Search customers, interesting in moving to SFX/MetaLib, to contact their local office or distributor for pricing and implementation information.

4. As MetaLib and SFX customers, what benefits can we expect from the merger? Can we expect for example enlarged knowledge bases or new or enhanced functionalities, which derive from former Endeavor products?

Ex Libris will continue to enhance and upgrade the SFX and MetaLib Knowledge Bases in order to maintain their high quality. The coming year will see MetaLib becoming an intrinsic part of Primo—ensuring a seamless connection between these two products. The increasingly tight integration of SFX and Verde, and the unification of their Knowledge Bases, will minimize the TCO of institutions running these systems.

5. The Strategyst Blog says that "Private Equity companies [such as Francisco Partners] have a 4-5 year timeline to recoup their investment. At that time, there will be some exit event – another sale, an IPO, etc. This means that code base will change hands again, which could mean another change in strategic direction." Would you like to comment on that.

The acquisition of Ex Libris by Francisco Partners was characterized by little to no change in strategic direction that affected our customers. We have retained and bolstered our existing management team, continued to focus on honing our library and research automation products, and move in the directions outlined prior to the acquisition. Whereas there is the possibility that ownership of the Company could change some time in the distant future, I envision that if this occurs it will not have a tangible effect on our customers.

Matti, thank you for the interview.

Further Info

♦ *Beate Rusch is member of the IGeLU Steering Committee*
♦ *Lukas Koster is Coordinator of the IGeLU SFX/MetaLib Product Working Group*

System Seminar 13th to 16th May 2007, Potsdam, Germany

♦ *Conference homepage: http://www.exlibris2007.de/*
♦ *Conference programme: http://www.exlibris2007.de/seminar-information/programme.html*

Photo by: Till Krech

Sanssouci, Potsdam

Photo by: Till Krech

Chinese tea Pavillon, Sanssouci

In Focus

Integrating library resources with Moodle

By Alison Pope, Royal Holloway, University of London

Contact:
Alison.pope(@)rhul.ac.uk

Royal Holloway launched Moodle (moodle.rhul.ac.uk) in September 2006. We have approximately 250 active courses and approximately 6000 users.
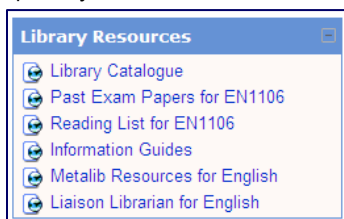
We brainstormed a vision of how to incorporate library resources into Moodle and identified three key areas to work on:

• Prominent key links to core library services

• Library training material delivered using Moodle

• Enabling tutors to discover library resource and incorporate them in context into their teaching materials in a persistent and reusable way

With a short implementation time it was not possible to achieve all of these by the launch date. We focused on the first two areas as being most achievable.

In this article I will describe two blocks we created to provide links to core services: a Library Resource Block and a Library Search Block.

We decided to create the key links to library services as a Moodle block that would appear by default on all course pages but that could be turned off or modified by the tutor. Being unfamiliar with the Moodle architecture we started with the Learning Resources Block developed by Alton College (http://moodle.org/mod/data/view.php?d=13&rid=361).

We decide to modify this block slightly so that instead of just offering top level links we could also include context specific links based on a course ID or a course category. For these contextual links we wanted to provide a deep link incorporating these variables.
An example of a course deep link is a link from Moodle to a course Reading list. We provide this using a dedicated system but if you used MetaLib or Aleph the principle would be the same.

An example of a category links is to link from Moodle to the MetaLib category for that subject.
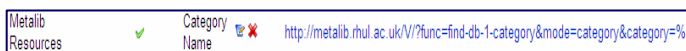
Here we are using the MetaLib Deep Linking syntax (see the MetaLib 3.13 Deep Linking document on the Doc Portal for details)
After our MetaLib root *metalib.rhul.ac.uk/V/* we add: *?func=find-db-1-category&mode=category* to indicate we want to link to a category and the link is finished by adding *&category=%s*. The %s is a placeholder for the course category. The block looks this up for each course when the block is displayed and replaces the placeholder with the correct category.

The only difficulty we had with this approach is that the categories had to match exactly and the deep link is constructed on the category dis-

play name. We had to do some tidying up to make sure that the categories in MetaLib matched those in Moodle.

The good thing about this block is that only the administrators who configure the block need to see the complex link structure. The tutors only see a list of the links that are available. Those that are checked are the ones that the librarians have been indicated should be displayed by default. The tutor can pick and choose which links they would like to display from the selection for their particular course.
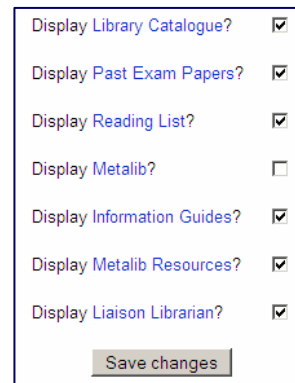
After we had created the link block we created a similar block to create a Library Search block. This also took code from the Learning Resources Block and combined it with a Configurable Search Block by Jan Dierckx (http://moodle.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=28060)

This block displays a search box on course pages and a list of library search engines to search. Again the administrators configure the search setup and select the default options but the tutor decide which ones to include for a particular block.
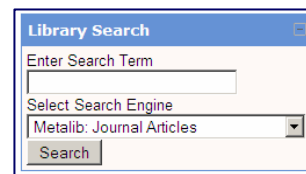
By default we offer the ability to search the library catalogue or any of our MetaLib quick sets. We have also set up Google Scholar, WorldCat and Windows Live Academic should tutors want students to search more widely.

To search the MetaLib quicksets we again used deep linking syntax. This is an example of one of the search links:

In Focus

Integrating library resources with Moodle

metalib.rhul.ac.uk/V/?func=quick-1-check1&mode=simple&find_request_1=&find_code_2=WRD&find_request_1=%s&group_number=000007620

We specified our base url and then syntax for a simple quick search. We added the placeholder %s in the find request and this is replaced by the block with the term the user enters into the search box in the block. Finally we add the group code for the quickset to each search string.

By reusing block code we found on the Moodle site and utilising the MetaLib deep linking syntax we were able to provide links to Library services in a short space of time.

This meant that we achieved our aim of making library resources visible within Moodle from its launch.

The blocks have not only enabled Moodle users to quickly access library resources from within their courses they have raised the profile of library services amongst academic staff.

Some downsides of the block approach are that they sit outside the flow of the course materials and take users away from Moodle to interact with the library systems themselves. We are seeing examples in course materials of bibliographic references written by hand and with no way for the student to easily locate a copy of that reading.

Like many other institutions our vision is to bring library resources more fully into the learning environment. We are starting to look at the exciting work in the community integrating the MetaLib X server with other systems (see for example the Ex Libris Webinar on Innovative Uses of the MetaLib X Server http://metalib.exlibris-usa.com/content58.html).

We then hope to use these ideas and technologies work on the third area of Moodle integration we identified: easily adding library resources within the course materials themselves. I look forward to updating you with our progress in this area in the future.

(Technologies used: Moodle (PHP web based Learning Environment), MetaLib, MetaLib deep linking syntax.)

The art of integration (I)

Photo by: Clemens Koppensteiner

Integration in Dutch ...

BY MARCO STREEFKERK, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

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Integration within University and National Libraries in the Netherlands
The 13 university libraries and the national library in the Netherlands work together in the UKB association. In preparation for a new policy document for 2007-2010, 4 work groups were formed to advise the board. The work group that I participated in was on integration (the others were on e-science, metadata and meta searching). Of course one should be aware that what made it into the final report is highly dictated by Dutch particularities. Also the work

group had very little time to prepare the report and as a result the topics the report deals with are somewhat arbitrary; with other people the list of topics might have been rather different. Having said that, the final report can be read as a nice example of how the current buzz word 'integration' might influence the activities of university libraries over the next couple of years. We presented 8 recommendations as the conclusion of our work group : areas within the integration's challenge where UKB collaboration could bring added value. In this report I'll only mention those that might also be of relevance in other countries.

Optimal accessibility of data sets

Unsurprisingly the work group focused on services. Sevices in a library environment however are a means to an end: the use of content. Therefore the first recommendation was to enforce the use of standards for exchange formats and protocols among UKB members in order to make their individual collections open and accessible for (re)use by others. (XML) Data should be made available without the need for any knowledge upfront about the internal organization of the provider and the content provided. This is also crucial for any library that wants to play its part in the Web/Library 2.0 development.
Taking a position on what standards to use is always tricky but the work group felt confident in advising on the use of Dublin Core as a minimum cross-domain

The art of integration (II)

Photo by: Tomasz Lysakowski

In Focus

Integration in Dutch ...

format at least for data discovery. SRU/SRW for search and retrieval, OpenURL for resolution and OAI-MPH for data harvesting together form a set of exchange protocols preferred by the work group. They cover the main need of all information organizations and these protocols also support the possibility of requesting the delivery of data in specific (meta)data format. The question of what kind of format to use in addition to the basic Dublin Core can then be agreed on by a group of institutions working together towards a specific content use, like for instance preservation. The emergence of so-called complex metadata formats like METS and DIDL is of importance here firstly because with them the traditional distinction between metadata and content is disappearing and secondly their modular structures allow the use of parts of the overall format for specific usage.

Joint service framework
The work group on Integration advised the UKB board to put effort into defining a joint service framework for all research libraries in the Netherlands. This service framework for research libraries should act as a further specification of the e-Framework for higher education developed in the UK for JISC and recently adopted by its Dutch sister association SURF. In the opinion of the

work group a service framework facilitates the discussion and development of a consistent policy for integration. Studies in other countries have already produced inventories of services relevant to the library domain. These can be translated to the Dutch situation, extending the list and defining the interdependencies between them. As a next step at the level of the individual institutions if necessary and at the level of the UKB if possible the list of services considered relevant can be implemented. As part of the implementation process agreement should be reached about what standards and protocols are best suited to support these services.

Knowledge Base for collections and their services
In order to make it clear to the outside world what kind of services are available for which collections, what functionality they support and how they can be accessed, a register of machine readable descriptions is required. The work group on integration advised the UKB board to look for initiatives like the European Library to set up such a register at the European level. Organizing central registration of service and collection description offered by Dutch libraries can build upon the experiences already available through working with shared Knowledge Bases for instance inside the linking servers. The current efforts within the Netherlands to come

to the purchase and installation of a consortium based ERM system, if successful, can be considered as a major step towards a centrally administrated service and collection register.

Centers of expertise
Lastly the work group looked at integration from an organizational perspective. It is clear that in order to follow up on the recommendations made by the work group, close cooperation within UKB will be necessary. Furthermore it was the shared opinion of all members of the work group that their institutions alone are not capable to tackle the challenges that research libraries face over the next decade. Therefore the work group also advised the board to try and set up one or more centers of expertise. The centers should not be financially dependent on anyone of the individual libraries but in stead be directly responsible to the UKB board. Now anyone who is a little familiar with the library community in the Netherlands will understand that this is a huge step. However integrating the shared challenges that face a group of libraries and solving them with partly integrated means and expertise could really make the difference between the success and failure of Dutch research libraries in the future.

Photo by: Tomasz Lysakowski

Perfect integration (I)

Photo by: Duane Moody

Perfect integration (II)

In Focus

Adorn your system with OAI and OpenURL

BY PATRICK HOCHSTENBACH, LIBRARY OF GHENT UNIVERSITIY

CONTACT: PATRICK.HOCHSTENBACH (@)UGENT.BE

In Ghent University we live in an environment with many heterogeneous data systems. When putting labels on these systems we could borrow names right from the enterprise content management world. Knowledge Systems such as A&I Databases have to interact with our catalogues to provide lookups and borrowing requests. Digital Asset Management systems such as Institutional Repositories and Digital Archives need to provide input to Web Search Engines and Web Content Management systems. E-learning systems need to include publications, images and videos form the archives. Document Management and Imaging Services can give input into your repositories, etc, etc, etc.
To cope with this complexity of systems and implementations, solutions are proposed which suggest open protocols and data models for content exchange. When all these systems just could work behind a neutral facade, then application developers could create interoperable services which can be preserved over time. The proposals are ingenious and seem to provide solutions to specific problem domains, but no solution have yet been found which would encompass all possible systems.

Ghent is implementing a set of protocols proposed by the Los Alamos aDORe Architecture to provide a set of interoperable services among a subclass of content management systems. aDORe provides three types of actions:

- Harvest: to retrieve collections of digital objects
- Obtain: to request services to individual digital objects
- Put: to submit a digital object to a repository

These services are implemented using the OAI-PMH and OpenURL protocols which have been proven very successful, and are relatively easy to add to existing content management systems. The MPEG-21 DIDL language is used to express the complexity of a digital object, which can be composed out of many different data streams.

As a test bed, Ghent University used aDORe techniques to implement services for the storage, description and dissemination of scanned image collections. The images are stored on our file systems and access copies are made available to the eRez Imaging Server. We adorned an eRez Image server with OAI-PMH and OpenURL plug-ins to provide neutral harvesting and obtain interfaces. eRez can provide a multitude of image manipulation services, but we chose to support only those services which would most probably be needed to create most of our web services: getThumbnail, getSmall, getMedium, getLarge, getZoomer, getTechnicalMetadata.

Descriptive metadata is provided by the ALEPH catalogue which also was adorned with OAI-PMH plug-ins. With the combination of both these systems we provide our cataloguers the default ALEPH cataloguing client for the input of metadata. The "View in Web OPAC" function was used to access the scanned image. Both systems can also be harvested using off-the-shelf OAI tools and be ingested into a Lucene search engine. This way an easy web search engine was created accessible at http://adore.ugent.be. All the images in this interface are accessed via the OpenURL protocol. If we can find better imaging techniques or other metadata containers, then these services could be easily exchanged. In the near future we would like to include video streaming servers in this setup. They can be added as harvestable or obtainable nodes. We will start providing eRez Imaging Servers to faculties to administer their own images and a federation of repositories on the university network can be imagined. Digital Objects could be resolved with an SFX server which would provide gateway services to the backend OpenURL interfaces whereas other nodes can provide preservation services and harvest data streams for long term storage. Annotation services which can be obtained and harvested are in an experimental phase. The aim is to work together with the E-learning team to ingest MPEG-21 DIDL into their system. Still a long way to go, but we are having a lot of fun already.

Photo by: "G1itch"

Perfect integration (III)

In Focus

Aleph to Omega - Integration in the Utrecht University library system

BY THEO ENGELMAN
UTRECHT UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
(UTRECHT)

CONTACT:
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The Utrecht University Library uses ALEPH and SFX and an in-house tailor-made system called OMEGA to offer library services to students and staff of the Utrecht University. The Utrecht University Library consists of a central library and 10 branch (faculty) libraries.

ALEPH is used as the database of all printed documents owned by the central and branch libraries. More than 2.000.000 titles and more than 4.000.000 items are currently stored in ALEPH. Access to the ALEPH WebOpac (http://aleph.library.uu.nl) is unlimited and more than 35.000 patrons produce nearly 300.000 loans annually.

OMEGA is used as the database of all electronic documents the library has subscriptions for and offers access to almost 13.000.000 full-text available documents. Access to the OMEGA search engine (http://omega.library.uu.nl) is unlimited, but only UU-staff and students have access to the linked full-text. Together they produce more than 2.000.000 full-text views a year.

SFX
OMEGA as catalogue of electronic documents and ALEPH as catalogue of printed documents are integrated using SFX (branded UBUlink).

Patrons tend to have their own concept of how and where to search and find information. The holdings have been split into printed documents in ALEPH and electronic documents in OMEGA and patrons have to be aware of these lim-

its when searching each system.

Linking ALEPH to OMEGA
While migrating to ALEPH 16 and to the current version of OMEGA in 2006, the library wanted to help patrons to bridge the gap between ALEPH and OMEGA, without having to integrate the systems or content.
As mentioned before, in ALEPH we only catalogue printed serials, not articles. We wanted to be able to offer to patrons who are searching serials and find titles in ALEPH, a link to OMEGA whenever a journal in ALEPH is accompanied by or continued as an electronic edition recorded in OMEGA. We use context-sensitive SFX linking in ALEPH to do a check via SFX on availability of the journal title in OMEGA. This check is done when showing the full-record in the ALEPH WebOpac.

In the full-record display in Aleph right above the title record of the journal, there are two buttons offering links using SFX-technology: "Full text" and "UBUlink".
The "Full text" button is a context-sensitive link that only will appear if the check via SFX in OMEGA is positive. Without a result in OMEGA this button will not be displayed.
This button uses Direct Linking functionality of SFX and links the patron directly to the electronic holding of this journal in OMEGA. Because both ALEPH and OMEGA are not limited in accessibility, everybody can use this functionality.

The "UBUlink" button appears in every full-record screen and in every item-global screen and is not context-sensitive.

This button links to the SFX-menu with a wide range of services (such as electronic copy-delivery via PiCarta/NCC, the Dutch national ILL service). Of course this SFX-menu also

Utrecht University Aleph Full record

offers a link to OMEGA, there has been a check for availability of an electronic holding of this journal in OMEGA.

The metadata from ALEPH does not contain year/volume/issue/page, only the journal title is

Utrecht University Omega Full record

catalogued. This is why the patron will end up at the homepage of the journal at the provider's site.

What to do in SFX
In order to use SFX's linking technology we created a LOCAL TARGET OMEGA with a Target-Service that could be used for direct linking. For this purpose we chose getCitedJournal.

For the correct construction of the URL to OMEGA we created a TargetParser in SFX using our knowledge of the search syntax in OMEGA.

Also we created a Plug-In in SFX for this TargetService. This Plug-In (based on the SFX Syndetics Plug-In) checks whether or not a holding in OMEGA exists

In Focus

Aleph to Omega - Integration in the Utrecht University library system

based on the ISSN of the journal title. If so, the link to OMEGA will be shown in the SFX menu and also the Full text button in ALEPH will appear. If not, no link to OMEGA will appear in the SFX-menu and no Full text button will appear in ALEPH.

Source ALEPH-UBU always invokes the service "Request a copy in The Dutch Union Catalog PiCarta" in the SFX menu, because the lack of year/ volume/issue/page information coming from ALEPH must be compensated for the patron who wants a copy of an article published in an issue outside the printed or electronic holdings of the Utrecht University Library. This is configured in a Display Logic Rule in SFX.

Another Display Logic Rule in SFX is used to prevent the link to our ALEPH catalogue to appear in the SFX-menu when coming from the source ALEPH-UBU. It is no use leading the patron in an everlasting circle.

A third Display Logic Rule in SFX is used to hide links to get-FullTxt services in the SFX menu when coming from the source ALEPH-UBU.
If we have a subscription to full text, it would have been available via OMEGA (the OMEGA Plug-In checks that) and the patron is better serviced via OMEGA, because OMEGA offers information about our various electronic holdings.
If we do not have any subscription to full-text, there is no use pointing our patrons to any

provider. For SFX was always about the 'appropriate copy', wasn't it?

What to do in OMEGA
In OMEGA we created a script that answers the call coming from the SFX-Plug-In checking for availability in OMEGA. That was all.

When patrons start their search in OMEGA, there is the possibility that we have a printed holding in ALEPH besides the electronic holding in OMEGA.
This situation is to be solved by using the ALEPH X-server to check, based on the ISSN of the journal, whether or not a holding exist in ALEPH. Maybe we will use the ALEPH Plug-In available in SFX, this also uses the ALEPH X-server.
If so, a button linking to ALEPH will be shown in OMEGA. This is still to be done.
The link to ALEPH can be made using SFX direct linking technology.
If no holdings exist in ALEPH, no link to ALEPH will be shown in OMEGA.

What to do in ALEPH
In ALEPH we configured the link to SFX according to the documentation.
Some things were not described correctly but Ex Libris promised to improve the documentation at the 2006 IGeLU conference.
Details about this ALEPH configuration are available; just contact the author.

Conclusion

Bridging the gap between our catalogue of printed material in ALEPH and our catalogue of electronic material in OMEGA, the Utrecht University Library integrates both applications creatively using SFX technology. No content is to be catalogued in the other system, simply checking and linking is sufficient.

Only where holdings are uniquely available in one format (print or electronic) this solution doesn't bridge the gap. Indexing all holdings in one or both search engines ALEPH and OMEGA might solve this issue, but that's beyond the scope of this article.

Utrecht University SFX menu

In Focus

Learning the Umlaut

BY INGA OVERKAMP, MAX PLANCK GESELLSCHAFT (MUNICH)

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In September 2006 the Second Research Software Contest, held by the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), awarded Ross Singer's Umlaut service. Umlaut is an OpenURL link Resolver and works as a middleware layer which transparently integrates a range of information systems, e.g. library catalogues, link resolvers and web services. Umlaut requests these distributed resources in advance and presents all available information in one homogeneous user interface. The result is very impressive and brings together "traditional" services (e.g. links to available full texts) and extended functionalities (e.g. by providing "Closest web results").

Umlaut's vision is to "improve access to library collections by contextualizing citations and available holdings more accurately for a given user". That sounds familiar. Wasn't that actually the initial reason to setup an institutional OpenURL link Resolver? So let's investigate and see which of the Umlaut' services would be feasible in the SFX environment as well:

Idea 1: Check external knowledge bases to present relevant information directly to the user.

Good news - the SFX software provides a mechanism to perform this kind of pre-fetch: It's the plug-in feature which is mainly supposed to define thresholds based on a value returned by an external program. For example, most libraries wish to offer a link to their catalog only if a record for the particular book or journal is available. This mechanism can also be used to enhance the information gained from the original OpenURL request with additional data obtained from the external system. There are some convincing examples - such as the integration of location and status information from the library catalog of the Wageningen University and Research Centre into their SFX server.

Idea 2: Provide a shortcut URL for the service menu. Sometimes patrons wish to bookmark a specific service menu, but unfortunately, OpenURLs appear to be longish as well as cryptic to the non-librarian. Umlaut converts each request into a very short URL in the form "http://findit.library.gatech.edu/go/XXX", displays it at the top of the service menu and thus provides a very straightforward possibility to store the link in any personalized tool. Until

now, SFX does not offer any comparable feature, but there are some implementations by individual SFX customers and we look forward to having this type of feature added to the SFX code.

Idea 3: Consider the user's context.

In a more and more interconnected world, OpenURL link resolvers are confronted with user requests from very different contexts, for example because the requester is located at an associated institution or just accidentally stumbled across a link to the Resolver. Displaying the institutional view on available collections is not helpful in this case because users may have access to completely different resources in their current working environment. A possible approach to solve this problem would be an architecture where link resolvers know one another and exchange relevant services. According to the documentation available, Umlaut has already taken a big step towards this direction: It checks OCLC's OpenURL resolver registry for a link resolver associated with the requester's IP address and - in some cases - requests additional services from this resolver. Ex Libris has always pointed to the fact that the requirement of bridging distributed resources is a good reason to choose the SFX software.

Photo by: Stephen Nicholas
Links (I)

Photo by: Bill Parker
Links (II)

Further Info:

♦ *More information about Umlaut, including a short description of the workflow and access to the service itself, is available at http://www.oclc.org/research/announcements/features/umlaut-about.htm*

♦ *The Plug-In feature is documented in chapter 9 of the SFX User guide part 1*

♦ *Frank Waajen from Wageningen UR presented the implementation on the 2005 SMUG conference in London, see http://library.wur.nl/sfx_local?isbn=089054218x*

♦ *Neil Verkland from the MacEwan College in Edmonton Alberta posted a self-contained solution to the sfx_supp mailing list in March 2006. A very trivial alternative is to offer a link to the TinyURL service with each menu, see http://tinyurl.com/27y3o3*

♦ *OCLC OpenURL resolver registry see http://www.oclc.org/productworks/urlresolver.htm*

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Learning the Umlaut

And indeed the product provides an XML interface (SFX API) which theoretically enables the exchange of service information between link resolvers. However, I'm not aware of any SFX installation which does dynamically integrate services from a remote link resolver into their own service menu. As a simple solution to offer users a transversion point to their local institutional link resolver, we added a "Check for a local link resolver via OCLC" target which only appears if the request comes from an external IP address.

Is it worth while?

While writing this article, I realized that over the last few years the notion of SFX has changed from software which provides context sensitive services to a tool which primarily generates links to full texts available online. Anyway, the initial vision was to serve our users with a well chosen set of appropriate resources for a particular request - and we still believe this means much more than just links to full texts. Taking a look at Umlaut and other innovative services may help us to rediscover some of our ideas we have disregarded while focusing on problems like full text licensing and providing links to appropriate copies.

My ideal knowledge base - a view from the back

BY LUKAS KOSTER,
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Discussions of integration in the digital library world always tend to centre around the end user perspective, the front end. We like to make things easy for our customers and keep them happy with a "one stop shop". But what about the back end and the people working there? The system administrators, the acquisition department, the cataloguers, the information specialists?

Components

In the Ex Libris product suite there are basically three (and possibly even four or five) tools that are used for administering electronic resources:

1 - Verde: for managing electronic collections
2 - MetaLib: for metasearching the electronic resources
3 - SFX: for linking to electronic services digital objects
4 - DigiTool: for managing digital collections
5 - Aleph or Voyager: for cataloguing electronic resources
It would be nice to have only one integrated database (virtual or real) for storing the information related to these administrative tasks. But more important than the actual infrastructure is the integration from the point of view of the workflow on the administration side. From this perspective there would be one back end system with three (or possibly four or five) different views, matching the different tools. The core of this back end would be the Central Knowledge Base (CKB), a database containing descriptions and configurations of the electronic resources, provided by Ex Libris. Customers would be able to localise these and also add their own resources.
In this situation it is important that all staff members have the appropriate privileges related to their responsibilities only.

The ideal scenario or workflow would look something like this:

Acquisition

The acquisition officer registers a newly purchased electronic resource using the Verde ERM view. First he checks if this resource is available in the shared knowledge base. If so, the resource is activated, and the local subscription and authentication information is added, as well as authorisation information if that is already possible at this stage. If not, a new local resource is catalogued. Not only subscription resources are registered here, but also all public resources, websites and databases. Descriptive information in one or more languages are activated if available, or added, and also all the different names that the resource is known by. If the library's policy is to make the electronic resources also available through the local cataloguing system, like Aleph or Voyager, or a third party tool, then the information will be available there, either through an automatic push mechanism or through a pull mechanism from the cataloguing system, if the catalogue is not yet part of the integrated back end. Alternatively, an entry made in Aleph or Voyager would also be present in the shared database, and visible through the Verde view.
The resource is immediately available in MetaLib to the end users as a "link to" resource (IRD record).

Ideals can look different

Photo by: Leopoldo

Sitting in the back side...

Photo by: Charles-Edouard Coste

My ideal knowledge base - a view from the back

The information specialists receive automatic alerts about the new resource as soon as it is activated. They can examine it and add their own categories or change existing ones. They can also add descriptive information linked to the categories or user groups they are responsible for. Furthermore they can enter suggestions for alternative descriptive fields. Another option available to them is suggesting and requesting new resources that the acquisition department will then deal with. They also have access to the inactive resources in the CKB to browse and discover other interesting resources.

MetaLib

An automatic alert is also sent to the MetaLib system administrator. He will check, test and activate available central knowledge base configurations or create local ones in order to make the resource meta-searchable. Also authorisation and proxy information is added or activated if needed.

SFX

Similarly, the SFX administrator is alerted. She checks the availability of target and service parsers for linking to the resource with an OpenUrl and activates these if applicable. Any thresholds are already available from the Verde part of the database. She adds local display logic. Optionally the possibility of local parsers is examined and implemented.

DigiTool

If the new resource is a local digital collection, the information will also be available as a possible collection description in the DigiTool view, where the appropriate digital objects can then be linked to the resource.

Consortia

In a consortia environment the individual institutions can share central resource configurations and have their own descriptive records. All administrators responsible for the consortia institutions, are also alerted. They can activate the central resources, configurations and parsers, or create local resource descriptions, add local categories, etc.

Resource configurations would have a multi-layer, inheritance based structure. The top level would be either a CKB resource configuration or a locally created one.
For resources offered by one provider that have some configuration settings in common (like for instance *EBSCO*), there would be a top level resource description and configuration with settings applicable to all dependent lower level resources. Each lower level resource (like for instance *Academic search premier* or *Business source elite*) would have its own configuration that inherits from the top level, but with overriding lower level settings.
Individual customers, or even different institutions in a consortia environment, can have

their own third level variations of the level above, for instance when a library wants to use all Conversion Tab entries of the CKB levels, but wishes to map one of the fields to another display label.
This way common settings can be managed at one level for all dependent resources and there is no need to maintain numerous copies that have most of their settings identical, with only a few differences.

Management information

There will also be a "Management Information" view, with the possibility of generating integrated reports and statistics according to all selection criteria needed.

Feedback

It would also be nice if there were some kind of mechanism to convey information about the local configurations to the Ex Libris CKB staff in order to alert them about local customer adjustments that might be candidates for CKB enhancements.
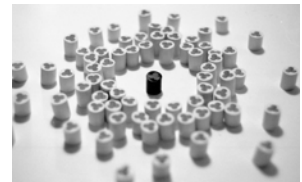
An integrated system like this would be installed as a complete system at customers' sites. But only the views that the customers have a licence for, will be made available for use.

Is this ideal image only a dream, or will it come true some day?

Perfect integration (IV)

Photo by: T.J. Romero

Perfect integration (V)

Photo by: "massenpunkt"

News

MetaLib 4.0 collaborative testing

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At the 2006 IGeLU meeting in Stockholm, the IGeLU Steering Committee began discussions with Ex Libris regarding how the IGeLU and ELUNA user groups could participate collaboratively in testing new versions of Ex Libris products with the objective of improving the quality of new releases. It was agreed to begin this new development with MetaLib 4.0, which was to be released in January 2007.

On November 1, 2006 Karen Groves, Ex Libris Product Manager for MetaLib, sent the user groups a proposal with two possible scenarios:

option 1: 1-3 MetaLib customers could travel to Ex Libris' offices in Jerusalem and work side by side with Ex Libris staff during the final testing phase (Dec. 3-14)

option 2: 5-6 MetaLib customers could have early remote access to the management and user interfaces during the month of January, and then following this initial period, 1-2 institutions would be part of an early adopter program where they would install and implement the software at their own institutions.

Each option had benefits and drawbacks. Option 1 would give us a chance to provide feedback on the product before its release, but it wouldn't give us a chance to test it out in our varied and unique production envi-ronments. Option 2 would allow us to influence the first couple of software updates to MetaLib, but we wouldn't be able to provide any feedback before the general release.

After weighing both options, the IGeLU and ELUNA SFX/MetaLib Product Working Groups chose option 1, primarily because it gave us the greatest opportunity to provide input into the process before the initial release of MetaLib 4.0, to have a look behind the scenes and see what kind of testing procedures are used by Ex Libris, and to actively participate in that process.

We created a set of criteria to measure any potential candidates by. The selected candidates would represent a balance of single installation and consortia, university and non-academic, English only and multilingual, while having a broad range of experience with the different management and user aspects of MetaLib. We also decided to send 2 participants from IGeLU and 2 from ELUNA to insure that each user group's constituencies were well represented. We then sent a "call for participation" to the SFX/MetaLib Discussion List and received nearly a dozen volunteers. From the group of volunteers, we chose 4 who were well suited to go on behalf of the user groups, they are Rui Francisco from the b-On consortia in Portugal (consortia, academic and hospitals, multilingual), Richard Cross from Nottingham-Trent University in England (single, academic, English), Lori Jargo from Brown University in the U.S.A (single, academic, English), and Licia Duncan from Union-PSCE in the U.S.A (single, academic, English). We sent one ELUNA representative and one IGeLU representative each week of the testing period with the intent to strengthen relationships between the user groups and to maximize the duration of our participation in the final testing phase.

We are just now beginning to analyze the results of testing, but the initial feedback from both the testers and Ex Libris has been very positive. The testers have reported that they were integrated into every aspect of the testing framework, brought into all of the debriefing meetings, and treated as full team members. Ex Libris reported that the process was very valuable for them as well. At first glance, this process looks like a valuable one for all involved and we hope that it may serve as a model for collaboration with Ex Libris going forward.

Ex Libris has now entered the "early adopter" phase, where each regional office has selected sites to implement MetaLib early. These early adopters will serve as an early detection and feedback loop to help identify needed documentation alterations and any software problems that will need to be resolved in early service packs. The user groups are currently working on collaborating with selected institutions to monitor how their experience goes.

The IGeLU and ELUNA SFX/MetaLib Product Working Groups would like to thank Ex Libris for opening up their testing process to the user groups and graciously covering the testers' travel costs. We would also like to thank the testers for their flexibility, hard work, and willingness to participate.

Teamwork

Photo by: Scott Robinson

Further Info

♦ *Mark Dehmlow is Chair of ELUNA SFX/MetaLib Product Working Group*

♦ *Lukas Koster is Coordinator of the IGeLU SFX/MetaLib Product Working Group*

♦ *Reports: http://igelu.org/sfxmetalib/pwg/documents/metalib4test*

News

Journey to Jerusalem: A tester's report

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In early December 2006, it was announced that Ex Libris had agreed to allow a small number of libraries around the world to take part in last-phase customer testing of the new version of MetaLib prior to its commercial release early in 2007.

For the 10-14 December testing period, myself and Lori Jargo from Brown University in the United States (representing IGeLU and ELUNA respectively) were selected for the task.

Arriving at Tel Aviv airport on Sunday morning, after an overnight flight from Heathrow, I had just enough time to drop off my bags at the hotel before continuing my taxi journey to the Ex Libris' offices in the heart of Jerusalem, in the company of our host, MetaLib Product Management Karen Groves, to begin testing: the Israeli working week starts bright and early on a Sunday.

Events began with a detailed briefing meeting that enabled the MetaLib development team to get a clearer idea of the precise skill-set Lori and myself could bring to the testing process and the areas that would be of particular interest and concern to us.

That kick-off meeting marked the start of an intensive, and hugely productive, week of rigorous software testing. Using both testing 'scripts' and open-ended scenarios, Lori and myself were able to explore the new functionality of MetaLib 4.0 from both the perspective of the user and of the application manager.

Amongst numerous improvements and enhancements introduced in the new version, users are likely to be immediately struck by the innovation of results 'clustering' when using MetaSearch. In version 4.0, results are not only ranked by relevance, but also grouped into topics and subtopics: making it far easier and more intuitive to identify relevant materials, particularly among large results sets. In addition, Ex Libris have done considerable work to make the new user interface 'compliant' in terms of accessibility (making it far easier, for example, for audio 'screen readers' to make sense of MetaLib pages) and to make customising the appearance of the interface much more straightforward (for instance, in the new version, MetaLib need no longer cling quite so tightly to the top-left quarter of the browser window). Many extremely valuable changes in behind-the-scenes administrative mechanisms are also being rolled out in this new version.

On different test servers, we both had the chance to run the MetaLib 4.0 'Upgrade Express' package, and as a consequence were able to recommend a number of well-received refinements to the workflow and reporting routines in this already much-improved upgrade service.

Lori and myself were able to identify and report a number of minor software 'bugs'. With the implementation process in its final weeks, and with the development team so close at hand, we often found that

'bugs' were fixed within a matter of minutes of being logged – and followed up by a face-to-face debriefing from the developer about the fix: an arrangement it would be very easy to get used to!

Both of us were invited to deliver a presentation to the wider product group on our local implementation of MetaLib, which gave rise to some very illuminating questions from the developers (most of whom rarely encounter customers in person). As well as acknowledging the many improvements that the new version of MetaLib will make available, Lori and myself were not discouraged from pointing out those areas where either one of us felt that opportunities to innovate had been missed, or where enhancements appeared to introduce unwelcome side-effects.

The work demands of the week left few opportunities to sightsee, or to enjoy the balmy autumnal Jerusalem weather. However, we were treated to a whistle-stop evening tour around the 'old city', and a guided night-time car ride through both the East and West of Jerusalem. Amongst many memorable restaurant meals arranged for us by our warmly hospitable hosts, a trip to a Lebanese café in the north of the city (an office favourite) was a particular highlight.

Those involved in both sides of the process seem in little doubt about the value of customer involvement in the version testing process in this way. It seems highly likely that this innovative experiment is likely to be repeated, and there is no obvious reason why it could not be extended to involve other products in the Ex Libris suite.

Testers walking through Jerusalem

To do or not to...

To eat or not to

Photos by: Richard Cross

News

Focus Group on E-Books

BY BEATE RUSCH,
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If you are not a regular Times reader, you may not have heard of the latest plans of our old comrade in books, Google: 22nd January 2007, The Times, UK: "Google and some of the world's top publishers are working on plans that they hope could do for books what Apple's iPod has done for music. The internet search giant is working on a system that would allow readers to download entire books to their computers in a format that they could read on screen or on mobile devices such as a Blackberry. ..."

The publishing industry, libraries and agencies are wide-awake. Everybody seems to digitize as much as possible. And the readers? Our patrons? They seem to like it. In fact they want more, "all information on my desktop" hasn't that been their plea all along?

E-books share some commonalities with e-journals, however they also differ in many important ways, in scale, business models, identifiers, OPAC interactions, versions, etc. These differences have significant implications for various Ex Libris systems. Administration and presentation of e-books. How to manage rights, how to handle metadata, how to do increase the power of linking, how to meta search. Many of you answered to an initial call for issues conducted by IGeLU and ELUNA and contributed some good questions.

The Steering Committees of ELUNA and IGeLU are currently discussing the set-up of an E-Book Focus Group with Ex Libris. The purpose of this Focus Group is to explore new and changed functionality raised by e-books, and to recommend an initial set of priority developments addressing the most pressing library needs in this domain. The idea is to identify key issues and to make recommendations across all products.

Be sure to hear from this group soon.

Photo by: "cindiann"

Benefits of hardcovers

VLENGEL
Integrating product user groups into a company user group

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VLENGEL - an acronym for Vlaamse En Nederlandse Gebruikersgroep Ex Libris - is the new Dutch and Flemish user group for customers of Ex Libris based on the Dutch language area.

VLENGEL was founded at the IGeLU conference in Stockholm, September 2006. The initiative for the foundation originated from SMUG-NL; the user group of the Dutch library consortium for MetaLib-SFX. The first official meeting of VLENGEL was 16th November 2006 at Utrecht University where 18 Ex Libris customers (13 Dutch and 5 Belgian) participated. Ex Libris Hamburg the support office for the Dutch speaking users took the opportunity of the user group meeting to introduce themselves.

Goals and perspectives
Though still not fully discussed and decided upon, VLENGEL has these ideas about its aims:
• To have a larger voice in IGeLU allowing input on solutions and improvements to Ex-Libris products.
• To act as a kind of supporters consultancy for active volunteers in IGeLU organs or working groups that have their grass roots in the groups participants.
• To improve and strengthen the professional contacts between employees of the various Ex Libris product customers. Such contacts can lead to exchange of knowledge on a very practical level in daily work, developments and new initiatives or to combined trainings and instructions for system librarians
• Streamlining the contact and improving communication to Ex Libris support
The new user group wanted to create an informal organisator. They wanted a user group that was very alive in sharing knowledge and experience, but devote little time and effort in organisations matters and discussions.

VLENGEL and the future
The future of VLENGEL is open. It all depends on people voluntarily spending time to make the user group worthwhile. But considering the enthusiasm and the speed in founding VLENGEL, we believe this group has a future. Opting for integration has served us well
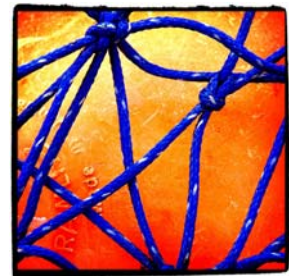
Photo by: Rob Garbett

Networking

Reports

Ex Libris and its customers –
Integrating MetaLib resource configuration skills

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In September 2006, for 2 days following the International IGeLU meeting in Stockholm Ex Libris demonstrated a renewed commitment to working with customers for a more productive future.

A workshop was held in Stockholm which extended the integration of skill sets between Ex Libris staff and customers in the creation of WEBCONFIG_COMPLETE and WEBCONFIG_XML configurations for MetaLib using Advanced CKB Tools previously reserved for Ex Libris staff. The aim of the advanced skills workshop was to empower customers to create local configurations which would permit searching on more than one search field of HTML and XML e-resources from the MetaLib search interface, and presenting the results within MetaLib (in the case of XML).

A further objective is to allow trained customer staff to contribute these locally developed resources to the CKB.

Attending this training in use of advanced knowledge base tools were a mix of staff from customers with demonstrated effectiveness in the creation of resource configurations for MetaLib, and Ex Libris staff from support offices in Scandinavia, Italy and Germany. The venue was courtesy of the Libris department in the National Library of Sweden.

In the electronic resource search landscape, there is no longer a focus by suppliers on Z39.50 compliance as the default protocol to enable searching of these resources outside the native interface. Reliance on XML as the protocol of choice is becoming more common, and this needs to be aligned with increased numbers of HTML or XML (web) resource configurations within the Ex Libris CKB, a time consuming process.

Ex Libris has recognised that enabling access to Advanced CKB Tools could provide larger numbers of configurations within the CKB to enable searching of HTML and XML based resources directly from MetaLib as well as satisfying the need for 'regional' configurations.

The experience gained within Ex Libris in terms of the time and effort required for creation and support of single search term HTML/XML (WEBCONFIG_SIMPLE) configurations has no doubt influenced a decision to promote the more capable WEBCONFIG_COMPLETE and WEBCON-

Photo by: Susan Liepa

FIG_XML configurations making MetaLib federated searching more inclusive with additional value for end users.

At this stage the opening up of use of these Advanced CKB Tools to suitably experienced customers is in trial mode and will be reassessed for effectiveness by Ex Libris, but is a welcome and collaborative step. Certainly the ability to search more than one field for HTML and XML resources must strengthen the overall usability of MetaLib.

In addition, providing customers with the knowledge and ability to make changes to WEBCONFIG_COMPLETE and WEBCONFIG_XML configurations will ensure that changes made by resource suppliers are able to be accommodated more quickly within the Ex Libris customer community.

CKB date: January 30, 2007	
Search and Retrieve (Full record)	
ALEPH300_NEW	2
ALEPH_12_1	4
ALEPH_X	25
EXTERNAL	64
WEBCONFIG_XML	25
Z39	738
Total	858
Search and Link (Hits only)	
EXTERNAL_JUMP	12
WEBCONFIG_SIMPLE	47
WEBCONFIG_COMPLETE	135
Total	194

Number of MetaLib CKB configurations by access type

Beyond

Are you a librarian 2.0 already?

BY SIBYLLE VOLZ
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Since the year 2005, the new buzzword in the library world is : "Library 2.0". It was based on the slogan "Web 2.0", which can briefly be described as "second generation web services". They allow participation and interaction of users and easy creation and modification of website content. Thus speaking of Library 2.0 means referring to Web 2.0 services that are used within library and information services. It means sharing of data, information and ideas with the patrons.

The blogosphere

Let's give some examples. The blogosphere is probably the fastest growing web community.
Technorati, a search engine for blogs, tracks 66.6 million blogs, with two new blogs being added every second (February 2007).
Libraries don't lag behind the times: the *Blogging Libraries Wiki* lists more than 280 blogs for academic libraries only (focus on US-American libraries), used for external communication with their patrons, and there are many more blogs created by librarians or information specialists to provide a platform for information and discussion.
Blogs are an excellent method to enhance interaction between libraries and their patrons. They allow information to spread quickly and are easy to use. They encourage patrons to make proposals on library holdings much more than through old fashioned e-mail-contact-forms. Via RSS feeds patrons can easily keep track of the latest blog entries.

Openness

One excellent thing about Library 2.0 is that it signifies openness: if you build explicit recommendation systems into your online catalogue, you allow your patrons to rate and rank your library holdings, to write reviews that may be helpful for others patrons. If you allow your patrons to tag your catalogue entries, you give up some control over metadata. Thus it significantly changes the traditional allocation of roles between librarians and their patrons. Social tagging is user centred as it's the patrons who classify library holdings by using their own terminology. This will definitely change library world.

Librarians 2.0 in Second Life?

Let's put it straight: the technologies mentioned here, and many more, like Wikis, Virtual Reference and Social Bookmarking, can serve our patrons in a much better way than before. But do we therefore have to turn into "Librarians 2.0" and become "gurus of the information age" (Stephen Abram 2006) and build "Cybrary Cities", as done by Talis and The Alliance Library System within the virtual world

"Second Life"? Marketing and online presence are probably the reasons for library engagement in virtual worlds.
I gave it a try: my newly created avatar – my virtual alter ego – hopped on Cybrary City for a short visit. It contains virtual representations of the above mentioned founders, of the ALA and of different Public and Special Libraries. Cybrary City was almost abandoned when I visited it. I didn't have the feeling that starting an online search at WorldCat search engine or reading full text United Nations documents – this and much more is possible at Cybrary City – is exactly what people are looking for when they settle down at Second Life and become "residents" (more than 3.3 million by February 2007): Places marked as "most popular" within Second Life were cybersex places, music clubs and casinos.

Library 2.0 – quo vadis?

Web 2.0 technologies come along with the revealing or gathering of personal data, as for instance in implicit recommendation systems that use data mining. That's a tricky thing for libraries where patron privacy has a huge impact. So, where to go with Library 2.0? I'd like us information specialists to watch closely those amazing new possibilities, to engage where it seems to be promising, but let us remember to use the technology that serves our mission and not vice versa.

Photo by: "Pathfinder Linden"
Library in Second Life (I)

Photo by: "thelibrarydao"
Library in Second Life (II)

Photo by: Kevin Lim
Library in Second Life (III)

Photo by: Michael Stephens
Library in Second Life (IV)

Further Info

♦ *The Blogging Libraries Wiki (http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/)*

♦ *Stephen Abram: "Web 2.0, Library 2.0, and Librarian 2.0: Preparing for the 2.0 World," SirsiDynix OneSource (January 2006, www.imakenews.com/sirsi/e_article000505688.cfm)*

♦ *Second Life (http://www.secondlife.com). Librarians at Second Life: "Taking on a Second Life" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygc95U4fT3Y&eurl=)*

♦ *Technorati http://www.technorati.com/*

♦ *Looking for more information? Just start a "Library2.0" search in any social bookmarking tool like del.icio.us, connotea, … or a blog search via Technorati … or talk with your colleagues ;-)*

SMUG 4 EU

Newsletter for SFX/MetaLib Users

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If you want to become an editor or a helping hand, please don't hesitate to contact:

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Copyright Note:

♦ *Please note in your calendar:*
   Second IGeLU Conference,
   Brno, September 3 - 5 2007.
   Hope to see you all there.