

ALEPH USER GROUP NORWAY

ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11



Report to the International User Group Meeting at the IGeLU Conference in Haifa

This will probably be the last report from the Norwegian Aleph user group.

On November 23rd 2010, our Aleph provider Bibliotekenes IT-senter (Bibits) announced to the steering committee that they would cease the support and maintenance of Aleph for Norwegian libraries in three years' time. Bibits then sent out a letter to the libraries affected. During the next few weeks Kjetil Hillestad and Tine Andersen from Bibits visited the major libraries to talk to the library managers about the decision.

The reasons for their decision were:

- Aleph has never consistently shown any profit for Bibits – on the contrary, Aleph has run at a loss most years
- The excellent working relationship on Nordic customization Bibits has had with Danish Aleph provider Fujitsu has been significantly reduced due to Ex Libris' acquisition of Fujitsu
- Ex Libris' new cloud-based library system (Alma) will not give Bibits the opportunity to charge maintenance fees, as these fees go directly to Ex Libris
- The Norwegian higher education consortium (Bibsys) selected OCLC's new system ahead of Alma in the tender for a new library system
- Bibits are developing their own library system (Mikromarc), a system that is in the top two library systems for Norwegian libraries. Bibits wants to focus their efforts on this system in the future

Bibits will end support and maintenance of Aleph for Norwegian libraries on December 31st 2013. Libraries who want to continue using Aleph may enter contract negotiations with Ex Libris in Germany.

During April, Ex Libris in Germany visited the three Norwegian libraries they see as potential customers: Stavanger Public Library, the Kristiansand area library consortium and the Norwegian Parliament Library.

User group activities in 2010/2011

The annual user group meeting and conference was held at Hotel 33 in Oslo, March 10th and 11th 2011. The main theme this year was of course the situation all the libraries now share: having to select a new library system. Kjetil Hillestad from Bibits explained their decision, and among other things there were presentations on RFID systems and how to best prepare for data transfer to a new system. The steering committee also organized a short course on how to write tenders.

Though this conference was kind of a wake for Aleph in Norway, the mood during the conference nevertheless was good and everyone was getting ready for the arduous process of transferring to another library system.

The user group will continue with the current steering committee and facilitate the sharing of experiences with the tender processes. We publish the tenders on our website <http://alephbrukergruppe.wordpress.com/> as they are published to the official tender database in Norway. The user group will continue as long as there is a need for us, and will eventually be disbanded.

Bibits has been unable (or unwilling) to address the problems the libraries experience with the customized web module that Bibits developed for version 18 in 2009. This was brought up during a meeting with Bibits, but improvements have failed to materialize.

The user group chair Helge Risvand attended the IGeLU annual conference in Ghent, Belgium in September 2010.

About the user group

The user group currently has 23 members, though this number will dwindle fast as libraries move from Aleph to a new system. The member libraries are very diverse; among the members are the Norwegian Parliament Library, large and small public libraries and school libraries. A large part of the membership are consortia – in all, more than 100 libraries are using Aleph in Norway.

Our website is at <http://alephbrukergruppe.wordpress.com/> and is in Norwegian only.

All Aleph libraries are now on version 18; the last to transfer was Stavanger Public Library which transferred in December 2010.

Closing remarks

The Norwegian Aleph User Group will not participate at the IGeLU conference this year. We would like to extend our thanks to the whole IGeLU community for the cooperation through many years.

For the Norwegian Aleph User Group

Helge Risvand, chair

Afterword

The 2010 report observed that the library system market in Norway was very stable. Well, it seems things change quite a lot quicker than we anticipate...