

Association of ALEPH users in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (SUAleph)

2014 Annual Report

Introduction

Association of ALEPH users in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (SUAleph) was established in spring 1996. It is an informal and open association with free admission. It unites 24 institutions. The sole distributor for ExLibris products is Mutlidata Praha spol. s r. o.

Collectively updated web page of SUAleph can be found at <http://www.sualeph.cz>

Meetings

SUAleph group meets two times a year, in spring and in autumn. The later comes after IGeLU conference, therefore ideas and conclusions from the conference are presented to local colleagues. The autumn meeting is traditionally held by Brno University of Technology, the spring meeting is hosted by some other member institution. Spring meeting of 2014 took place at the Academic Library of University of South Bohemia (in České Budějovice).

Topics

Since 2013 report two meetings (autumn 2013 and spring 2014) were held with following main topics (both formal and informal):

Primo installations

So far, three institutions have selected Primo as their discovery solution. Accidentally, each of them in a different mode. University of Pardubice runs Primo as SaaS provided by Multidata (local distributor), Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information has local installation and Brno University of Technology subscribes to the Total Care outsourced program (distant cloud server maintained and supported by Ex Libris). This variety may bring helpful comparative experience.

Future upgrades

In the last report I wrote about problems that big libraries have with fast succession of new versions of Aleph. The complexity of their business forces them to postpone the transitions as far as possible. This results into the strategy of omitting every other version and upgrade bi-versionally (e.g. from 20 to 22). Moreover, smaller libraries tend not to precede the big ones with upgrades. Which, to a certain extent, negates Ex Libris' strategy of faster upgrade cycle.

Content expansion

Rather peculiar but still noticeable trend can be observed regarding the variety of Aleph items. Libraries, with intentions to meet users' requests as well as practical institutional needs, started to lend various non-bibliographic items via the system. Ranging from rather standard e-book readers, over chairs (study places) to umbrellas and frisbees.

Alma

Although coming of Alma into The Czech Republic is nowhere near, some movement can be seen. Ex Libris is slowly approaching libraries' representatives with offers of Alma & Primo as a next generation solution (Ex Libris solution days in Bratislava and Olomouc).

Future

The cancer of requests for efficient spending of already cut-down budgets has affected the selection processes of discovery systems so far. It is possible, that it will claim its toll on ILS as well. There is a certain threat that some institutions will be forced to abandon reliable solution (Aleph) in favor of the one offered by the lowest bidder regardless of other qualities.