

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

2016 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. Charles University in Prague became the distributor for ExLibris products.

Collectively updated web page of SUAleph can be found at <http://www.sualeph.cz>. However, a new presentation is currently under construction.

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 2016 took place at The Research Library in Hradec Králové.

Topics

Since 2015 report two meetings (autumn 2015 and spring 2016) were held with following main topics (both formal and informal):

Online payments

As more and more libraries adopt some kind of online payments solution, this topic still remains in the spotlight. Dealing with finances is always delicate, therefore it requires great deal of planning, testing and sharing valuable experience afterwards.

Central library portal (CPK)

In the late 2014, the nation-wide project of building a portal providing a single access point to services of all (involved) libraries was launched. Moravian Library was assigned to find technical solution. SUAleph community presents a great opportunity to discuss and channel ideas, requirements, news etc., as many of member institutions also plan to participate on CPK. Therefore the portal related matters are also among our main topics.

After Aleph?

The Aleph development cycle is steadily approaching its end and the libraries are looking for replacement. Aleph maintenance costs are already through the roof and the main requirement for the next solution is to cut them. The natural step would be to migrate to Alma. But no institution in the Czech republic have received the price estimate for Alma yet, however, we all believe that it won't be any cheaper than Aleph. The costs would have different structure, of course, because it would be a transition from standalone local installation to cloud solution, but the overall costs are not likely to be lower.

Therefore, some institutions are already looking for a solution outside of the ExLibris universe. The most obvious option is an open source solution of a kind. Koha is the most discussed system. This topic has never been officially on the schedule, but its undeniable importance cannot be overlooked.

Future

We are slowly preparing for the future without Aleph and even without ExLibris. This would have serious ramifications for our user group. Not that we would stop meeting and collaborating, but it would render our (at least some members) association with ExLibris products and IGeLU questionable or even pointless.