

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

2017 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.

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 2017 took place at The National Library of Technology in Prague.

Topics

Actually, there was only one major topic in early 2017:

New Maintenance Contracts

Traditionally, most of Czech and Slovak institutions did not sign the maintenance contracts directly with Ex Libris. Instead, Ex Libris contracted local distributor who provided maintenance to the institutions. Ex Libris decided to cease this arrangement. The transition took a couple of years and in 2017 the institutions and Ex Libris were finally ready to sign new contracts.

However, the institutions found number of terms in the proposed contracts unsatisfactory or even unacceptable. I was, as the Sualeph Chair, commissioned to express our concerns. In a letter to Ofer Mosseri I mentioned three points of major concerns which were found troublesome across all the institutions:

1. Accordance with the laws of Israel – this is rather unacceptable for legal departments all across our institutions. Some more proximal governing law will have to be negotiated.
2. Maintenance fees – increase politics is formulated way too vague. „From time to time“ one-sided increase complicates fiscal planning under tight budgets, which is a constant condition in our institutions.
3. Warranties and Liability – Total warranties and liability waiver seems unacceptable too, our institutions will require Ex Libris to take on some basic responsibility for their product.

Ex Libris reply was delivered personally by Ron Biran during Inforum conference in Prague in May 2017:

1. It would be possible to sign the contracts with accordance to Czech law.
2. Maintenance fees increase will be specified not to top 3%. However binding the fees with Czech inflation was not accepted.
3. Ex Libris maintains its position in this point as similarly formulated warranties are standard in software contracts.

As you can see my negotiating efforts were met with half success. However, the final contract is always negotiated between Ex Libris and the respective institution and the final terms in the individual contract may vary.