MELI (Ex Libris Users Group – Israel)
Annual Report 2025

Introduction

Founded in 2005, MELI is the Israeli Group for Ex Libris users, dedicated to fostering knowledge, sharing and collaboration among Ex Libris academic libraries, focusing on innovation, accessibility and integration with Ex Libris products.

The Group includes 44 institution members:

- 10 university libraries

- 29 college libraries

- 4 special libraries: (including the National Library of Israel and the Israel Museum)

- 1 public library

- New members:

  o The Jerusalem College of Technology - Lev Academic Center

  o Zfat Academic College

Steering Committee Members:

• Naomi Abraham (Bar-Ilan University) - Chair

• Boaz Dotan (University of Haifa) - Treasurer

• Irit Kloner-Margalit (Tel Aviv University) - Website, Listservs Administrator

• Amy Dinnerstein (College of Management Academic Studies) - Website

• Yifat Albahari (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) - Recording Secretary

• Alona Kabesa (Tel-Hai Academic College)

• Yifat Belous (Weizmann Institute of Science)

MELI Product Working Groups:

MELI currently maintains three active working groups dedicated to addressing matters related to primary Ex Libris products:

Alma Product Working Group – Focuses on optimizing Alma functionality and metadata management across institutions.
Chair: Dafna Mizrahi-Melcer (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Primo Product Working Group – Dedicated to enhancing search and retrieval in Primo VE, especially for Hebrew and Arabic content.
Chairs: Michal Lahav & Nir Zinger (University of Haifa)

Electronic Resources Product Working Group – Works to improve access, integration and metadata quality of Israeli electronic resources in Alma and Primo.
Chair: Sarit Sambol-Szasz (Bar-Ilan University)

Israeli Representation in IGeLU and International Groups:

- **Analytics CoP** - Maya Amichal, Group Coordinator (Weizmann Institute of Science), Ariel Lock (National Library of Israel)
- **IGeLU Conference Planning Committee** - Maya Amichal, (Weizmann Institute of Science)
- **RapidILL PWG** - Dr. Lynne Porat (University of Haifa)
- **Primo PWG** - Nir Zinger, Enhancement Coordinator (University of Haifa)
  - Aha Implementation Task Force
  - CDI Advisory Group
- **Next Discovery Experience User Experience Focus Group**
- **Primo BO to VE Feature Alignment Project** - Nir Zinger (University of Haifa)
- **Alma UX Focus Group -** Ruhama Amouyal-Liberman, Olga Gilshtein (Bar-Ilan University), Dr. Aviva Levin-Belousov (University of Haifa), Dafna Mizrahi-Melcer (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Esther Guggenheim, Dr. Ahava Cohen (National Library of Israel), Naomi Galor (Reichman University), Daphna Frimerman-Kolka, Sivan Kedar, Rona Terenblit (Tel Aviv University)
- **Alma Authority Focus Group** - Dr. Ahava Cohen (National Library of Israel), Sharon Shapira-Glaubach (University of Haifa)

MELI Activities:

MELI SC Main Activities 2024/5

- Membership according to institution (not per library)

- Growing number of volunteers for PWGs

- Overall rise of participants in MELI@10 (100-150 participants per session)

- Increasing participation of presenters from MELI at IGeLU conference

- Changes in the MELI SC: More than half of Steering Committee members completed their terms; new members joined, alongside a newly appointed Chair, maintaining continuity in ongoing projects.

More MELI Activities:

MELI@10 Webinars between November 2024 and June 2025:

- Primo Research Assistant: Revealing the Magic – The Hidden Work of Artificial Intelligence
- MELI 2024 Activity Report
- BibFrame / Linked Open Data
- ALETHEA: An AI Tool to Assist Lecturers and Students
- Enriching Bibliographic Records Using AI
- Managing Digital Archival Materials in an Academic Library
- My Artificial Cataloging Assistant – AI in the Metadata Editor
- Primo NDE UI
- Mixpanel for the NDE UI

Over 1000 participants in all. Presentations and recordings for all webinars are available on the MELI website / MELI YouTube channel.

Online Workshop:

- Turning Data into Insights – Using COUNTER and SUSHI in Alma.

MELI Annual Conference 2024

The 18th MELI Annual Conference was held in December 2024 at MUZA – Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv. It was the first fully in-person conference since COVID, welcoming over 200 participants and achieving high overall satisfaction.

Preparations are underway for the 2025 MELI Annual Conference, scheduled for December 2025.

Annual Meeting with Ex Libris Management:

The Steering Committee and Chairs of the Alma, Primo and ER PWGs met with Ex Libris management in May 2025 to discuss specific issues that influence the Israeli community.

Working groups activities and achievements:
Alma Product Working Group:

- Resolved indexing and MARC indicator issues
- Fixed UI language inconsistencies between Alma and Leganto
- Improved search behavior for hyphens and apostrophes
- Hebrew support in Metadata Assistant - under review
- RTL improvements expected in the upcoming BIBFRAME editor

Electronic Resources Working Group:
- Added Israeli databases to CDI: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Shalem Foundation, Ben-Yehuda Project, Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, and Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs – currently underway
- Reviewed existing Israeli databases for metadata integrity and access
- Initiated engagement with Israeli vendors for Provider Platform inclusion

Primo Product Working Group:

- Enhanced Hebrew and Arabic retrieval in Primo VE
- Integrated Melingo Arabic component; awaiting new version in Q1 2026
- Improved CDI metadata for Israeli databases (DOI, ISBN, Danacode)
- Addressed UI directionality issues in Primo's interface
- Led request to add Danacode as a local identifier in CDI
- Formed sub-group for NDE UI and MixPanel feedback

IGeLU 2025 Travel Grant Recipients:

This year MELI placed emphasis on "giving back to the community" and thus increased the amount of Travel Grant to the IGeLU conference, giving priority to first time participants:

- Uri Gafni (Bar-Ilan University) - Open a Library Card in Other University Libraries
- Esther Guggenheim (National Library of Israel) - Adapting and Advancing with Alma Releases
- Guy Shahaf (Israel Institute of Technology) - Build your own theses AI agent cataloger
- David Odes (Herzog College) - From Four to One: Merging Distinct Academic Libraries with Alma & Primo
- Hagay Bar (Tel Aviv University) - Unifying Knowledge and Breaking Down Silos: Enhancing Access to Professional Insights
- Nofar Eliash (Tel-Hai Academic College) - Library Operations in Emergency and High-Pressure Situations
- Amit Niv (University of Haifa) - AI for metadata extraction

Naomi Abraham - Chair
Submitted to the IGeLU National User Group meeting (INUG)
on behalf of the MELI Steering Committee

September 2025.