

## Ex Libris General Questions & Answer

### 9<sup>th</sup> IGeLU Meeting

#### Session 13

September 17 2014

Minutes taken by Fiona Burton, with assistance of Mark Dehmlow and Peter Klien

(as at 2014-12-21)

Ex Libris staff on the panel:

- Matti Shem-Tov, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Bar Veinstein, Corporate VP Resource Management Solutions
- Bettina Forster, VP Professional Services Europe
- Oren Beit-Arie, Chief Strategy Officer
- Tamar Sadeh, Director of Discovery & Delivery Strategy
- Yair Amsterdam, Chief Operating Officer

Moderator: Peter Klien, Austrian Library Network (OBVSG)

#### Question 1

##### *Salesforce*

*What plans does Ex Libris have to improve turnaround times on the resolution of Salesforce cases, particularly in light of the increasing number of libraries adopting Alma? Are there plans to increase the size of the Alma support and development teams as more libraries come on board?*

Yair noted that resolution time is a very important measurement and so they have worked to introduce the Support tier module for Alma and Primo to improve resolution time. Having the Support tier model should allow more time for R&D. They are working on staffing levels to deal with increasing cases and analysts. They are also looking at improving interfaces with R&D, with weekly responses to R&D, with the aim of improving resolution time for cases.

#### Question 2

##### *Support cases closed without timetable*

*Why are support cases / development requests being closed, particularly for Alma, without a date / release when it will be fixed? Whilst it's good to know that they're on the roadmap it makes it difficult to plan and to keep our colleagues informed if we have no timescale for when issues will be resolved.*

Yair noted they had already received this feedback at the conference, and as a result, they are looking at changing process because of this feedback. For the cases closed before the relevant release, they will be looking at a new status for these items, e.g. fixed by R&D. More information will be coming about this after the conference. Yair commented it is clear we should only close

incidents when the customer gets the fix, so they can monitor it is actually fixed, and then close it after release.

The Alma PWG has been talking with Ex Libris about the voting process and Salesforce process. There will be some kind of voting process where enhancements will go through that process

### *Question 3*

#### *Telephone support?*

*We frequently use Ex Libris support in order to solve problems with our products (SFX, Primo). Unfortunately the technical assistance is not very efficient:*

- *Slow response times*
- *Difficulties in understanding the problems, especially at the first line of analysis*
- *Excessive slowness in solving cases: sometimes the initial scenario has changed at the closure of a case*
- *Unresolved problems after many messages*

*Could you also provide a telephone support service, maybe managed by local Ex Libris offices?*

Martin Büscher noted there is no general global telephone support however with the 24x7 Hub there are free phone numbers which can be used for urgent cases when the system is down.

Ex Libris also believe everything should be in the CRM, which is the major support reference database, which is also better for the customer.

However, if for any reason when an issue is stuck, the analyst can ring the customer. If customers want a call, they should update the case to indicate this and add the phone number. Customers are encouraged to use the escalation process to escalate issues to management.

### *Question 4*

#### *Primo and Aleph Support*

*From our perspective the (German) Aleph support is far better than the one for Primo. Examples: 1) Relevant answers (non-templates) are given faster. 2) Better understanding of given descriptions and the affected environment.*

*What kind of outlook can you give for the Primo support?*

Martin reported that their aim is to have same high-level support for all groups. Regarding Primo, they are adding headcount in North America & Europe, including one new staff member in Hamburg, with another position open. They are working to improve the knowledge of analysts, including setting up a knowledge transfer process. With the new Tier 1 and Tier 2 structure, they strongly believe they are addressing these issues, which will improve quality, with the fast entry of case by Tier 1, and a Tier 2 consisting of product experts. It is noted there are a few very good Aleph analysts who are now working with Primo and this is resulting in better interoperability resolution.

## Question 5

### *Support for local installations*

*What is Ex Libris' strategy for providing services (example: for upgrades) for local installations with the concentration by Ex Libris on the cloud? How will Ex Libris ensure that the competence for supporting institutions using local installation will stay at Ex Libris?*

Bettina noted they provide Support and Professional Services for local customers. Services for local customers include training, upgrades and 24x7 for local customers. Although many customers are moving to hosted, there are lot of services for local customers.

There is co-operation between Support and Professional Services to maintain knowledge, and working on improve processes. There are also discussions during conference to ensure there are smooth processes within company including good communication.

## Question 6

### *Hosted versus local installation*

*On Monday morning Ex Libris has shown us the impressive percentage of new customers which are hosted by Ex Libris. Are there any plans to draw existing customers with local installation into Ex Libris hosted environment?*

Matti noted there is a major shift from local to the Cloud, with a higher percentage of customers moving to the Cloud. However, there is a huge local customer base. Ex Libris cherishes the customer basis, and are not pushing anybody to the Cloud, and it will be a long time before the majority of customers of Aleph, Voyager, Rosetta, Primo customers move to the Cloud, possibly 10-15 years.

When looking at corporate revenue, it shows how important it is to provide development and support for the local customer base, and so support for local customers will remain the same.

## Question 7

### *Performance of hosted products*

*Customers of various products hosted in the cloud have seen sluggish response times and jobs/processes either failing or taking a very long time - either when the customer is new to that product or when the products have been used for some time but performance is suddenly degraded.*

*What steps are Ex Libris taking to make sure that all hosted products are performing satisfactorily and in a stable environment especially as many new customers are coming online with Primo and Alma?*

Barak Rosenblat, Cloud Hosting for Ex Libris, reported the 24x7 Hub uses monitoring alerts, and contains groups of people expert about many domains including complex issues. They are looking at constantly improving the monitoring of activities to improve the stability of performance. This includes more proactive monitoring, trend analysis, response analysis, and ensures services are scalable. They undertake root cause analysis of any issue associated with the Cloud, and it is noted that while the number of hosted customers is increasing the number of service issues are reducing.

#### *Question 8*

##### *Alma and the Cloud*

*Are there any options of Alma NOT being hosted in the Cloud and if yes, can you (attempt to) tell us what the advantages are of choosing this option*

Matti states this is not an option. Initially they had been talking about a local version of Alma but now they are very definite this is not needed. With SaaS they cannot support both local and cloud versions. It is noted that pure cloud systems are only in cloud and this is how we will keep Alma.

#### *Question 9*

##### *Hosting site in Australia?*

*Can you talk about issues related to having a hosting site in Australia, as opposed to hosting Australian customers at the Singapore site?*

Yair noted that originally datacenters were implemented in North America and Europe, while the Singapore datacenter was implemented in 2013. This decision about Singapore followed extensive analysis about where to open the datacenter, including which location would offer the best performance for Asia Pacific customers. Ex Libris will continue to monitor performance of data center to ensure it meets the needs of the customer. Currently no issues are being seen with the Singapore location so they believe a new datacenter at this stage.

#### *Question 10*

##### *Page down message*

*We are a Cloud customer. Our Primo is maintained by the Ex Libris Cloud team. Several times a year we have a short downtime when Service Packs are installed. What irritates me and my customers is, that during the downtime of our Primo web server no meaningful ""Maintenance! Please come back later." message is shown.*

*Can the Cloud team in our data center please find a workaround for this situation?*

Barak noted they are notifying customers about the status page and they are advising customers a week in advance about any maintenance windows. For end- users there are solutions and they are investigating this for Primo.

#### *Question 11*

##### *Data security*

*The Ex Libris Privacy policy found at the web-page states among others: "We may share or transfer Personal Information (i) as directed by our library customers, to whom Users originally disclosed their Personal Information; and (ii) as may be required by law. Can personal information be disclosed to US government authorities, if a US court orders Ex Libris to transfer this kind of information? Not long ago Microsoft was ordered by a US court to disclose personal information although this was stored in Ireland.*

*Please clarify your position regarding protection of personal information of users from EU-libraries which are hosted in Amsterdam.*

Bar noted that Ex Libris has been working very hard about data protection lawyers. Microsoft, which has a parent company in US, was asked by the Court to provide a subsidiary with data for arising from a drug matter. This was not an issue arising from the Patriot Act but a result of treaties covering law enforcement activities. It was noted that Microsoft are rejecting this request.

The Ex Libris situation is very different with an Israeli Headquarters with the European datacenter managed by the European entity. In addition, Israel is one of 14 countries that the EU accepts as OK for data protection, and so this does not compromise any data protection issues. This can be confirmed if you Google 'EU data protection Israel'.

Bar noted under data protection laws, courts do not allow access to European data, so there is no jurisdiction, or paths for any such data access to be given. There is only an issue if the parent company is a US company, which is not the case for Ex Libris. In addition, if there was any request, they would fight in court, as there are no legal grounds.

*Question from floor:*

*What is the situation with the data center in US?*

Bar stated they are using the data service provider Equinix, which has a US parent company. However they are working with the European subsidiary. Equinix just provides the building whereas all servers, equipment is managed by the Ex Libris. Equinix do not have server access but just provide the power and system and so is not a 'sub-processor'. Bar noted that the US Datacenter is managed by the US company, and so courts could have jurisdiction, but they have not been approached.

*Question from floor:*

*What is the situation for APAC datacenter?*

The APAC datacenter is run by Ex Libris from Israel, so again there is no legal jurisdiction for US courts. To investigate this further around data security search for 'Singapore adequate legal protection'.

Matti noted that Ex Libris Israel owns the APAC datacenter

*Question 12*

*Data security and privacy in hosted solution*

*How does Ex Libris prevent unauthorized access to the personal data in their hosted solutions? Are our data in the centers in Amsterdam, Chicago and Singapore secure? Why doesn't Ex Libris choose a European data host who must not follow the patriot act?*

Bar referred to slides that were part of the Alma presentation. Security is a multi-layer process with ISO certification obtained at many levels. It starts in development where code needs to be developed with security in mind. For example, developers need to be aware of any vulnerabilities and ways to avoid these when developing code cycle. Penetration testing is undertaken by third

party companies, which including getting the other companies to try to penetrate data. He agreed that certification is important with Ex Libris certified until 2018 and they repeat the third party audit on an annual basis, including for all data centers and all offices.

Regarding risk to applications, Ex Libris are taking a strict approach. For example, SSL is the default access and there will be no option to not use SSL. They are looking at implementing this with Primo and requiring customers to use SSL.

Security officers are employed, who are dedicated roles who work full-time in this area to make sure everything is secure. There is more information available on this including white papers.

Ex Libris as a global company had tried to find the best providers that are out there. Equinix is one of the best datacentre, and is rated in the top three internationally and hosts some of the biggest international companies. They make sure that they work according to a very secure approach in Europe, North American and APAC but there is a good security separation as Equinix just owns the buildings and does not own servers and they cannot access data.

Matti noted they were one datacenter company that could provide worldwide datacenters, otherwise they would have to work with a number of companies. A list of other companies that are being hosted could be provided.

Bar noted they have internal and external advisors that are legal experts, and have defended the fact that Equinix is not a sub-processor, an argument that has been accepted by European countries.

Comment from floor:

They have experienced slow response, which could be caused by their geographical location, as they need to access data from Austria.

#### *Question 13*

##### *Alma Community Zone*

*Currently, the Alma Community Zone incorporates global authority files from the Library of Congress (LC), the United States National Library of Medicine (NLM), and the German National Library (GND).*

*Does Ex Libris intend to integrate \*soon\* other main global authority files, like those of the French National Library (Autorités BnF, RAMEAU) or the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF)? If so, when?*

Dvir Hoffman reported they are loading authority records, with the roadmap indicating which sources they are loading and they have plans to add further sources depending on the number of customers and their importance. For example, they are looking at Maori and Canadian sources depending on their use in the relevant countries.

They are also investigating LOD options and this will be built into the roadmap.

The approach will depend on the needs of customers and what is needed, when.

#### *Question 14*

### *Alma and agile development*

*If Alma is really an agile product, then why is the customer feedback not incorporated in the product using a regular enhancements cycle? Development partners or individually speaking to institutions does not really qualify Alma to be a true agile product, neither does monthly releases. Can you please respond?*

Oren stated yes they are starting this process. There have been discussions with the Steering Committee about including Alma into the formal enhancement process, while taking into account what is identified in the roadmap. Previously Alma was very young, but it is now a toddler so it is time to include it in the enhancement process.

Bar noted that with every monthly release, the majority of improvements have been driven by customer feedback so while there hasn't previously been an enhancement process, its development has been driven by users and the community.

### *Question 15*

#### *Integration of Alma and Rosetta*

*What is Ex Libris' vision concerning the integration of Alma and Rosetta? Which system is going to handle which part of digital asset management in practice? Is there a roadmap for the integration and if so, what does it look like?*

Dvir noted that Rosetta is a product that is increasing seen as a high-end digital asset management that includes digital preservation and allows for complex objects. Ex Libris is working on adding into Alma, digital management, support for digital repositories and special collections. More information will be provided in the future.

Alma is a unified solution, and Alma allows the publishing of data into Primo, which allows for automated data management. They are continuing to evaluate information and can give more details to customers. They have already started with the more critical aspects of integration and will work on this further when it makes sense.

### *Question 16*

#### *Rosetta and DigiTool*

*In recent presentations of Rosetta Ex Libris claims it to be a complete digital asset management and preservation solution. Which are the features supporting digital asset management - as opposed to preservation related activities? Is there a roadmap for when Rosetta will replace DigiTool as a product?*

Dvir reported that development has started focusing on preservation, and are investigating adding more digital asset management features including editing and access rights management. They will continue to enhance features and focus on more issues.

It was noted that Rosetta is not designed to replace DigiTool, but they are evaluating on a case-by-case basis to see what features are required. Rosetta is a system that stands alone, and often relates to legal deposit libraries.

It was noted that customers can move to Alma, as digital is being added to Alma.

Bar noted they will be publishing details of digital features in Alma, including at workflow level. This will help customers decide whether they can use Alma, or a combination of Alma and Rosetta.

#### *Question 17*

##### *KnowledgeBases in Alma, SFX and Primo Central*

*Can you please explain the way Ex Libris handles the existence of KBs for SFX, Alma and Primo Central. There is a partial (though not full) overlap in requirements from these systems, and even some dependencies.*

*In what way does Ex Libris make sure all KBs are kept in sync and at the right quality level?*

Oren noted that Richard Ovenden spoke about the legacy of past and promise of future, which is very relevant to this question. Processes worked in print, and are now working with e-resources, so the transition needs to be seamless, and they are hoping that one single KB will solve the issues. However with so many institutions, infrastructure, they need to respect the legacy while supporting the future.

Therefore, in this transition stage they are doing this in a number of ways. Originally Ex Libris had organizationally different teams, but they are working on developing unified teams that have responsibility across products. Previously, the team managing the SFX KB contacted providers regarding linking, whereas another team contacted them about PCI. Now there is one team focused on a single goal devoted to services that are derived from data. This is a work in progress but things are getting better and should improve in the future.

In addition they are looking at the tools that manage the SFX CKB and the Alma Uresolver, with the aim of adding automation that will create information in both environments – SFX and the Community Zone (CZ).

#### *Question 18*

##### *Primo Central content*

*How do you characterize the content scope of Primo Central today and where do you want to go within the next three years? What kind of publication types you want to integrate and who are your preferred partners on the publishing side? As a library with a focus on STM we would be happy about patents and standards for example.*

Tamar noted Ex Libris is focused on the academic environment, and therefore focuses on resources for academic and not K-12, including open access information and institutional repositories. Currently 25% of material is open access and the Primo Central team is looking at everything they



can get hold of, as long as it is of good quality, including its metadata and linking ability. They are also investigating research data sources, and note they source some but will improve this in the future.

Regarding patents, Ex Libris is trying to understand how important this is to the community. In the recent survey only 60 libraries responded, of which 2/3 said patents were important. However, the survey showed that Primo searching was not good enough with 62% saying the search needed to change. Ex Libris is investigating integration with a third party as a separate tab to enable sophisticated patent-oriented searching.

Regarding publishers, Ex Libris has a good relationship with ProQuest and hopes to continue negotiating with EBSCO.

#### *Question 19*

##### *Strategy for UStat?*

*What is the strategy of Ex Libris for UStat? Will UStat stay as a standalone product and development?*

*If it will be developed, is this development in cooperation with Alma analytics?*

*If it will be developed, when can we use Ustat for books counter data?*

Bar stated that yes, this is being kept independent from a development aspect, as there are lots of SFX customers. They are adding support for Counter4, and adding SUSHI vendors. Alma customers use UStat in order to upload data from vendors, with relevant analysis performed in Alma including cost per usage and comparison of resources. However the future direction is to build analytical tools within Alma.

Question from the floor:

What about book data?

Dvir noted they were looking at adding book data and are working on support Book report 1 and 2. They are analyzing this against the current UStat code base and within Alma. They are working on a plan and they should have a concrete plan within 1-2 months about when data will be available.

#### *Question 20*

##### *IPv6*

*Are your products IPv6 compliant?*

*What is the roadmap for migration for those that aren't?*

Shlomo noted they have been following IP6 for many years and are reviewing products against the plans. All hosted customers can handle this in the Cloud and that the Voyager Linux version is certified.

All products that integrate together must be IPv6 and Ex Libris undertake a review every 6 months of the situation. The assessment is that it is not time yet to implement as they do not believe any customer is ready for implementation. However if such a customer believes they are ready, they should make Ex Libris aware, so they can then put into effect the plans they have ready.

#### Question 21

##### *Change management in LMS?*

*Aleph and/or Alma : As admin tasks create a bottleneck situation we're looking at alternative workflows that would enable us to "outsource" recurring service requests such as password resets so that our systems librarian can focus on incident management instead.*

*How will change management and service management processes be supported by future version of the library management system?*

Bar noted that changing passwords is not change management. In general, they are continuously developing APIs that will allow self-service, including password resets. Therefore, the answer for this is through APIs.

#### Question 22

##### *Quality Assurance*

*Quality Assurance is a big issue in various Ex Libris products. As an example, there was a Primo Hotfix within two days after Service Pack 4.8.*

*Why not use automated regression and integration testing tools for this? If you do use it, then why is it not finding out issues?*

*This is not a new issue. Year after year, this keeps happening and customers are getting really frustrated. Furthermore, please don't answer the question by saying you should be on the Ex Libris cloud.*

#### Question 23

##### *Quality Assurance*

*After an upgrade to Aleph 22 we have experienced major difficulties with printing from the client. The reason is unclear, but seems to have something to do with integration of a third party software called Bersoft HTMLPrint (a new version of this s/w was used for Aleph 22). Problems are: 1) It is not possible to copy from the preview window (a degraded functionality) 2) In some libraries the system is unable to print to a default printer. This raises questions:*

*Which policies does Ex Libris follow when using a third party product in their own products? Does Ex Libris test integrations with third party products especially prior to rolling out a new release or SP?*

#### Question 24

##### *Quality Assurance*

*I am concerned with the quality assurance of product releases and versions. There are continuing issues with monthly releases breaking functionality in Alma. There always seems to be something major in the Primo upgrades. Even the most mature Ex Libris products have not been exempt from serious problems (for example the recent disappearing display rules in SFX).*

*Please explain how Ex Libris plans to remedy these issues? Does/will Ex Libris use automatic iteration testing and regression testing in their quality control?*

Combined with Q23 and Q24

Bar noted there can always be problems with regression occurring. However they are trying to change processes that should make difference. For details, customers should look at Tamar's presentation. Ex Libris currently uses automatic testing products. For the newer products, testing occurs on an automatic cycle every night, which allows releases to be regression testing on a nightly basis. They are also working on additional services to continue and improve the testing process.

From June 2014 the Primo quality team has been integrated into the development team with this implemented for Alma 1 year ago. The concept of combining Quality Assurance and Development into one team is better.

The third improvement step has been with the release methodology. For Alma, new releases are loaded into the Sandbox, before being released into the production instance. The releases are all on a scheduled cycle. They are looking at this for other products, for example Primo.

Ex Libris is constantly looking at improving this at a process basis, but are trying to address this in different ways.

For example, how quickly you can fix things so if problems are found then how quickly they can be fixed. For example: developing very quick Hot Fixes if required; addressing all the regressions. They have taken many steps to improve the situation and are working on improving this for 2015.

*Question from the floor:*

*Is there a success criteria that must be worked to? How can we be assured that all steps are addressed?*

Bar noted they used to measure how many errors per code but processes have been put in place to reduce the errors, and increase the satisfaction score. He noted that if scores are not good next year, they will need to consider this.

Matti noted they should develop objective measures, for example the number of hot fixes, not the number of bugs, which will be a number that has clear measurable effects.

*Question from the floor:*

*Referring to the Primo issue with the German umlaut, do you have different regions running regression?*

Bar noted that Alma tests are run on actual data and they have much better system on the Cloud.

Matti noted they must develop better processes.

Shlomo noted they are changing QA in Primo, including a test center in every region, and are starting to roll this out, thus providing testing in non-English regions.

*Question from the floor:*

*Concern there are not enough test cases run every night. What data is covered?*

Bar stated that with Alma there is full coverage. If automatic testing were the savior then they would put more developers, however it does not matter how many tests are done. If any issues are found, they undertake root-cause analysis and then add further tests to the testing regime.

Matti noted they will take advice of smart people. They need to understand the issue, and see if there needs to be an improvement. They continue to learn and change.

*Question 25*

*Quality of metadata*

*We import records from our vendor, e.g. Alexander Street Press (ASP) and Ebook Library (EBL), or from a 3rd party supplier, e.g. Serials Solutions, because they are of a higher standard and offer more chance for discoverability than the records in EL products. ASP assure us that the same file is provided to EL as is made accessible via their website for customers who choose to download directly.*

*What is Ex Libris doing to improve the quality of the metadata records in PCI, SFX, CZ?*

Tamar noted they are getting the same files from the publishers. ASP is a good example where they had to re-load data where they had problems with the date but are fixing this problem with ASP.

In general, they have tools to improve the data that allows the Community Zone to include enhanced and enriched records. In addition the Advisory Group is advising on allowing editing and enhancement by community.

*Question from the floor:*

*They have noted a difference in data between repository simple DC vs MODS and is wondering if there is a problem.*

Tamar asked the questioner to provide examples and they will investigate.

*Question 26*

*Ex Libris vs. OCLC in The Netherlands*

*In the light of the recent agreement between UKB, the association of the 13 Dutch university libraries and the Royal Library, with OCLC about moving the national ILS platform from the old PICA/OCLC union catalogue platform to Worldshare, and the tight integration of the new public libraries National Catalogue with the PICA/OCLC union catalogue –*

*What are the options for Ex Libris Alma in The Netherlands, especially in respect to the four Aleph libraries?*

Bettina noted the current options for the Netherlands are the same in Alma. Alma has been developed for academic libraries, and is a state of the art system, which includes the ability to integrate with third party systems including interoperability with Worldshare. Customers are using Alma, Primo, and WorldCat in the US. Ex Libris is investigating API integrations with Worldshare and are happy to work with libraries in this area as they think it is the way to go.

Bar noted that WorldShare doesn't have full services for an ILS.

#### *Question 27*

##### *Accessibility standards*

*Would Ex Libris be willing to have an external company audit their Primo/Alma code for conformity to common programming and accessibility standards?*

Tamar stated they do adhere to the WC2 specifications with Primo, and use WAI testing software. Customers also undertake testing and they think are well covered.

#### *Question 28*

##### *Move towards linked data?*

*At the IFLA 2014 Satellite Meeting"" Linked Data in Libraries: Let's make it happen!"" in Paris August 14th, Shlomo Sanders announced a move towards linked data. He mentioned that all internal references in Alma, Primo and Primo Central will use URIs and that the move towards linked data in these services will be divided into stages.*

*Could we please get a clearer understanding of the underlying strategies, the timeframe and how - in practice - this move will change the internal systems and end user services?*

Shlomo Sanders noted the first URI for Primo is working for linked data. There will be two linked data services - URI and a search that returns URIs. They are adding URI orchid linking for PNX. Alma interoperability is looking for a customer to work and make the Alma APIs more RESTful. Every new API will be based on recommendations that they get. In Primo, they are creating many RESTful APIs and they will be using those APIs. They will be based on how a URI looks.

Oren noted that it is critical for Ex Libris is not just to develop it, but to see people use it. They are interested to see new projects using those tools.