

Ex Libris Customer (1978-2005) Questionnaire -- Naomi Steinberger

1... What is your name and the name of the institution(s) where you worked with Aleph (and/or other Ex Libris products)?

The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary

2...When did your site install Ex Libris software and when did you start working with it?

We installed ALEPH 200 version 20 in January 1990 onsite at JTS.

3...What was your job title, or, more generally, what did you do? Were there particular projects you were involved in?

At the time I was head of Public Services but I was the person who spearheaded automation in the library. I was the point person, and still remain so, in the library for the ALEPH system.

4...Were there modules which you felt were particularly good, distinguishing Aleph from other vendors' versions of the same module?

We licensed ALEPH because of its Hebrew capabilities.

5...Who were Aleph/Ex Libris' main competitors?

VTLS who came out with a Hebrew version shortly after.

6...I think that two early decisions were very important:

- support of standards: the MARC and MAB formats, and, later UNIMARC
- the early use of Unicode, the ability to handle multiple languages and scripts – Hebrew and English from the first and, very early, Danish/German/Italian – laying the groundwork for making Aleph a system which could be implemented in virtually **any** language
- Others?

That was it for us.

7...Comments on the role of user groups (ICAU, NAAUG, SMUG, etc.)?

I was active in ICAU as I was the only US member at the beginning and served for a number of years on the steering committee. I then joined NAAUG and was a bit active there.

8...Were there particularly interesting/valuable Ex Libris staff that you remember?

Over the years I worked with so many excellent ExLibris staff. The original group, Judy Levi, Aharon Rivlin, Natan Lev and Dalia Mendelson. In addition I worked closely with Azriel Morag and Udi Arad. Worked with Barbara Rad-el and Tami Ezra as well. In those days they would come to NY to do the installations and trainings and we spent lots of time together. I hosted some of them at home. They are all interesting people who were extremely dedicated to their work. When visiting Israel, and the ALEPH office on the Hebrew University campus, I had meetings with Yohanan who was a true visionary. Once the US office opened Jerry Specht became the go to person for everything ALEPH in the US. When looking at the picture of the ExLibris staff from 2000 it's amazing how many of these people I worked with over the years. Today I'm happy to work with Jerry, Tania Gutman and always happy when Randy Menakas when working on ALEPH issues. Paul is wonderful support for Digitool and Matt is wonderful for Primo. They're my main contact people.

9...It seems that, with ALEPH 500, the choice of a Linux / Oracle environment was important -- but maybe most of the competitors' products also operated in this environment?

I don't know. We were "wedded" to ALEPH from the beginning because of the Hebrew capabilities and continued. The thought of changing systems, both the expenses it would incur and the work it would entail, was not something that we were able to handle.

10...Are there particular interesting, fun, or odd things that you remember?

The great parties both at the ICAU meetings and at the systems seminars in Israel. Lots of dancing on the tables and people really enjoying themselves. Also the locations of the meeting enabled me to go to some outstanding places in Europe. I will never forget when Azriel Morag brought Matti Shem-Tov to the NAUG meeting in Iowa. This was a major turning point for ExLibris. And no turning back. Matti has reshaped and grown the company way beyond most everyone's belief.

11...If your library has stopped using Aleph, when did that happen – and what was the successor system? NA

12...If you moved to a different library, please describe briefly your history since that time. NA