

## Ex Libris Staff (1978-2005) Questionnaire, Yaala

[Feel free to say as little or as much as you like. Do *not* feel that you need to answer all of the questions....]

1. When did you start working for Ex Libris? How did this come about?

I started on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2000, the day the "Y2K problem" was supposed to hit computers, the Millennium bug. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Year\\_2000\\_problem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Year_2000_problem)). But it was a calm day.

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

I was trained on Aleph in general, and assigned to be Aleph support analyst at Headquarters. I worked with the Aleph500 team, while the Aleph300 team was also in existence.

*Thinking of the 1978-2005 time period...*

3. Why was Ex Libris as successful as it was? Why did customers go with Aleph rather than other systems? Some possibilities:
  - a. Superior system and program design? (-- primarily Yohanan's doing? Others?)
  - b. Superior functional design? (-- primarily Judy Levi's doing? Others?)
  - c. Superior strategy (Oren Beit-Arie -- and others?)
  - d. Superior marketing (Barbara Radel, et al.)
  - e. Superior organization (Azriel and Udi and ???)
  - f. Other?

All of the above, and some luck, I think.

4. Who were Ex Libris' main competitors?

I remember SIRSI, III...

5. I think that two decisions – perhaps just coincidence or luck – were very important:
  - a. the use of the MARC standard – absolutely critical to success in North America (and the UK?), perhaps less so in Europe?
  - b. 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
  - c. Others?

Agree, plus the ability for customers to freely customize almost anything.

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

7. Were there particularly interesting/valuable customers that you remember?

I remember getting cases from Jerry Specht, in Jerusalem. And I knew that I need to work on them as priority. At the time, it could take a while to work on a PRB (support incident).

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

When I got used to Circulation, I loved it, because there was a way to understand and troubleshoot.

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?

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

I am happy that I started working in Ex Libris, and remember fondly the way I was accepted into the North American Aleph support team.

11. When and why did you leave?

Whatever reasons for leaving, I was happy to come back. The work is challenging and rewarding.