Map of/Excerpts from Jerry and Randy’s May 21, 2017, conversation with Judy Levi (via Skype)

*Link to complete unedited (1-hour) audio recording*

![Randy Menakes](image1.jpg)  ![Judy Levi](image2.jpg)  ![Jerry Specht](image3.jpg)

**Interview map/excerpts**

*h:mm:ss*

0:00:50  Jerry/Judy’s first meeting
0:04:00  Judy’s “trip out of hell” (flight from Jerusalem to Montreal)
0:05:00  Randy/Judy’s first meeting
0:07:45  Boston Office
0:09:10  Jerry/Randy’s history
0:12:00  Judy, pre-ALEPH history at the JNUL (Jewish National and University Library)
0:15:15  Union List of Serials in Israel Libraries, mid ‘70’s, Yohanan
0:17:10  *ALEPH becomes official project (1978)*
  “One of the reasons it was successful was that it wasn’t the idea of some corporation”
0:17:45  “The first idea was to get a ready-made program [DOBIS-LIBIS]
  but the IBM computer would have been six months too late,
  so we said “OK, we’ll do it.”
0:18:40  Carmella Ronen came to Hebrew University in 1974
  “You think you and Randy worked closely together;
  Carmella and I were Tweedledum and Tweedledee!”
0:20:30  Unfeasibility of merging 23 libraries’ card catalogs necessitated automated solution
0:22:00 Physical merging of 23 collections
0:24:30 Character set issues: Hebrew, Arabic, Latin, Cyrillic
   “We even drew the fonts!”
0:26:00 Yohanan’s foresight
0:27:40 1981 visit to CDC headquarters in Minneapolis/St.Paul
   “We always said that Yohanan wanted to ‘see his baby walk’ ”. Chutzpah!
0:28:40 CSIC in Madrid – first customer outside Israel (1982)
0:29:00 People critical in early success
0:31:20 “Let me tell you something about Udi and Azriel …”
   “If you don’t have the proper marketing …”
   “We tried it [breaking into North American market] before that ourselves”
   Jerry: “You need to have a good system too.”
0:33:20 Table-driven system
0:35:30 Kate Ward/Notre Dame’s experience:
   “It was a feeling of empowerment … and sheer terror….
   We were co-developers, co-conspirators.”
0:38:00 Herbert van de Sompel; SFX
0:38:30 Judy: “… we were having so much fun doing what we were doing. It wasn’t a job.”
0:39:00 Yohanan’s apartment;
   [Barbara: “Like Steve Jobs; the equivalent of the garage in the U.S.”]
0:40:00 Randy: “… bond between customers and the product …
   making the system unique and yours alone.”
   System seminars;
   Ex Libris is pretty darn good at resource allocation
0:43:40 Decision not to go for public library market
   Judy: “The public library thing came up at least twice.”
   Alma is 99% academic libraries
0:48:10 Interesting/memorable customers
   Judy: “Training session where I had to explain how to use the mouse.”
   “I enjoyed Denmark; DTV was … special”
0:50:20 Randy: National Library of Japan … challenging
   Cultural sensitivity training… Two extremes: Israel and Japan
0:54:30 Randy: Kos System Seminar: “eye-opening to me … the professionalism;
   Interaction with customers; involvement late into the night …
   Cooperative development.”
   Judy: “It keeps customers loyal. They’ve invested their spirit in it.
   It isn’t just that they paid their money and they got what they got.
   They have ongoing influence.”
0:56:00 Jerry: “You want to take advantage of that…. You want to have them feel
   involved because they’re really bright people who can really contribute.”
0:57:50 Judy: “Just to give you an example of when Yohanan didn’t want to do something….”
Jerry: “I always felt that Yohanan did a good job of picking up on ideas and recognizing when something did really need to be done.”

0:58:45 “Aleph Record Relationships” document; Judy: “a truly impressive, but rather frightening diagram.”

1:00:40 Holdings records … “We didn’t want to do it,… but it had to be done.”

1:02:20 “Alma came as I was winding up.”

1:03:00 What are each of you most proud of having done in your years with Ex Libris?
Judy: “I’m proud of the personal and working relationships that we had at the Jerusalem office.”
“From the viewpoint of the most exciting time: the beginning … the actual, physical move of these libraries up to Mt. Scopus and the creation of the new library.”
“Really, working with wonderful people: the customers, the distributors, the offices around the world.
“I feel very lucky that I happened to land in the right place at the right time: If I had stayed in the Library and not gone into the computers, I don’t know whether I would have stayed with libraries…."

1:07:10 Randy: “It’s been a great place to spend my career, and especially academic libraries.
I think of a lot of really interesting visits I had … CUNY….”
Judy: “At least 14 different ways in Aleph for calculating late return fines.”

1:09:45 Things that you’d do differently if you had them to do over?
Randy: “Taking Project Management position supervising three or four people. I don’t think it suited my talents as well as some other things….”

1:10:50 Jerry: “At one time (with NOTIS) I was supervising 12 people.
I was OK as a manager, but wasn’t a really good manager.
I felt that as a troubleshooter, I could do really well.”

1:11:20 Judy: “I’m kind of laughing to myself because we three have this in common… I never wanted to be a manager…
“At one point in 1999, Udi said to me: “OK. You have to head these people (the Aleph Support)…. After three or four years they realized that, no, this should be taken away from me.”
Jerry: “They don’t necessarily go together.”
Anything else?
Randy: “I’ll say this: it’s been wonderful working with you two….
“Judy, it’s been great talking with you again. It’s been a while. You’ve got a great spirit.”