Ex Libris Announces Development Partners for its Next-Generation Library Framework

Institutions from the international customer community partner with Ex Libris to create the Unified Resource Management (URM) framework

Jerusalem, Israel – July 6, 2009. Ex Libris® Group is pleased to announce the first academic institutions to begin collaborating with the Company as development partners for its groundbreaking Unified Resource Management (URM™) framework — the next-generation framework for library management services.

The three initial development partners – Boston College and the Princeton University Library, both in the US, and K.U.Leuven in Belgium – together reflect the international character of the Ex Libris customer base. The development partners represent the needs of both single institutions and consortia and bring extensive experience with Ex Libris library management solutions. Under the banner of K.U.Leuven is the LIBIS library network, consisting of 30 independent member organizations (comprising universities, colleges, national and regional parliaments, and a network of public libraries). Teams from the partner institutions will embark on a program of collaboration with Ex Libris over the coming months as the URM framework is developed.

In addition to work with the development partners, Ex Libris is reviewing URM requirements and workflows with a first series of focus groups, comprised of over 80 customers representing institutions worldwide. These focus groups will explore the topics of metadata management, consortium support, selection and acquisition, and fulfillment/patron management. Ex Libris expects to expand the focus group activity in the future as well as to put in place additional forums for ongoing collaboration with libraries and the institutions with which they are affiliated.

The 21st century is seeing libraries and research institutions exploring new approaches to managing their resources and providing services. Ex Libris is responding to the changing needs with URM, a next-generation platform that supports the unified management of back-office library operations—selection, acquisition, cataloging, management, and fulfillment—for the full spectrum of library materials, regardless of format or location. URM will enable libraries to implement more streamlined workflows, to integrate the library more fully with campus systems, and to leverage Web 2.0 and community features necessary for working in more collaborative ways. Economic realities have increasingly encouraged libraries to seek

new forms of sharing at the network level. A centralized system for managing metadata along with a data-services environment will provide new ways of creating, managing, and sharing metadata and other types of information that is common to all libraries.

The URM framework is designed to accommodate the emerging and future needs of libraries, not just the traditional back-office management activities common today. The extensible design and adherence to the Ex Libris open platform philosophy ensure that URM will grow with the needs of individual libraries and the larger library and academic environments in which they operate.

By centralizing data services in a software-as-a-service environment, URM will support flexible models for collaboration across the functional spectrum—from cooperative collection development to more seamless sharing of metadata and resources with peer libraries. In this new network environment, libraries will be able to join forces to optimize technical support, purchasing power, collections, and even staff knowledge and resources.

More information about the framework is available on the [URM Resource Center](#).

Tom Wall, university librarian of Boston College, commented, "The Ex Libris partnership offers an opportunity to explore new ways of managing all of our library resources efficiently and in a cost effective manner while providing an environment for libraries to join together to enhance purchasing power, collections, and technical support. I'm particularly optimistic about the possibility of URM enabling the evolution of traditional technical services operations. Additionally, the development of a robust reporting module will help all libraries in assessing their efforts and discovering new more efficient workflows. URM developments will translate to better services and highlight the increasing relevance of the library as essential to the academic wellbeing of the University."

"Our staff members are very interested in exploring the potential of URM," commented deputy university librarian Marvin Bielawski of the Princeton University Library system. "The University Library system has a long tradition in working together in cooperative and collaborative programs with other academic and research libraries," added Bielawski. "We wish to expand these programs in ways that will both increase our internal efficiencies and those of other libraries."

Jo Rademakers, head of LIBIS Library Computer Services at K.U.Leuven remarked: "As we represent a large and diverse network of libraries in Belgium, I believe the

teams at K.U.Leuven /LIBIS will broaden the perspective of the URM project. Our history of successful cooperation with Ex Libris in the past, through implementing a wide range of library automation solutions, convinced us that embarking on a Development Partnership would best further the goals and objectives of all of our member libraries." As with all Ex Libris solutions, URM will address specific needs of consortia and will provide full Unicode support.

"Collaboration is a basic tenet of all Ex Libris development," explained Oren Beit-Arie, chief strategy officer at Ex Libris. "We are thrilled to begin working closely with our first development partners on designing and developing a truly new framework for library services. URM represents a significant paradigm shift from traditional library automation systems in almost every respect—architecture, design, scope, and options for deployment. An important milestone in the evolution of library services, URM provides a unique opportunity for libraries not only to do things differently and much more efficiently but also to do completely new things, offering new services to their institutions and users. This is a momentous time for the information community, in which we openly and collaboratively depart from traditional models of integrated library systems into a new framework built to support current and emerging missions of academic, research, and national libraries."

About Boston College

Boston College (BC) is one of the oldest Jesuit universities in the United States. This private coeducational university has 8,500 undergraduates and 4,000 graduate students. While known primarily as an undergraduate liberal arts university, BC also has well-known graduate programs, including education, law, management, nursing, social work, and theology. BC runs a number of Ex Libris systems: the Aleph® integrated library system, the Primo® discovery and delivery solution, the DigiTool® digital asset management solution, and the Ex Libris e-product suite—MetaLib®, SFX®, and Verde®.

For additional information on Boston College, see www.bc.edu.

About K.U.Leuven

Situated in the heart of Western Europe, K.U.Leuven (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) has been a center of learning for almost six centuries. Founded in 1425 by Pope Martin V, K.U.Leuven bears the double honor of being the oldest existing Catholic university in the world and the oldest university in the Low Countries. The university has over 34,000 students, about 4,000 of whom are from overseas, and employs

around 4,500 researchers. It teaches and supports research in Dutch and English and participates in the Erasmus international exchange program.

LIBIS is part of K.U.Leuven and offers services to a library network comprising 30 independent member organizations, which include universities, colleges, national and regional organizations, and a network of public libraries. LIBIS hosts a full suite of Ex Libris solutions, including Aleph, Primo, DigiTool, and the e-products MetaLib, SFX, and Verde.

For additional information on K.U.Leuven, see http://www.kuleuven.be/english/. For additional information on LIBIS, see http://www.libis.be.

About the Princeton University Library system

Located in Princeton, N.J., the Princeton University Library is one of the world's most distinguished research library systems, consisting of the Harvey S. Firestone Memorial Library and 15 special libraries. Its holdings include more than 6.7 million books, 6 million microforms, 33,000 linear feet of manuscripts, and smaller but distinguished holdings of rare books, prints, archives, and other material that require special handling. The library's extensive electronic resources include databases and journals, statistical packages, images, and digital maps. Along with the Ex Libris Voyager® integrated library system, the library system uses the SFX OpenURL link resolver.

For additional information on the Princeton University Library, see http://library.princeton.edu/.

About Ex Libris
Ex Libris is a leading provider of automation solutions for academic, national, and research libraries. Offering the only comprehensive product suite for electronic, digital, and print materials, Ex Libris provides efficient, user-friendly products that serve the needs of libraries today and will enable them to transition into the future. Ex Libris maintains an impressive customer base consisting of thousands of sites in more than 70 countries on six continents.

Dedicated to developing creative solutions in close collaboration with customers, Ex Libris enables libraries to maximize productivity and efficiency and, at the same time, greatly enhance the user experience. By empowering users to discover and obtain the information they need, libraries ensure their position as the bridge to knowledge.

For additional information on Ex Libris Group, see our [Web site](), visit our [Initiatives]() and [Commentary]() blogs, and follow our [Twitter]() page.