DIE ÖSTERREICHISCHE BIBLIOTHEKENVERBUND UND SERVICE GMBH

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COOPERATION BECOMING A HABIT : BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES IN THE AUSTRIAN LIBRARY NETWORK

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THE CHALLENGE TO COLLABORATE IN THE DIGITAL AGE
NALIS CONFERENCE
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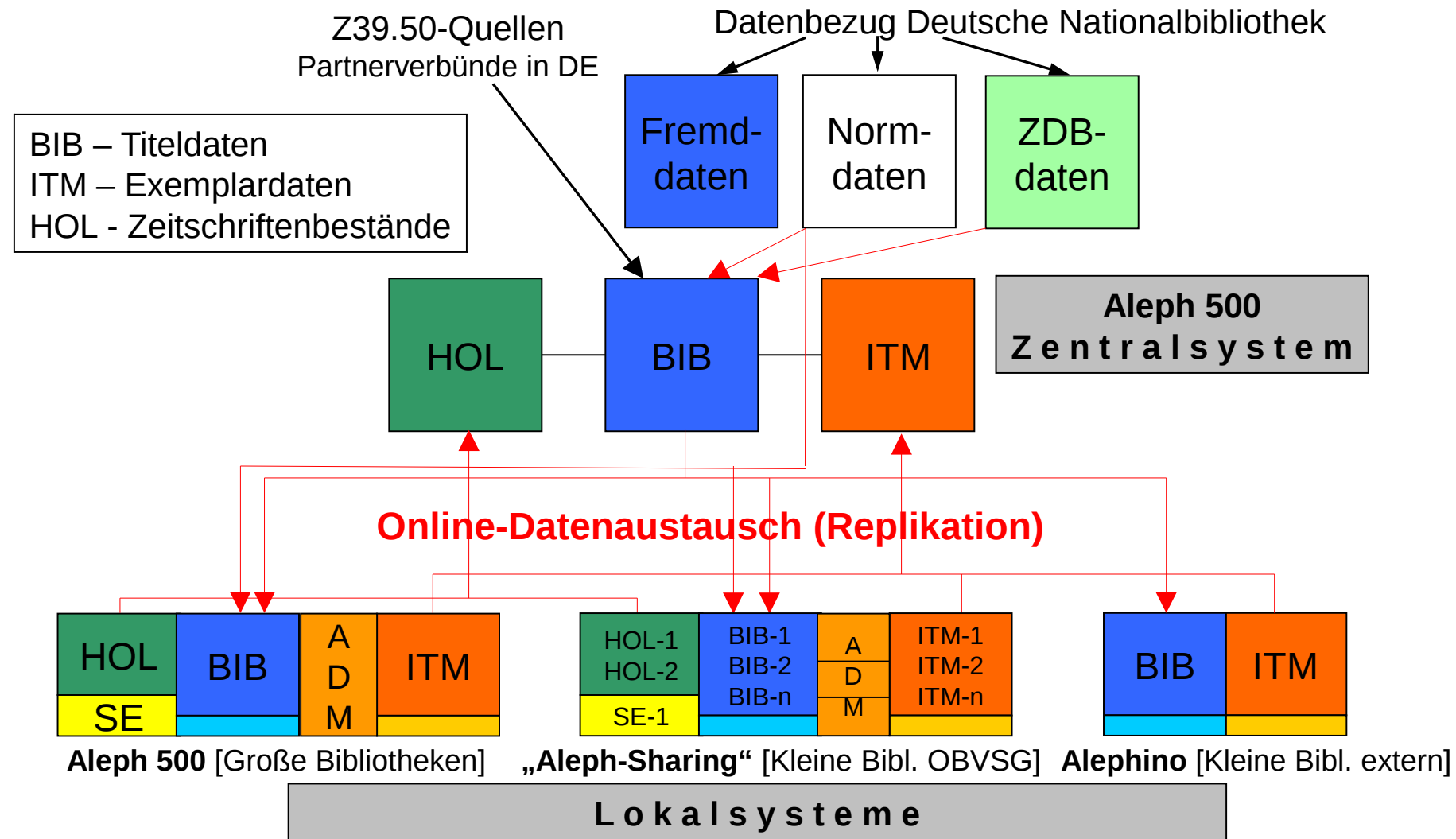- Value of strong further partnership

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The Austrian Library Network (ALN): Who are we?

- Currently 70 voting members of the General Assembly
  - representing 89 single institutions

- Starting with core of
  - Austrian National Library
  - 18 (now 21) Federal Universities
  - Austrian Academy of Sciences
  - Verbund für Bildung und Kultur (Education of teachers)

- Additional members are from different types of scientific libraries
  - Research
  - Administrative
  - Governmental
  - Ecclesiastical

- A central office

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ALN: Guiding Principles Main Network Architecture

- Almost homogeneous structure
  - Started with pure Aleph-systems
  - In the meantime also Alephino-systems included

- Distribution of features over one central and many local systems with the general guideline **„As much central as necessary, but as much local as possible"** gives us
  - Flexibility
  - High degree of synergy

- Central database without duplicates as policy – not a union catalogue for lucky historical reasons
  - Specialised on cataloguing using all possibilities like authority data, resource databases, Z-sources
  - Catalogue enrichment
  - Other services of general use and interest

- Bidirectional data replication between central system and local system
  - Every user benefits from data improvement automatically

- Homogenity and functionality of core software and the central catalogue are cornerstones for the cooperation within the network

Cooperation becoming a habit : benefits and challenges in the Austrian Library Network

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ALN: Data Architecture Central / Local Systems

Z39.50-Quellen
Partnerverbünde in DE

Datenbezug Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Fremd-daten

Norm-daten

ZDB-daten

BIB – Titeldaten
ITM – Exemplardaten
HOL - Zeitschriftenbestände

HOL

BIB

ITM

**Aleph 500
Z e n t r a l s y s t e m**

Online-Datenaustausch (Replikation)

HOL

BIB

A D M

ITM

SE

HOL-1
HOL-2

BIB-1
BIB-2
BIB-n

A D M

ITM-1
ITM-2
ITM-n

SE-1

BIB

ITM

Aleph 500 [Große Bibliotheken]

„Aleph-Sharing" [Kleine Bibl. OBVSG]

Alephino [Kleine Bibl. extern]

L o k a l s y s t e m e

Cooperation becoming a habit : benefits and challenges in the Austrian Library Network

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ALN: Organisation

- Based on the law about the Central Office: „Die Österreichische Bibliothekenverbund und Service Gesellschaft m.b.H." (OBVSG = The Austrian Library Network and Services Ltd.)
    - Defined services for named member institutions by law
    - Membership is voluntary for over 11 years now (especially for the universities)

- OBVSG
    - Independent of any member of the network
    - Represents the network
    - Provides and develops services
    - Tries to watch innovative trends and technologies
    - Rather strong position as an executive body

- General assembly
    - Every member represented, voting weight according to its „size"
    - Defined working groups (especially for strategic discussions)
    - Strategic decisions
    - OBVSG does not vote, but is allowed to make proposals and can veto decisions under defined circumstances

- Periodic meetings of system librarians/administrators and local system responsibles

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OBVSG – The Austrian Library and Services Ltd.: The Central Office

- Founded by federal law January 1st 2002

- Private legal form chosen:
  - „Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung": ~ Ltd.
  - Owned 100% by the Federal Republic of Austria
  - But outside of the federal administration and any single ministry
  - Rather free decisions within the given budget

- Neutral institution independent of ministries and all participants

- Provision of central services

- Operational management of the ALN, including integration of new members

- 30 employees

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OBVSG: Duties

- Operating the central office and the central catalogue including all necessary databases

- Providing all central services

- Operational management of the Austrian Library Network including
  - Planning
  - Execution
  - Representation

- Contracting new members

- Operation of local library systems

- Data management, especially data conversion and correction

- Development of new services for academic libraries

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ALN: Funding

- Austria is called a rich country
  - Unfortunately this wealth is not represented in the public budgets for science and education

- OBVSG gets an amount of 1,72 Mio € per year for defined basic services
  - Amount stayed the same for 13 years now and was never changed
  - No additional central budgets for the whole network anymore
  - Additional services have to be paid by customers

- University Libraries get their budget from the university

- Universities negotiate contracts with the ministry for periods of three years

- Contrary to for example DFG in Germany infrastructur is not funded by research promotion agencies in Austria

- Every project has to be discussed and economically evaluated before realisation

- „Help yourself, so helps you god"

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OBVSG: Selected Services [1]

- National and general infrastructure
  - Centre of competence
  - National ISIL agency for Austria (International Standard Identifier for Libraries and Related Organizations, ISO 15511)
  - Representation of the network
  - Data quality in general
    - Datamigration services
    - Data validation / consistency tools
  - Catalogue enrichment services
  - Authority files

- Provision of local ILS-services
  - Hosting of Aleph systems
  - Use of full Aleph systems to serve also small institutions („Aleph-Sharing")
    - Bridiging the gap between very basic functionalities in cataloguing and additionaly needed local services
    - Effort dependent cost models
    - Growing demand

- Hosting of SFX and MetaLib

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OBVSG: Selected Services [2]

- Primo as a central service
  - Very sophisticated features asked
    - Integration of many sources
    - Includes catalogue enrichments
    - Should include defined full text indexing
    - Minimisation of efforts
  - Only chances of realisation, if using almost all existing synergies
    - Based on consortia architecture
    - Unified data preparation - Primo Data Preparation System (PPS)
    - Realisation as a central service using one common Primo instance

- Repository Solution „Visual Library"

- ÖVK-NAH: The „Österreichische Verbundkatalog für Nachlässe, Autographen und Handschriften: ÖVK-NAH" is a central catalogue of literary bequests, autographs and manuscripts, where eleven members of the Austrian Library Network include their materials.
  - Realised within the Aleph central infrastructure
  - Combined with the long time experience of the OBVSG
  - Driven by enthusiastic specialists under the leadership of the Austrian National Library

- Main Office of the Austrian Academic Consortium (electronic resources)

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ALN: Historical Remarks on Collaboration [1]

- Library automation started nearly 40 years ago when a special legal framework was given
  - Responsibility of a single department of one federal ministry for all federal libraries
    - Consultations for expertise with libraries but control and decision-making at one place
    - Central funding and planning of necessary resources
    - Nevertheless was there always a lack of ressources
  - First goals:
    - Electronic recording and administration of library materials
    - Sharing and usage of common resources (especially Cataloguing)

- No clear founding date, but some milestones
  - 1974 Central planning office founded
  - 1978 Development of first software product for circulation used by more then one library
  - 1984 First central catalogue of journals („Österreichische Zeitschriftendatenbank")
  - 1987 BIBOS 2: Library management system based on central catalogue aimes integrated library system
    - Change of cataloguing rules

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ALN: Historical Remarks on Collaboration [2]

- Serious deficiencies of this mainframe and terminal based software BIBOS led to a procurement process 1997 and the decision for the system Aleph 500 by Ex Libris
  - Whole network involved within the selection process
    - High acceptance of the result
  - Switch to production after one year implementation work on January 12th 1999
  - Step-by-step replacement of former software modules and integration of old data into the new environment
  - Still functional base of almost all services

- Political decision about a clear legal form of the central office had to be made hereafter
  - Attractiveness of the network due to well functioning infrastructure
    - Increasing interest of potential new participants
    - Demand for additional and adapted funcionalities and services
  - First attempts to serve small institutions using Aleph
  - Increasing difficulties without clear legal and organisational framework
    - Potential participants from outside of the scope of the responsible ministry
    - Inflexible fiscal regulations within the governmental organisation
    - Inappropriate legal construction of the central office

- Well established cooperation was maybe temporarily weakened but never vanished after central control and funding was lost in 2002 due to the new university law

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ALN: Main Philosophy of Collaboration

- The idea of common projects and cooperation between participants and central office could be established over many years due to
    - Central responsibility and funding at the beginning
    - Homogenous system environment within all participating institutions
    - Similar (basic) intentions and demands of participants
    - Well operating services

- The members participate in strategic discussions and decisions
    - Members articulate there wishes and influence further direction of development
    - „Checks and Balances" exist

- Concentrate the expertise

- After changes in law no (federal) institution is obliged to be member of the network anymore
    - OBVSG has to be aware of the demands when creating services
        - New services have to respond to local needs, because customers must be willing to pay for them
        - Often this demands are brought up by member libraries
        - Developing of standard procedures and homogenous data situation makes complex systems of high quality manageable
    - Stability of the network depends also on the creation of „win-win-situations" between network members and OBVSG

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Benefits and Challenges

Benefits

- Better use and quality of shared resources
  - Seamless Integration into an extensive network and spectrum of services
  - Centralised data managementt
  - Participation in common projects
  - Use of leverage effects
  - Sustainability
  - Development of tailored tools

- Improved Akkumulation and usability of know how

- Increased market power
  - Stronger impact and influence on new developments
  - Handling of projects too big for one
  - Coordination of activities

- Community with a „shared destiny"

- Facilitation of international cooperation

Challenges

- Creation of „win-win" situations
  - Common interests reduce often to smaller groups
  - Overhead has to be compensated by benefits

- Danger of long decision processes without satisfying results

- Questions of funding and resources
  - „Critical mass" always necessary

- OBVSG has always to be up to date on strategy and service
  - Development of additional useful services
  - Choosing the „right" projects

- Divergence of interests
  - Common sense may disappear at least in part

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Partnership in the Future: Does it make Sense?

- Almost all reasons for Collaboration will remain valid

- Cloud-Services for Libraries
  – Commercial: Improved negotiation position
  – Open source: Supply of common (basic) infrastructure

- Consortial acquisition (electronic material)

- Implementation of RDA

- Long term preservation

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